

# *Minerva Mysteries*

*Three into one.*



*Comfy Mystery Series*

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ISBN: \_\_\_\_\_

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DFW, Texas, USA

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## ***BOOK 1 - MYSTERY OF THE STOLEN SHIP RADAR SCOPE***

### ***Chapter 01 –Life after Service***

Minerva stood in front of the long hallway mirror. The blue suit with skirt and white blouse felt comfortable and yet still foreign. The last eight years of her life had little to do with fashion and a great deal to do with protecting her country. Minerva retired from her six-year commission within the Office of Naval Intelligence, ONI and then she took advantage of her connections to finish her college studies while working to become one of the first woman detectives in the State of California. She needed her license and the skills she learned in the Navy to pursue two goals.

The first was why she was preening in front of the mirror—her first case as a newly licensed private detective. It was a commissioned contract with the LA Police Department but it sounded like a case she could really help solve.

The second was a promise she made to herself in Saint Louis, MO when she boarded a train bound for Los Angeles, CA. She would find her two brothers and reunite her family, pulled apart on the Orphan Railroad. Her fingers slipped into the shoulder-strapped purse she wore and felt for the picture she carried with her since time remembered. The picture of three six-month-old children looking out at the world they could not understand.

That last day, the kindly priest and fussy budget nun allowed her to stand next to her two brothers until their new adoptive parents selected them. Her adoptive parents—an actor and director from Hollywood—were kind but did not desire more than one child. Robert's foster parents looked like stuffy old bankers. Bo's foster father matched his temperament. Bo was the one Minerva worried about the most. She figured he would run away the first chance he got and she whispered her destination to him.

The process of adoption was a well-orchestrated event in the early 1900s. The Orphan Train had been finding homes for children across the United States since its inception in 1854. Minerva didn't know much except that they were eight years old when they were gathered in the auditorium of Our Lady of the Waters Orphanage to be selected by parents from across the country.

Minerva lucked out with her adoption and she intended to put all her good fortune and learned skills into solving the mystery of her brothers' location.

Brushing the sleeves of her jacket one last time, Minerva Daniels, birth parent's name unknown, turned and walked out the door of her tidy little Los Angeles apartment with a confident air. She knew her abilities to solve mysteries, honed by her years as an agent for the ONI would help her complete both of her missions.

Today, she would sit down with a Detective Abrams, a Los Angeles child welfare officer. He had a runaway that had eluded capture for three weeks. His call to the pesky woman gumshoe was more to frustrate her than put her services to the test.

What the detective did not understand is that the pesky new private detective had stood toe-to-toe with the President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt and did not back down.

### *Chapter 02 – New Enemies*

The struggle of WWI had ended almost four years ago but Admiral Worthington's world had changed little. As intelligence officer for the US Navy, his duty was to assure America was protected and that included the newest tools of war that were being invented.

Warrant Officer Benjamin Doling stood at attention awaiting his next order. The results of his investigative report confirmed that the new radar scope was stolen and that it was an inside job.

Professor Albert Covington's contraption, based upon the first successful radio range-finding experiment of British physicist Sir Edward Victor Appleton was scheduled to be auditioned in Washington DC within three months. Appleton used radio echoes to determine the height of the ionosphere, an ionized layer of the upper atmosphere that reflects longer radio waves. Professor Covington's directed the radar at ships in the ocean instead of the ionosphere. The QR22 Radar Transmitter weighed three hundred pounds and went missing while being installed on the USS Columbia. As the administrative flagship for the Commander in Chief U.S. Fleet, the theft would not go unnoticed.

"Dismissed." Admiral Worthington did not turn to see the reaction of the Warrant Officer.

"Get me Minerva Daniels on the phone and have my car ready. And get me dinner reservations at the US Grant. You should book three rooms for an extended stay. Put them under my name." He heard the quick footsteps of the Warrant Officer.

Picking up a set of binoculars, he looked out at the harbor entrance of San Diego. Naval and commercial vessels jockeyed for position in their attempts to ingress or egress the port. The Admiral's naval career began as a boatswain, ferrying the big ships around the

eastern seaboard naval ports. He did not miss the cold but he would sure love to worry about shipping lanes and timetables, if only for a little while.

Putting the binoculars down, he huffed and headed for the gangplank. Nothing was ever accomplished by wishing for an easier path. Besides, he needed to dress up for his guest this evening.

It has been almost two years since she left the Navy. They communicated often but their worlds grew further apart. Hers was establishing a detective career on land while he remained anchored to the naval docks. It did his ultimate goals no good if he pestered her to stay. Under his command, no personal attachments could be considered. While his appointment this evening was to get his favorite intelligence officer working on the case, his primary goal was to advance his other agenda.

