

The impostor is an actor who is hired to pose as a company's incapacitated CEO in order to thwart a hostile takeover bid by a corporate raider. What follows are ruthless attempts to kill the CEO to ensure the hostile bid is successful.

The Imperiled Impostor: *Deception without Detection*

By Charles E. Lake

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THE IMPERILED IMPOSTOR

Deception without Detection

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, NO ONE MUST KNOW!

CHARLES E. LAKE

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One

Nickolas, age 78, the oldest of the three septuagenarians in the room, fished the two beans out of his coat pocket. One bean was white; one bean was black. He turned his back on the other two men, hiding the color of the one bean he placed into the small, opaque dark blue jar on the coffee table the men were holding captive.

“Okay,” Nickolas said, “You signori have voted and now so have I. I suggest we have a drink and relax by discussing what property values might be here in Florida the next year or two. Then we can see how the vote turned out.”

“Good suggestion, Nick!” said Marcellus. “I’m ready for a little bourbon and investment talk. It takes my mind off of unpleasant things.”

Dario nodded his head in agreement and headed toward the well-stocked liquor cabinet.

Each of the men got the drink of his choice and then settled back in their easy chairs and relaxed as they talked about Florida real estate, politics, and some of their other investments. Unlike many other men, they didn’t discuss sports or the weather; they had little interest in things they could not financially manipulate or control.

They had these get togethers the third Thursday every month unless they had a called session, like today, because of something important that could affect each of them. They always met at the Indian River Ranch, a 2200-acre recreational property owned by Langston Industries, a company in which each of them was a shareholder and each was on the Board of Directors.

After an hour of conversation and another round of drinks, Dario said, “Signori, I believe the jury has reached a decision.”

He fetched the blue jar and in one quick motion flipped it over and set it back on the coffee table upside-down. The three men gave their complete attention to the upside-down jar. Slowly Dario removed the jar, leaving behind its contents: three black beans.

Nickolas flipped his cigarro from side to side in his mouth.

It was Marcellus who announced the results.

“The vote is unanimous, as it has to be. Earl must die!”

The men nodded their consent; then rose and adjourned to the liquor cabinet.

Three

California had not enjoyed the beautiful weather that the East Coast had enjoyed that day. For the last 10 hours a blinding torrential rain had blistered California's central coast, the Big Sur area all the way up to San Francisco. Now, just before midnight, there was nothing to be seen except rain and nothing to be heard except the roaring wind. With a storm like this one, residents of this desolate coastal area worried about the ever-present danger of mudslides.

Only a bull-headed, reckless fool would attempt to drive here, in this weather, through this cliff area with its narrow, winding road. The fool came, driving a Porsche. He was driving it recklessly, like there was no today, much less tomorrow. The result was only a matter of when and where. The Porsche skidded off the road and went over the cliff, into the abyss that waited greedily for its visitor, its guest.

Jose had witnessed it all. He and his wife were huddled in their beat-up van, parked on the opposite side of the road from the cliff and the ocean. Jose was wisely waiting for the heavy rain to let up so it would be safer for him to drive. The fool's car was the only one he had seen in the last hour. He was able to see the unforced accident even though it was raining steadily and heavily. Jose's first thought was to ignore what he had seen ... *there will be no reward and possibly even punishment for an illegal alien to get involved. They say I'm illegal, but I'm loyal, I love this country. I don't want my family to be sent back to Columbia.*

Conscience and his wife Maria, who also witnessed the accident, got the better of him ... she told him to go see if the driver had survived. He grudgingly put on his raincoat and trudged out into the bad weather to the edge of the cliff where the car had disappeared. The rain and wind were bad, bad, bad. He was getting wet, wet, wet and cold, cold, cold. Despite

The Imperiled Impostor

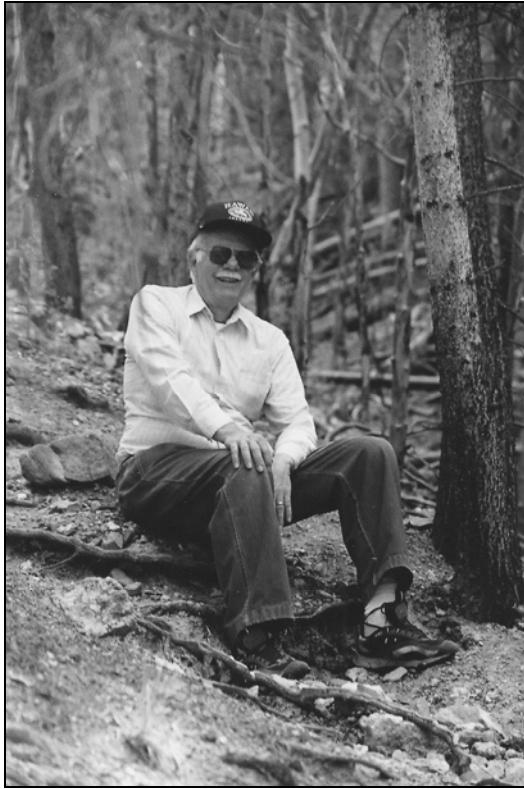
his discomfort he peered over the edge of the cliff. Down below he saw the wreckage of the car at the base of the cliff. It was burning despite the rain. He was also able to see the fool's body that had evidently been thrown clear of the car about 50 feet below on a ledge ... he couldn't reach the car or the driver, but he would call 911 and let the authorities know. He was sopping wet and cold when he got back in the car, but his wife was satisfied that they had done what was necessary. *Dare I tell her, next time we must investigate something in bad weather, it will be your turn? No, probably not.*

About the Author

Charles Lake, a native Texan, was a data processing system analyst at Texas Instruments before he retired. He is a 1952 graduate of Texas A&M University with a bachelor's degree in Statistics. After graduation he served as a communication officer in the Army Security Agency on Okinawa during the Korean War.

