

The Re-Awakening

Carter Vance

Copyright 2013 Carter Vance

This is a work of fiction. Any similarity of this story to reality would be just a strange coincidence.

Chapter 1

Basta!

"Enough! We've had enough of your scheming behind our backs and your continual meddling to thwart our efforts." Cardinal Rossetti yelled at Pope Olivet while Cardinal Barale looked on.

"Your time has finally come. You *will* be retiring soon, perhaps of ill health. Then we'll see if this so-called 'messiah' can help you and this pitiful church."

Pope Olivet knew that he was the next to last pope on St. Malachy's list, the one that had prophesied every pope since 1143 correctly. He just never thought that his term would be over so soon.

He had heard rumors, from his worldwide sources that funneled information to him through his last few remaining trusted confidants, that there had been a birth of a boy somewhere in Brazil last year, under unusual circumstances.

Eyewitness accounts of the aerial fireworks at the location seemed to indicate that there was some kind of a battle of aircraft and very strange lights in the sky. And, furthermore, this all occurred on the night of Dec. 21st, 2012. Was it a coincidence? He thought not, especially since his papal astronomers had found the prophesied sign in the night sky.

Yes, this could very well be the End Times and the times of tribulation as outlined in the third secret of Fatima. That boy could very well be the returned Christ as prophesied in the Book of Revelation. If so, the world was in for a rough ride over the coming years. It was going to get a lot worse before it got better.

Perhaps his and the church's enemies knew of this rumor and believed it to be true. Why else would they force him to step down at this time? Why the hurry? Maybe they were running scared, fearing that their fate was rapidly closing in on them.

He needed to know more. If Christ had truly returned to the earth, he must find Him and offer what little assistance he could muster. Now, given the circumstance just thrust

upon him, he might not be able to do much. He was already severely constrained by the dark forces that had infiltrated the church and had little to offer the new Messiah. This would only hamper him further.

He was puzzled, however, why his enemies would allow him to live rather than arrange for his death as their predecessor had done to Pope John Paul I. Maybe that would happen soon after he stepped down.

Either way he needed to know so that he could use whatever amount of days he had left to do something useful.

Chapter 2

Retirement

Days later, Pope Olivet resigned as pope citing poor health and general weakness. He said he felt incapable of adequately fulfilling his duties. He took up temporary residence at Castel Gandolfo.

There he was greeted by his friend Carlo Razzotti who had with him the new selection of books from the Secret Archives that Olivet had requested before stepping down. Under a new pope, he might not have the access he once had.

"Carlo, my friend, do not be disappointed with me, it was either step down or experience a sudden health problem, if you understand me.

"At least this way, alive, I can continue God's will as best I can. Perhaps this might afford me some modicum of freedom to be useful to His plan. How is it they say, to fight another day?

"Carlo, my friend, I must ask another favor of you. It may be dangerous, so think carefully before you give me your answer."

"Anything, your Eminence. What would you have me do?"

"I believe the Cardinals do not suspect our confidential arrangement. It would be most useful if you could be a go-between for me and my successor. If you agree, I will whisper in his ear, at our forthcoming meeting, that you are to be trusted with sensitive messages.

"Yes, your Eminence, I would be honored that you trust me with such a task," Carlo replied.

"Good. I suspect that he will keep you on in a position similar to the one you had with me. Hopefully, no one will be the wiser."

Chapter 3

Habaemus Papam

It didn't take long to elect a new pope. Cardinals Rossetti and Barale had been preparing for this for months. They had been subtly planting the seeds and quietly politicking for their own candidate.

It had taken only five ballots, over two days, and then the white smoke billowed out from the Sistine Chapel. Soon thereafter, there came the announcement of Pope Simon along with his introduction to the world from the balcony overlooking St. Peter's Square.

"Damn it! How did he win? I thought we had well enough votes lined up for my election," exclaimed Cardinal Angelo Pietro Rossetti.

"Sire is going to be mad as hell," Cardinal Barale retorted. "It seems Pope Emeritus Olivet was far more crafty than we had anticipated."

"But how could this be?" Rossetti queried. "The prophecies say 'not from Spain, but from ancient France' and 'Peter the Roman.' The part of Italy that I was born in was once part of ancient France when it was called Gaul. And, obviously, my middle name is Peter."