He pushed the military dress uniform aside and selected a tweed jacket with a powder blue shirt and dark blue tie. The black slacks with his new two-toned oxford sports shoes finished off the look. His close-cropped hair showed signs of his wisdom and he once again doubted his resolve. *What could a gorgeous woman find in an old salt like me?*

Huffing, he turned from the mirror and walked out on the front porch of his base accommodations awaiting his driver. *No battle was ever won by sitting on the sidelines.*

### ***Chapter 03 – Familiar Friends***

The US Grant Hotel has been a fixture in San Diego high society since its opening in October of 1910. It is also where the Admiral entertained visiting Naval and political dignitaries.

He is well known by the staff and he knew everything would be to his liking. He had no need to pack. He kept a set of clothes at the hotel for his frequent stays. Whether Minerva stayed depended on his ability to get her interested in the case. He knew she would be prepared. Her naval career taught her to be ready to move out at any time. The room would become her headquarters for the duration, a luxury far above her enlisted grade.

The Admiral tapped his shoe on the back of the car seat letting his nerves find a rhythm—his hopes being a serenade rather than blues. The short drive left little time for deep thought and once under the portico entrance, he changed back into his hard-charging persona. *Into the battle old boy—it is death or victory!*

She walked in a few minutes after his arrival. Her long column plaid skirt was deep peach with a delicate chiffon blouse in a lighter shade. This was set off by the white cardigan sweater draped across her shoulders. Her blonde hair clipped in the latest fashion danced around her beautiful face almost begging someone to start up the band.

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Unlike the crowds of movie stars and want-to-bes, she left the hat in the store setting her golden locks free.

He stood watching her move across the lobby, all eyes diverted from their original view and he felt a trembling deep inside that tormented his dreams. Huffing, his authoritative idiosyncrasy, he knew he blushed but moved forward to greet her.

“Minerva, you look marvelous.” His voice carried and any eyes not already turned found his objective. Gathering both of her hands in his, he bowed slightly and then turned her towards the restaurant, taking one of her hands and placing it the crook of his arm. “I hope you brought your appetite. Andre has some delectable seafood ready for us.”

Minerva moved closer as they turned towards the maître d' and squeezed his arm, smiling.

“I have some business for us after dinner, but first we dine and catch up.” He was back in control. “I want to know everything. How is it going as a landlubber, girl?”

### *After Dinner Mission Brief*

Diner, sating the appetite and bridging the lost time between encounters went well. Dessert was put off until after their initial meeting. Andre had them moved to a quiet chefs table off the kitchen. The din of clattering pots remained but their privacy was secured and they could talk freely.

Warrant Officer Benjamin Doling arrived, accompanied by two naval MPs who stood guard just outside the dining alcove. A quick salute and shorthand greeting had Benjamin sitting at the table, passing out copies of his investigative report, and placing evidence collected during his one day on the case.

“Minerva, you remember my assistant?”

“Of course I do. If it weren't for Benny here, nothing would ever get done!” Her laughter was part of her charm. “How is the old tar treating you, Benny?”

“He grumps a lot more since you left but as long as he can wander around on a boat he is manageable.” The sailor eased into the conversation. “How have you been?”

“Minerva, read the report and then we will dig into the case.” The Admiral watched as she opened the brief. “It seems I still have some disciplinary training to do for this young sailor...”

Benjamin was in his third year of assisting the Admiral and had already put in his re-enlistment papers to the approval of his mentor. They made a good team and they needed each other to succeed.

The next three hours were conversations about the theft, the evidence collected to date and the critical nature of the crime. In the end, Minerva was convinced she could help and was glad to be back in the company of her naval buddies.

“I will need passes to inspect the crime scene and I will need a place to set up for the investigation.” The new detective was already working through the treads of the case or at least the obvious lack of evidence.

“You have a suite here at the hotel set up for you. It will have all the communications equipment you need and a beautiful view of the harbor from your balcony.” The Admiral sat back. He had his team with the right people leading.

“As to your passes, I am giving you Benny for the duration. Anything you need, Benny can get. I have also provided you with top security clearance so nothing should stand in your way. Welcome aboard Minerva.”

Turning towards the kitchen, the Admiral barked another order. “Andre! Bring in the cheesecake and make sure my slice is bigger!”

### *Case Headquarters*

Dessert finished and conversation slowing down, Admiral Chance Worthington stood to leave. “You two have control and I need to get back to running my ships. Call me if anything gets in your way and let’s have briefings at least once each week.”

Minerva stood and brushed his hand aside, finding her way into his embrace. “Thank you for thinking of me.”

Her complexion changed hue as she kissed his cheek. “And don’t think you can get away without that other conversation you been holding in the back of your head. You do understand I am a detective and you can’t hide the truth from me?”

He huffed, improving on the crimson color of her cheeks but smiling, bowed. “You got me gumshoe, put on the cuffs.”

He turned and walked into the kitchen.

She whispered to herself. “I intend to Chance.”