He and his wife, Joyce, have been happily married for 67 years with four children, eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He and Joyce stay busy with activities related to their family, friends, church ministries, and travel. For over 17 years, they have been volunteer workers in *International Friends*, a ministry of First Baptist Church Richardson that teaches English as a Second Language to international adults. At one time they played competitive duplicate bridge attaining the rank of *Silver Life Master*, but several years ago they retired from this pastime. He and Joyce have made their home in Richardson, Texas since 1960.

This is the fourth book Charles has authored and published. His first book, *Grabbing Operas by Their Tales*, flippantly retells the plots of 15 of some of the world's most popular and best-known operas. It is written in the style of Dr. Richard Armour's books, a favorite author of Charles'. His second and third books, *The Mortician and Other Short Stories* and *The Seances and Other Short Stories* are anthologies of short stories. Most of the stories in all of his books originated during summer months in Colorado where Joyce and Charles vacationed for two months each year over an 18-year period. For his family and friends, he has compiled four anthologies: two of favorite poems, one of favorite and familiar Bible verses and one of humorous anecdotes.

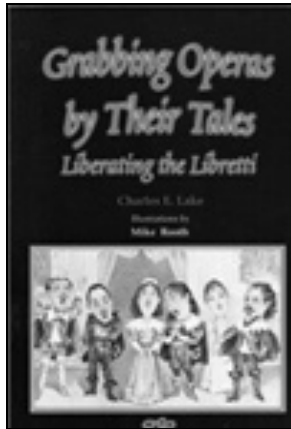


Enjoying one of those nice summer days in Colorado.

Charles Lake

cel52@sbcglobal.net

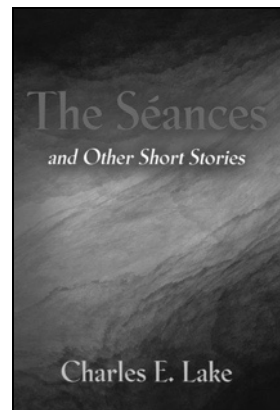
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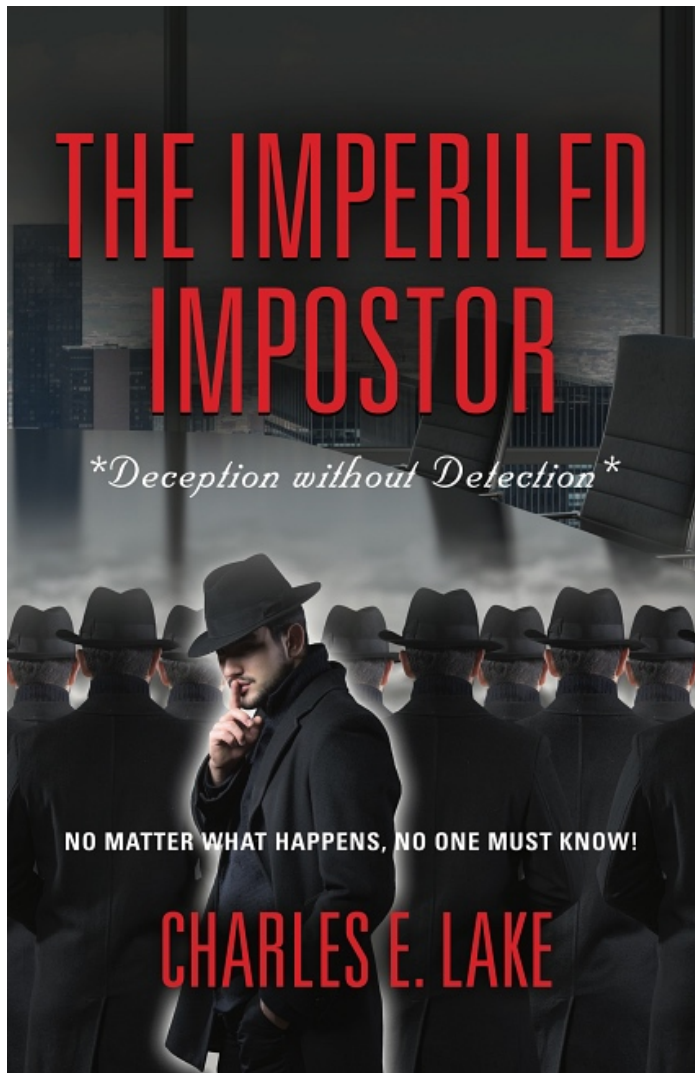
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