Cardinal Barale shrugged. Nostradamus and St. Malachy were often not easy to interpret. Obviously there must be a more subtle explanation. It just eluded them, and most of the world, at this time.

The new pope, Simon, was of Italian descent although he was born and lived in Chile which had been a colony of Spain. Time would probably reveal a solution to this mystery. Could it be that the prophecies were wrong?

No matter. They had lost the election in the conclave and now had a new pope to "manage" and manipulate in order to further their agenda and that of their master. In fact, if you counted the retired pope, they actually had two popes on their hands with which to deal.

Their master had a short temper. They would surely feel his wrath soon.

Chapter 4

Peace in the Jungle

Back in the Yucatan, life was quiet for the Christos family. It would be a quiet and safe place to begin to raise young Lazarus Christos in obscurity. Peter and Sarah and little Lazarus had settled into a routine.

Sarah and Peter were a little bewildered at the task before them. As with most new parents this was a whole new experience for them. Especially since they had a unique child on their hands.

How do you raise the returned Christ? What do you do? What do you say? How is He going to behave?

Will He be enlightened from the beginning or will He need to grow in consciousness? Would He be much as a normal kid would be, with maybe a few exceptions?

These were the questions that flowed through their minds as they devoured book after book on child development. They especially homed in on the traits of kids known to have high IQs at an early age. Maybe their development profiles would be helpful in raising young Laz.

The key, they were sure, was going to be love, unconditional love. It was the one indispensable element in the healthy development of any young individual.

They were soon to learn that little Laz was both a precocious child and yet still a normal little boy. He had sparkling blue eyes and for the first year or so, he had blonde hair which eventually turned brown.

Although shielded from the world in their jungle compound, Peter and Sarah kept themselves abreast of world events. Even though they knew they were active participants in the prophesied End Times, it came as quite a shock to them that the Pope had resigned so soon after Laz's birth. Nothing like that had happened in over six hundred years.

Peter called Joseph, the Grand Master of the Knights Templar. "What do you make of this?" he asked.

"Expect the unexpected." he replied. These are historic times so expect world shattering events. This is just a small sample of what is yet to come. By all accounts, it's going to be a very rough and, at times, horrific ride."

"Is there anything special that Sarah and I should be doing?"

"Just concentrate on the task at hand. Raise the young lad and prepare Him to be a man in the modern world. Time passes quickly. Soon enough there will be plenty to do.

"Which reminds me. We never finished your flight training. That is a skill that might come in handy in the years to come. I'll have Knight Air Commander Harmon get in touch with you and make the arrangements. I suggest that you start as soon as possible. You have a lot more to learn."

Peter turned to Sarah, "Hun, it looks like I'm going back to school."

Chapter 5

Mad as Hell

"Those incompetent sons of bitches!" he bellowed in that deep familiar voice.

"Who are you talking about, Sire?" Sister Regina replied.

"Those so-called Cardinals who can't even rig a simple election. That's who," he answered. He was mad as hell. He did not suffer fools gladly.

He had expected his Cardinals to do his bidding. He had wanted Pope Olivet out of the way. That Pope had managed, over the past several years, to undermine his plan. He had been leaking information out to his flock that might prepare them for the times to come.

Surprise was always a useful element, especially when you are going to deliver some nasty acts upon the world. Unprepared people panic. In that state, they are much easier to manipulate. And he was the master of manipulation. Truth was not his ally.

"Regina, my pet, we can not let this blind us to what we must do. However much I do not like this turn of events, we must press on with my plan. It is just a small pebble in the road."

"Yes, Sire, what do you want me to do next?"

"We must prepare for the years and battles to come. Regina, my pet, I have a special project for you. It may very well be the key to my ultimate success.

"One of my earlier minions, Hitler, had the right idea. He began but, upon his defeat, all his efforts were for naught," the voice explained.

"What are you talking about, Sire? I don't understand."

"Power. That extra edge that gives one that extra winning advantage in any confrontation. Throughout history there have been certain objects which are imbued with extraordinary power; supernatural power. Power that can mean the difference between winning and losing; between life and death. Such is the power of those artifacts that I seek. Nay, that I require!"

"Your wish is my command, Sire. What are these artifacts and where do I find them?"

"Ah, Regina, that's the rub. They have been scattered through time and distance all over this world. We must find them and retrieve them to add to my arsenal of power.

"I need every advantage to defeat that so called, returned Messiah."