### *Accomplice*

Benny carried the equipment he brought up to the suite. It opened into the main living room with a set of meeting rooms to the right and a hallway leading to her sleeping quarters to the left. Directly across from the living area were a wet bar and a dining area which was set in front of the balcony and the view of the harbor.

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“I will set up the communications in one room and leave the smaller one for your office.” Benny was in fix-it mode and Minerva allowed the sailor to do what he did best.

She found her luggage in the master suite and noticed the bathtub could hold a small submarine. She made a mental note to test it out.

Then she took off her eveningwear and put on navy scrubs. How many long nights had she spent with her naval buddies sitting on the bunks sharing salty tales? Few women made it in a man’s world but she earned her place and enjoyed its rewards.

Back in the living area, she stopped Benny from fussing around and made him relax on the couch across from her.

“This place is twice the size of my house.” She laughed and pulled a beer out of the bucket on the table greeting their arrival.

“My room is just across the hall.” Benny attempted to relax. “It’s not much bigger than a broom closet but it’s better than the cot I have on the USS Columbia. It’s really good to have you back Minerva.”

“Lose the hat and grab a beer.” Minerva pointed to the bucket. “Get me up to speed on Chance. How is he doing?”

The rest of the evening wandered through the last two years of naval history surrounding Admiral Chance Worthington.

**BOOK 99 - MINERVA MYSTERY ORIGIN STORIES**



<http://orphantraindepot.org/>

The mission of the National Orphan Train Complex is to collect, preserve, interpret, and disseminate knowledge about the orphan trains, and the children and agents who rode them. The museum's collections, exhibitions, programming and research will engage riders, researchers, and the general public and create an awareness of the Orphan Train Movement.

NEW! An expansion of the Brick Courtyard is being planned, near the restored train car exhibit. Bricks may be ordered individually, and BOOK CLUBS will have their own special lane! [Click here](#) for the brick order form; please indicate if the order should be included with book clubs.

***Objective***

These chapters are to build out the history of the main characters and give depth to their bios. They will be used as necessary when and if they are needed.



Writing on a Train  
[www.bloggeratlarge.com](http://www.bloggeratlarge.com)

***Minerva Mysteries***

Come and join us for the adventure. Like to write? Why not join the Minerva Mystery Authors and have some fun riding the rails of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century America. We are not COZY but we are COMFY and a lot of fun. Write your own Comfy mystery with us and get it published as part of the Minerva Mystery Series.

***All Aboard!***

<http://vismgt.com/minerva-mystery-project/>

***Chapter 01 – of Parents***

***The sinking of the USS Maine***

The US battleship, USS Maine, suffered an explosion, killing 260 out of the 400 men aboard. ... a team of American Naval Investigators researched and concluded the explosion was caused by a fire that ignited the ammunition stocks (not by a Spanish mine/act of sabotage).

Only one of the 260 killed in the sinking of the USS Maine, Chauncey Barrington Cushing, brought tears to the eyes of a young mother in Boston. Minerva Alice (O'Sullivan) Cushing had spent her honeymoon on the shores of Cape Cod and now sat in the small cottage her husband rented before shipping out as a newly graduated Lieutenant in the US Navy.

Chauncey's first assignment was to provision the USS Maine. Being born into Brahman Boston stock, marrying an Irish lass was looked down on by his family. He left his young wife ashore six months pregnant without any support from his family. The first voyage filled the decks below with the appropriate ammunition deemed advisable for a ship ready to engage an enemy. Over a twelve month period, they moved from port to port in New England providing the new father with a chance to go ashore when his three children were six months old.

Soon after his joyful visit, the USS Maine was given orders to proceed with due haste to Havana, Cuba. The USS Maine stood ready in the harbor during the Cuban War of Independence until it's sinking at 21:40, on 15 February, 1898. Lieutenant Chauncey Barrington Cushing, inspecting the arms stored aboard ship never felt the explosion and he never witnessed the tears of the widow he left behind.

### ***Boston Society and Widows***

[Oliver Wendell Holmes](#), Sr., coined the phrase in 1861 in his novel *Elsie Venner*, describing Boston's aristocracy as the 'Brahmin Caste of New England.' They believed destiny had set them apart to create a shining city on a hill. They embraced the values of their [Puritan](#) forebears: hard work, thrift, culture and education.

The ancestry of Minerva Alice O'Sullivan stretched back to 1840 and the great Irish immigration. Her parents and grandparents built a new life amid the trials of the anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant [Know-Nothing](#) movement. In Minerva's time, it was the [Immigration Restriction League](#) that pitted Brahmin against Irish, splitting a city as well as families.

Her marriage to the young Lieutenant destined for high Brahmin society was tolerated until his death. Six months after, she was forced out of the cottage and into the streets without support.

In the sweltering heat of August 1898, Minerva Alice O'Sullivan Cushing pushed the carriage holding her three infants, dressed in their Sunday best, each having a small satchel strapped across their backs. The satchel contained their birth certificate and a picture Minerva had taken just before her husband left for Cuba. It showed his three children sitting together looking out at the world.

Pushing the carriage across the busy street of Mount Pleasant Avenue, she opened the gate to Boston Carmel Convent. After only a tear soaked moment kissing each child, she rang the doorbell and hurried off into the afternoon traffic of Boston. She could not raise the children and her in-laws refused to even speak with her. The nuns would find them a home and God would have to watch over them.

Boston Carmel was founded in 1890 from the Carmel of Baltimore, one hundred years after the latter was established as the first foundation of religious women in the United States. The church was part of a vast network of charities that looked after orphaned children and since the civil war were known to participate in the Orphan Railroad program.

### *Oblivion*

Minerva had no real destination. She wandered down to the central train station in Boston and paid for a ticket on a train heading south to New York. She had no luggage and when the train pulled into the station in Hartford, CT she disembarked and wandered into the crisp evening air. The dark of night brought her to 21 Valley Street and she found a bench next to the side door to St. Joseph Catholic Parish.

The morning bell woke her with a start. Standing above her was Sister Mary Francis, Mother Superior for the Sisters of Charity.

“Come dear, let’s get you inside and warmed up.” The nun’s gentle voice brought the first quiet peace to her broken heart. The Boston Irish girl followed the nun into the rectory and into the convent where her life could find solace.

It would be three years later that Sister Alphonse Michael took her final vows.

## *Chapter 02 - The Orphan Railroad*

Only historical anecdotes can trace the travels of the three siblings. What is known for sure is that their journey began on the steps of the Boston Carmel Convent and they were together until their adoptions in Saint Louis. It can only be assumed that they became a part of the Orphan Train’s child migration still running since civil war times.

### *The New England Home for Little Wanderers*

The time span of The New England Home for Little Wanderers’ involvement with orphan trains does not coincide exactly with the movement as it is generally recognized. The Home opened its doors in 1865, 11 years after the practice of moving children west was started by the Reverend Charles Loring Brace of the New York Children’s Aid Society. The Home’s orphan trains ceased operations in 1906, while other agencies continued until 1929. In the beginning, most of The Home’s wards were the orphans of soldiers and sailors who had died in the Civil War. In its first year, The Home placed 178 children. More than half went to

families in Massachusetts while the rest went out of state, with the largest group – 26 – going to Michigan. One child was placed in Canada, and one in California. Every senior administrator of The Home between 1865 and 1906 personally took one or more companies of children west.

The sinking of the Maine started another round of horrors and the church was prepared to handle the influx of orphaned children. Fathers left for war and glory, leaving behind families that would be destitute if they did not return. The children of Minerva were first in a long line of children affected by the Spanish-American War of 1898.

### *Saint Louis Orphanage*

Our Lady of the Waters Orphanage in Saint Louis took in young children and had a reputation for finding good families. The day the train arrived from Boston, the triplets were gathered up into the fussy arms of Sister Penelope and hustled off to the dormitories where three cribs were placed side by side. Their paperwork was rushed through the normal hands but the picture each had stayed with the children. Sister Penelope knew the miracle it would take to keep the three together. Maybe having the picture would help them as they went off to different families.

### *Father Bentley's Railway Adoption Holiday*

The fresh clean April air filled the church hall as couples arrived to look at the children of the Lady of the Waters Orphanage. Father Bentley had performed this annual event for thirty-five years and while he believed it was a Godly thing to do, he was tired. It would be his last; having received word from his superiors that he could retire. Sister Penelope held his arm and guided him to a seat she had prepared where visitors could stop by for his blessing and he could oversee the children under his care.

Three of them stood together so different and yet so much alike. Minerva, her golden hair done up in curls always stood between the two boys. She was slightly taller than both and kept them under a watchful eye. The night before, the elderly priest convinced her that adoption was the best for them.

Robert, always prim and proper with his hair slicked down had that pensive look of deep thought. Father was sure that Minerva told him what was to take place. He would accept his sister's guidance and act appropriately.

Bo, the child with no real name and hair that seemed to be aflame, fidgeted and continually pushed Minerva's arm from his shoulder. He was not happy and was not going to be anything other than himself. Rebel and ruffian, adoption was not his cup of tea.

Early in the process the wife of Film Producer Barrymore Daniels selected Minerva, placing her yellow ribbon around her neck. Charlotte Daniels, an actress in her own rite, was stunning and very gentle. Her husband seemed attentive and Minerva accepted them

and the blessing of Father Bentley. She allowed her new parents to call her Mini if she could remain beside her brothers until they were selected.

Robert was next, selected by a wealthy banker from Connecticut. Codington Redman and his wife Marlene could not have children and chose adoption to fill the quiet hallways of their Hartford mansion. Banker and board member of multiple charities, Codington just finished the launching of The Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company in 1905. The trip was a gift to his wife for his new promotion. The child was his penance for his absentee husband status.