Sister Regina was standing in her room in Vatican City listening to her Master rave on over her cell phone. He was like this at times. He was very intense. She had never met him face to face but knew well his voice.

"Your task is to find as many of these artifacts as possible and acquire them for me by any and all means. There is no higher priority. Do you understand?"

"Yes, my Lord."

Chapter 6

Artifacts of Power

"This may take a while. Make yourself comfortable, my pet."

Regina slipped out of her nun's habit revealing the red leather corset and black studded thong that she always wore under it. It also revealed her never removed, studded black leather collar. "Now, that was more like it!" she thought to herself.

She lay down on her bed, still in her tall leather boots and switched to speakerphone mode and listened.

The voice continued, "These artifacts of power or talismans, if you will, may even be disguised technological devices. It matters not how but that, at one level, they are focal points of immense energy.

"The most famous and most powerful ones are: the Ark of the Covenant, the Rod of Aaron, the Stone of Scone also known as Jacob's Pillow, the Ring of Solomon, the Spearhead of Longinus, the Black Stone of Mecca, and, more recently, the Golden Cauldron of the Nazis.

"The Ark of the Covenant is a gold plated wooden chest that was built by Moses to heavenly specifications. It has two golden angels on top of it facing each other. It is said to be the seat of the God of the Israelis. It contains the two tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written.

"The Ark is a powerful device utilizing some kind of Shekinah energy or radiation or some other unknown type of energy.

"It was used as a weapon of great power, capable of sweeping enemies aside. It was used most famously in the battle of Jericho. It seems to also have some sort of communications capability, as it was somehow consulted regarding battle plans.

"The Ark was also reputed to have parted the waters of the river Jordan.

"It was kept veiled most of the time and special precautions were needed to be employed in moving it, as its energies can be dangerous to its users. It was once captured

by the Philistines but they returned it because of the ill, and sometimes deadly, effects it had on them.

"For a significant amount of time, it was stored in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. By the time, 586 BC, when Solomon's Temple had been destroyed, it already had been moved to various places. Most recently it was alleged to be in Axum, Ethiopia.

"With its deadly power I would love to have this artifact but, unfortunately, word has it that it was recently moved by the Templars to a more secure location which is unknown to us. This means that they are in control of it.

"However, it may not be such a great loss as it has been prophesied that, after the End Times, the Ark will no longer be used and will fade into history. This may mean one of two things. Either I lose and somehow, in the process, the box is destroyed or that I win and destroy the Ark. Remember, the propaganda that I lose the battle is just that, propaganda.

"The Rod of Aaron, is the staff which Aaron wielded with seemingly magical powers to transform objects, transmit plagues, control water, and even change into a serpent. It is also a symbol of authority. At one time it resided within the Ark of the Covenant but disappeared from there and its current location is unknown.

"The Stone of Scone is also known as Jacob's Pillow, or the Coronation Stone. It is allegedly thousands of years old. It might have been the pedestal stone of the Ark in the Temple of Solomon.

"Legend has it that the stone was originally from a place called Bethel, in Israel, and was used by the patriarch Jacob as a pillow upon which he rested his head. While doing so, he received a vision from God confirming that Jacob and his offspring were to be God's chosen ones. It was thought too have been brought to Ireland by the prophet Jeremiah and then on to Scotland later.

"Historically it has been used to legitimize the coronations of Jewish and later Irish, Scottish and British kings. It is said that it "roars" when the rightful king stands on it.

"Currently it supposedly it resides in Edinburgh Palace but I believe this to be a fake. You need to find the original so that I can use it to legitimize he whom I will empower to be the leader of planet Earth.

"The Ring of Solomon, was a gold signet ring which was worn by King Solomon and was said to allow him to control the wind, fly on a carpet, communicate with plants and animals, and summon and command spirits or demons. The ring also bestowed wealth on its wearer. It was said to have been given to him by an angel.

"The ring had inscribed on its face the symbol of two intersecting triangles now known as the Seal of Solomon or the Star of David.

"The Spearhead of Longinus, also known as the Spearhead of Destiny, is the point of the spear that Longinus, the Roman legionnaire, used to pierce the side of Christ on the cross. By being within the body of Christ it attained mystical power that endows its possessor with the power to rule the world.