Bo, last to be picked stood toe-to-toe with Jonathan Günter, a hard looking steel manufacturer from Allentown Pennsylvania. His laugh was gruff and his grip was made of steel. At eight years, Bo was not a match. “Your flaming hair matches the furnaces in Allentown, boy. You will do.”

Bo had no retort for the man of steel. He was already planning his escape. Nobody beside Minerva would ever boss him around.

### *History Lost*

In 1910, four years after their adoption, the Mission District Fire in Saint Louis destroyed the records of Our Lady of the Waters Orphanage. Most families, having adopted their children never returned or kept in touch with the Orphan Railroad. The journey of the three siblings was lost and the miles between them vast. Sister Penelope’s prayer for a miracle was all that remained.

### ***Chapter 03 - On Their Own***

Once again, the history of the separate lives of the siblings is speculative, pieced together from conversations over the years of their detective work together. The three have chosen to consider life beginning at their meeting in during the *Mystery of the Stolen Ship Radar Scope* in 1922. It was the case that brought them back together.

### *Acting at Life*

Minerva lived a luxurious childhood in the hills of Hollywood, having everything she needed and any career she desired. From the age of eight until she reached her sixteenth birthday she obeyed her parents and got a great education. Her birthday dinner, planned to be a quiet affair was when she announced her plans to join the Navy.

Her mother’s tears and her father’s acquiescence were expected and planned for. Her mind was made up and the short trip to the naval station in San Diego was the last outing she expected from her adoptive parents. They were good to her, but it was time to start her real life.

Her six year enlistment allowed the young orphan to become part of an elite cadre of intelligence officers that served the country well during World War I. The work was suited for the girl, now woman and the only other goal she had was to find her brothers.

Robert also found studies easy and excelled at sports in the exclusive schools his foster father paid for. Robert entered the university early and in 2018 graduated, accepting a position with the New York Police Department. Not the financial world Codington Redman expected for his son with an international banking degree but he had served the banker's purpose. He had been a son to his wife now deceased for two years. Wishing him well at the graduation ceremony he went back to Hartford and his country club existence.

Bo worked in the steel mill building up the muscle required to stand up to his stepfather. He maintained the chip on his shoulder like a badge of honor. It was Jonathan Günter's joy watching the boy's anger that fueled his determination. At sixteen Bo stood once again toe-to-toe with the man and this time Jonathan backed down. He left Allentown to find his life, falling quickly onto petty crime and other exciting adventures.

In 1920, the train robbery near Paris Texas on the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway was just another in a long line of criminal activities that haunted the railroad.

The St. Louis–San Francisco Railway (reporting mark SLSF), also known as the Frisco, was a railroad that operated in the Midwest and South Central U.S. from 1876 to April 17, 1980. At the end of 1970 it operated 4,547 miles (7,318 km) of road on 6,574 miles (10,580 km) of track, not including subsidiaries Quanah, Acme and Pacific Railway or the Alabama, Tennessee and Northern Railroad; that year it reported 12,795 million ton-miles of revenue freight and no passengers. It was purchased and absorbed into the Burlington Northern Railroad in 1980. Despite its name, it never came close to San Francisco.

Detective Bellamy worked his way quietly into the rundown cotton warehouse in the dilapidated area of Paris Texas. There he witnessed Bo in the act of hogtying six robbers. There was little question that Bo meant to keep the loot the others had stolen from the train.

The detective had dealt with many youthful scoundrels, but none so jovial. The boy carried on a conversation with the surly bandits, promising they would be much better off in the good arms of the law. Spending the loot would only make them want more. Bo was giving them a great blessing, removing the temptation of their ill gotten gain.

“Now that you have them hogtied,” the voice of the detective filled the empty space of the warehouse. “How about putting these cuffs on, it will make my job that much easier.”

Bo stood and slowly turned to see the detective properly positioned to control even his temper. “Now officer,” Bo’s voice trembled a bit. “You understand this is just a job interview. I wanted to show you how good I am at capturing these rascals.”

He watched the smile grow on the detectives face so he continued. “I was only fooling around about absconding with the loot.”

Laughing the detective put his cuffs away and slapped the young man on the shoulder. “Your interview is over. Help me get these rogues into the paddy wagon and I’ll buy dinner.”

They hustled the robbers in the waiting arms of the local police, signed the appropriate papers and walked into the center of town for a steak dinner. Detective Bellamy’s arm on his shoulder reminded the young man of his sister.

*Chapter 04 – In Latter Times*

Author Note:	Still unfinished
This chapter is to capture the possible scene of the siblings finding their biological mother. It is a possible scenario that cannot be fully determined until a number of mysteries have played out giving us a better sense of their personalities.	

Years passed and solving mysteries together sealed the love between the siblings. Their orphan experiences now a quiet memory, enhancing their present familial existence.