"It once resided in the Hofburg Treasure House Museum in Vienna from which Adolf Hitler took it in 1938 during his reign of power. The Americans found it near the end of the war and returned it to Austria in 1946. Many believe that this spearhead is a fake and there are numerous theories of what happened to the real one.

"The Black Stone of Mecca, supposedly dates back to Adam and Eve at which time it fell from the sky. It may have been a meteorite but it has been a center of worship ever since.

"It is attached to the wall of the sacred Kaaba which is the cube like building that Muslims all over the world point to when praying. Some of them believe that this stone will appear on Judgment Day with eyes to see and a tongue to speak.

"We may need to conquer the Arabs to get it unless you come up with a more ingenious plan.

"The Golden Cauldron of the Nazis, originally made for Hitler in the 1930s, is said to have acquired black magical power through its continual use in blood rituals by the SS. It was found at the bottom of Lake Chiemsee in Bavaria in 2001. It is currently being held in a high security bank vault in Zurich.

"Lecture over. So now that you know what you are looking for you may begin the quest. I will tell Cardinal Rossetti to authorize your absence."

With that, he abruptly ended the call as he usually did.

Chapter 7

New Directions

Joseph, the Grand Master of the Poor Knights of the Temple of Solomon, was an imposing figure. For this special occasion, he was dressed in the historic and iconic templar uniform, complete with shining metal armor, chain mail, and a white tunic with the red cross pattee.

He was broadcasting his speech to the entire Templar community, worldwide, by secure Templar communications channels.

"Fellow Templars and Family, (the Order had dropped celibacy long ago) we live in an historic time; a time for which we have been preparing for centuries. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has returned to us, as prophesied, as Lazarus Jesus Christos.

"These are the End Times that lead to a thousand years of peace on Earth. These are the times that will try men's souls, your souls. We must gird ourselves for the battle near at hand.

"We do not know what we will encounter, but we will be confronting evil head on. Now that we know that the battle is near at hand, we must adapt our procedures, alter our preparations, and proceed to a high state of readiness. Not only must we re-double our efforts, but must embark on a new path. With the return of our Lord, we will be called upon to fulfill new tasks. You maybe called upon to fight and die in the cause of restoring good and balance to this world.

"In the coming years, young Lazarus will take his rightful place at the head of this organization and we will take our direction from Him. You will work with the Messiah and help Him restore order and peace to our world. It is a privilege for which many a Templar before you has given his life.

"We must follow His lead wherever it may take us, be it the far reaches of the Earth or to heavenly realms.

"Until then, when He is with us, here or anywhere, you are to treat Him no differently than any of your fellow Templars. It is important that He learn how we comport ourselves with one another.

"Now, as to immediate practical matters, the Grand Council will develop a strategic plan to convert many of our assets to forms which will allow us to provide our Lord the most flexibility and leverage of resources to pursue His mission. So do not be surprised to see radical changes in procedures, properties, businesses, and deployments.

"These are historic times. Fear not as we have a most inspiring ally and His heavenly help."

Chapter 8

Just Joan

Time passed quickly at the Christos' Mexican estate. It had been almost two years since Laz was born, when Sarah announced to Peter, "Our family is about to get bigger."

It came as quite a shock to Peter as he had assumed that Laz was going to be their only child. He had not considered that there might be other children. It seemed that his and Sarah's lives were going to be even more complicated.

After he had some time to think about it, it made sense to Peter. After all, Jesus had come from a family with several brothers and sisters. Laz might want to have a similar environment.

Peter relayed his thoughts to Sarah, "Hun, brace yourself. This may not be our last child. Not if history is any guide." Sarah blinked, but seemed unfazed.

Nine months flew by. The Templar doctors made sure that Sarah had the best care possible. Sarah had prepared little Laz by telling him, "You're going to have someone to play with very soon now." It was hard to know, at this early stage, how much he understood. They had no idea what was His level of consciousness at this time. They were winging it just as most parents do.

Before they knew it, Peter was shepherding Sarah into the mobile, neonatal unit in which Laz was born. The Templars had moved it to the estate several months earlier.

Hours later, it seemed longer to Sarah, the Templar doctor announced, "It's a girl." Of course, they already knew that from the sonograms.

Sarah and Peter had labored over the selection of a name for their new daughter for over a month, hoping for some inspiration. It came about a week earlier when Jacques had been describing to Peter the latest body armor that the Templars had developed. When he said it was light enough even for women to wear comfortably, an image of Joan of Arc flashed through Peter's mind. There was a sudden realization that their daughter was coming into the time of what was going to be the great tribulation. Maybe she came to be part of the fight to come.