They had just finished *The Case of the \_\_\_\_\_* and were lounging around the pool at US Grant in San Diego. Besides finishing another case, they were celebrating Minerva’s engagement to her sailor, Admiral Chance Worthington.

“You do know that he is old enough to be your father,” Bo poked his sister making her frown. “Will we have to call him Dad?”

“Boston Mathew Thomas Aloysius O’Sullivan, if you say that again I will wash your mouth out with soap!” Bo stood stone still while Robert rolled out of his lounge chair laughing hysterically.

“Now you did it brother!” Robert spit out the words between laughs. “She even added a new name to make it worse!”

A waiter came by with tall glasses of Champaign followed by Warrant Officer Benjamin Doling carrying a tray of sandwiches and Admiral Chance Worthington with a bouquet of flowers mostly made up of red roses and baby’s breath, Minerva’s favorite.

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There was an officer's ball in the evening for formal announcements. Now the Admiral had one mission—to get the blessings of Robert and Bo.

The Admiral walked with a sense of authority even in swim trunks, a towel draped across one shoulder. If he was older, his physique did not show it.

“My lady, these are for you but they pale in comparison to your beauty.” The Admiral bowed handing the bouquet to Minerva.

“As for these fine gentlemen, I can only provide my wisdom and experience. I believe they could use a father figure to mind their tongues.” He stood with his hand on his hips facing the two brothers. It was evident he overheard the conversation and Bo's snide remarks.

“Challenge accepted brother Chance!” Bo yelled, lunging himself from his chair and grabbing the Admiral in a bear hug pushing the both of them into the pool.

The resulting splash drenched Minerva's flowers and Robert stood up, getting ready to jump in and break up the fight. Both men surfaced laughing and worked their way to the side of the pool by Minerva.

“Boy-oh-boy you are in for trouble now, Bo,” Robert whispered.

Placing one hand on the pool side and draping his other arm over the smiling Admiral, Bo looked into the shocked face of his sister. “I like him Sis, I really like him!”

### *Dances and Dreams*

The evening was magical. Their sister wore a \_\_\_\_\_ dress that turned every head while the Admiral's dress whites acted to frame its silken beauty.

Author Note:	Still unfinished
Dress will depend on the year this part of the story is attributed to. My thinking is the early thirties but it is not yet determined.	
I like this but maybe blue...	



Robert spent his evening speaking with the Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson and his lovely daughter, Mellissa. Being a New Yorker, they had met a number of times while he was with the Police department. Besides, as far as Robert was concerned the only

worthwhile conversation was one that allowed him to stare into the eyes of the lovely Mellissa.

Bo didn't sulk so much as fidget. Formal dancing just wasn't his thing. It was Warrant Officer Benjamin Doling who rescued him. He was guiding a tour of the USS Oklahoma, the last American battleship commissioned with triple expansion machinery. Grabbing a few other men holding up the walls of the ballroom, the two went to explore the Standards style battleship. They returned as the last guests wandered out of the hotel lobby, finding Robert, Chance and Minerva talking quietly in a cozy corner with coffee and pastries.

"If I had one wish," Minerva snuggled up within the embrace of her sailor, "it would be to have my real mother at my wedding."

Chance kept silent and the conversation ebbed until Robert shifted in his chair moving closer to his sister and getting her attention.

"Is that what you really want, sis?" He watched as her eyes sparkled to life.

"I have been on a little case of my own. And I think I have a lead." Minerva sat up straight.

"No promises but I will head to Boston and track it down." Minerva's smile answered her desire.

Bo arrived and stood besides his brother. "You let it out of the bag Rob. I thought it was going to be a surprise?"

"You know that Minerva is the best detective in the bunch and will be needed for the research." Robert stood up to face his brother. "And don't call me Rob."

### ***The Case of the Missing Mother***

Bo's name led Robert to the Boston area and records on or about 1897 where he found the birth certificates of triplets born to a Minerva Alice O'Sullivan Cushing and Chauncey Barrington Cushing. The documents, with the first and middle name of the third child still blank confirmed their origin.

Over the last two months, Robert made frequent trips to the Boston area and tracked down the vital statistics of their father. He did not abandon them. He died in the port of Havana, Cuba on the USS Maine. He also confronted his father's side of the family and they shut the door on him requesting that he keep his Irish trash on the other side of town.

As to his mother, little was known. He did find that she was forced to leave the house her husband provided. Left to the streets, she chose to give the children up for adoption.

After visiting eight organizations active in caring for orphans, Robert knocked on the convent door of Boston Carmel. The ancient nun answering the door listened carefully to the tall man's request and then gathered up his hand in hers guiding him into the chapel.

"I need you to speak with Mother Superior. Sit here and pray a little while I get her." Patting his hand, she walked up the aisle, genuflected towards the dimly lit altar, and walked through the gates to the cloistered part of the convent.

Mother Superior walked with a tall sturdy gait but her face showed many years of experience. She stood before the knelling man in the pew and lifted his chin with her hand to get the best light from the dim chapel. "You still have the same thoughtful look I remember from when I first met you. Do you know about your brother and sister?"

"You recognize me?" Robert was aghast, standing to face the nun.

"Yes, child," she took his hands in hers, "you were the very first orphans I received on that very doorstep," pointing to the entrance to the chapel.

"Your mother was in tears, but I could not get to the door in time to stop her from leaving. You must know that she loved you and did the best thing she could for you."

"I do Mother Superior, I do." Robert took a deep breath. Tears escaped and he shuddered and his mixed up emotions boiled up inside. He wanted to hug the nun.

She did it for him, bringing him into her embrace and guiding him back to a sitting position on the pew. "When I picked up your brother, he kicked and screamed. When I scooped up your sister she squirmed, attempting to get back with you two. But you—you looked me right in the eye and smiled that quiet smile of yours."

"I remember each of you fondly. You were only here for a little while but you stole a place in the heart of a novice and I have prayed for each of you every day." The elderly nun sighed and hugged the man's arm beside her.

"Now, tell me what it is you are looking for. Have you found your siblings?"

The afternoon drifted by as Robert gave his accounting of finding Minerva and Bo. Their continuing bond and their adventures seemed to brighten the nun's countenance. The dinner bell rang faintly from behind the gates, interrupting the conversation.

"You know, being one of the orphans of this convent school," Mother Superior poked at Robert's ribs. "It is our God given duty to feed you. Will you join Father and some of the sisters for supper?"

# *Minerva Mysteries*

## *Three into one*

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Robert laughed and followed the nun past the altar, through the sacristy, and into the small dining room used by the priests of the parish. Dinner and stories sated appetites and brought back memories drifting through the evening hours until it was time for prayer.

“The nuns and I need to go to prayer and rest. You return here at noon and we can continue our conversation. I believe I may have some information that will help your search.”

Robert acknowledged her request and stooped so that she could reach up and trace a blessing on his forehead. “I seem to remember you doing that sister.”

The next afternoon, the parish priest and Mother Superior sat at the small dining table with another nun. Father stood as Robert entered and greeted him, pointing out the chair he was to occupy.

Mother Superior started the conversation. “This is Sister Benedict. Six years after you left our care for the Orphan Railroad, Sister was sent to help the victims of the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904. There she worked alongside a Sister of Charity volunteer.”

Mother Superior stopped to sip her tea and pass the sugar cookies to her guest. “These are my only vice. My mother made them and I learned the art of the sugar cookie in her kitchen.”

Robert accepted the cookie and took a bite. The taste of good creamery butter danced on his tongue, bringing an immediate smile.

“The two worked side by side for many months and became good friends. Both shared their love for the convent and the trials that brought them to sisterhood.” Mother superior gently tapped the folded hands of the quiet nun sitting beside her.

“Sister Alphonse Michael became like a sibling to me. We worked all day treating the burns of the victims and prayed together at night in our small room. It was then that she cried in my arms telling me of leaving her three children in Boston.”

The nun’s quiet voice seemed raw, and Mother Superior took over the conversation.

Patting the old nun’s hand she finished her tale. “Sister Benedict chose to join the cloistered part of our order soon after the fire. This is the first time she has been out in the world, but after prayer, she knew she needed to pass on her story.”

“While no one can be certain Sister Alphonse Michael is your mother, Sister Benedict is certain she was from a convent in Hartford, CT.” Mother Superior wondered at the expanding smile on Robert’s face.

“We detectives call this a very promising lead.” Robert bowed to the now silent nun. “My smile is the realization that I was brought up only miles away from where my mother found solace. Thank you, Sister for leaving the cloister to give me this hope.”

There was a need to move and find the Sisters of Charity in Hartford and Robert made a quick but gracious goodbye.

### *Reunions*

Hartford did not or no longer had an official convent for the Sisters of Charity. He did find that the Sisters of Charity provided their care for eight parishes and three hospitals. Robert reached the fifth, St. Joseph Catholic Parish just as the noon bells finished resounding to The Angelus meditation and he slipped in the back of the church.

There were a number of nuns of all shapes, styles and ages kneeling in silent prayer. Robert moved up the isle to a second pew and half knelt, half sat wondering what to do next. He took out the old picture he carried forever and stared at the three children staring back at him.

It was his prayer—his way of focusing on what was important in his life. The world around him faded and the gift of his brother and sister filled his mind, freeing tears of both joy and sadness.

He had no idea how long he was there and would have remained in his meditation if not for the trembling hand that reached for the picture. “Do you know those children, my son?”

He looked into the eyes of the nun and saw his sister and his brother. “Yes, mother. It is me.” Standing, he gathered in the nun who fell sobbing into his arms. The world once again disappeared allowing time and space to give way to lost love.

The Sisters of Charity tend to be more outgoing than the Carmelite nuns, and the refectory of St John’s was more like a college dorm as the mother introduced one of her lost children. Laughter and tales merrily danced around the room. It was not long before plans were made for the little Sister of Charity to go on an adventure to San Diego. The weeks of preparation were forgotten after Robert made arrangements for a transcontinental conversation between Sister Alphonse and Minerva Daniels soon to be Cushing.

Tears and shouts of joy traveled back and forth across the continent as mother and daughter shared their first words. Hanging up Sister Alphonse Michel made the announcement she would leave as soon as Robert could arrange transportation.

## *Collaboration*

### *Minerva Mysteries Project*

*Cozy Comfy Mystery* series around the lives of triplets separated near their birth in the early 1900s. Two guys and a girl find each other and solve mysteries across America while getting to know each other.

### *Collaborators Sought*

We are seeking authors willing to build a singular voice and write episodic mysteries around the main characters. With many authors participating we can build a series of interesting novellas and have fun while doing it. Think of all the great TV series. Multiple screenwriters build a world around quality characters. Why not the *Comfy Mystery Book* as well?

### *Still to be decided*

- ! Episodic length – I think we will do best with novella length of 20000 to 40000 words per adventure.
- ! Ratings – I will not do R or X rated but would like it to be spicy enough to get Hallmark Drama to take a deep breath.
- ! Commitment – let's set a one year commitment with four episodes each. With rework and coordination (episodes averaging 25000 words) we could produce four books for publication.
- ! Time period – I chose 1900s around WW1. This is not set in stone but needs to be agreed to quickly as all research depends on the historical timeframe.
- ! Time commitment – besides delivery of episodes and a schedule, we will have a monthly telephone meeting to keep us in sync.

### *If Interested*

- ! Provide your email, and a sample of your writing to [Bill.joyce@vismgt.com](mailto:Bill.joyce@vismgt.com)
- ! Check out my author's page (go ahead – everyone giggles when they see it) and then get a free sample of my writings
  - o Epic Fantasy (<https://draft2digital.com/book/189352>) or
  - o Military Thriller (<https://draft2digital.com/book/190943>)

Thank you for your interest

*r.e.joyce*

We were approached by a rather dusty old gentleman who stated flatly in a west Texas drawl, that he “found the scrolls while looking for gold”. His only requirement was to be left alone and that any reward could be left at the Western Union station for his eventual return to civilization.

They were parchments dating far back in history, and they told wonderful tales that filled our staff with excitement. Our happiness was so great that we chose to pen a name commensurate with the event. These are the transcription of the works we have been given under the name of *r.e.joyce*. We hope you rejoice too!



Writing on a Train

[www.bloggeratlarge.com](http://www.bloggeratlarge.com)

*Minerva Mysteries*

Come and join us for the adventure. Like to write? Why not join the Minerva Mystery authors and have some fun riding the rails of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century America. We are not COZY but we are COMFY and a lot of fun. Write your own Comfy mystery with us and get it published as part of the Minerva Mystery Series.

***All Aboard!***

<http://vismgt.com/minerva-mystery-project/>

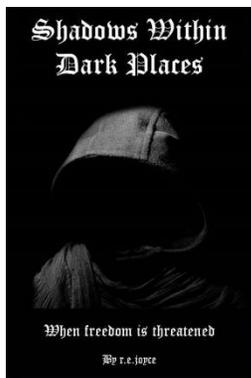
### Books by r.e.joyce



Ariah, from the moment of her transformation to Unicorn, is given a mission to find and stop the evil that has covered her valley in darkness. Leaving the only home she knows, she bands with an elf maiden Dariel, a leopard, a grumpy wolf and even the young man Tarran for a journey of discovery seeking the Light of Savron that can stand up against the darkness. As they seek, her horn changes color until in battle it turns crystal revealing her to be the Light of Savron. Yet it is in the love of Dariel and Tarran that the true light is made complete. While the world holds back the evil hordes, Ariah brings her precious friends before the darkness and returns the world to the light of love.

Seven Starts of Midnight is an epic fantasy thriller centered on a world at the brink of darkness. The forces of evil, festering for centuries, erupt and seven heroes are called to save the world and rebuild the goodness of the earth.

Gathered together from all parts of the known world, our heroes lay their individual desires aside to become part of the adventure and by doing so build something new and worthy of praise.



This epic fantasy finds an ancient world being plunged into chaos by an evil warlord and a creature from the swamps. Heroes are called to take up the battle but it is a strange shadowy figure who guides them.

Jadarr is not seen and his character is continually questioned, but they choose to follow as he gathers together those who will serve the kingdom. Is he evil or is he good? Fairytale or sent by God? Intertwined into the fabric of this world is a figure standing apart yet bringing those who seek goodness together.

Are we guided by unseen forces and are these forces reflected in the lives of unique individuals who pass through our lives and give us hope? Look around and you will see that the mystery and majesty of ancient times is still with us today.

<http://vismgt.com/vmpublishing/>