"Joan, rings true to me," Sarah told Peter when she heard of his inspiration. "Joan Christos."

"Joan Christos," Peter repeated Sarah's proclamation. "What about a middle name?" he asked.

"No, just Joan," Sarah answered.

Chapter 9

The Quest Begins

Where was Regina going to start in her quest to collect the artifacts of power? It seemed like an almost impossible task. She had just been asked to find the hardest to find objects in the world, things which had been sought for over centuries. Some of them might have never even existed in the first place and were just the stuff of myths.

It seemed reasonable that the youngest of the objects might be the easiest to find as it had less time to go many places. That meant that the Golden Cauldron of the Nazis would be her first target.

She started researching the scientific analyses of the bowl and any court filings regarding its disposition. Everything seemed to indicate that it was still in the possession of that financial company which had been holding it as collateral.

What she couldn't determine was whether it was still intact. Gold had increased substantially in value since the cauldron was seized. It might have been melted down to extract that value in a more saleable form. The gold alone was worth at least one and a quarter million dollars.

Either way, she needed to get into that high security vault in Zurich. Could she charm her way in or would it be more expedient to just break into it? Possibly both would be necessary.

Antiquities expert, Professor Paul Noorthuven, had analyzed the cauldron and was also one of the few people that the Zurich financial executives would allow to access it. Perhaps he could be persuaded, or coerced, into creating a reason for the cauldron to be removed for further study. His laboratory would be a much easier target for a robbery attempt.

She would need to have her Master direct Cardinal Barale to lend her a relic from the Vatican storehouse, something unique that would pique the Doctor's curiosity.

Regina picked up her cell phone and hit the icon for her direct number to her Master.

His familiar voice answered, "Yes?"

"Sire, I have a plan for the acquisition of the Nazi Cauldron. It involves deception and requires bait."

"I like deception. I have found it to be a reliable tool. What is this bait you require?"

"I need a pre-Roman Celtic bowl that my research suggests may be one of the antiquities stored in the Vatican's secret storehouse. It may be similar enough to the one in Denmark which is believed to have been the model for the Nazi bowl.

"Could you persuade Cardinal Barale to retrieve it for me to use as a lure for Professor Noorthuven? Tell him it is item number 3278471x3."

"Yes, my pet, consider it done. As you know, retrieving these artifacts of power is a top priority for me." Before she could finish saying, "Thank you, Sire", he clicked off the phone abruptly.

Regina had her assistant schedule a meeting with Dr. Noorthuven and requisition a jet for her trip to Geneva for the meeting.

Chapter 10

Family Life

Just after Joan was born, Laz's vocabulary and language skills started to develop rapidly. Soon he was able to string together multi-word sentences. And with that capability came the seemingly never ending barrage of questions.

"Why is the sky blue?"

"What is dust?"

"Where is Egypt?"

"What is this time thing you keep talking about?"

And on and on He went. Sarah and Peter were hard pressed to keep up with them all. They found themselves researching things just to keep up with Laz's questions.

By age three, little Laz started to become aware of the outside world. He watched television, educational videos, and started exploring the internet. He was particularly interested in historical events.

One day He blurted out, "But Mom, they have so many things wrong! I just know it. They are wrong." And after He had finished reading the Bible, He asked Sarah, "Where's the rest of it?"

Right from the start, Laz was a happy child. He smiled a lot and was full of laughter and joy. His sister Joan was less so. She seemed quieter, but it was still too early to know much about her personality.

Time passed quickly and before they knew it, Sarah announced to Peter, "Make room for another addition to our family. You're about to be a father again."

Peter was not as stunned as he had been before, when she announced the coming of Joan. Laz and Joan received the news well. They were happy with the prospect of new playmates.

But Peter was stunned when they got the news from the doctor that, this time, it was going to be twins, boy twins.

Chapter 11

Messianic Rumors

The Curia had rumblings going on among some of the Cardinals and their staffs. Word seemed to be circulating about the birth of a boy, born under unusual circumstances, in Brazil, near the Mayan 2012 date.

Not many details were known, but the people most interested in the rumors were some of the highest ranking Cardinals. It was very curious that they would be so interested in such rumors and seemed so concerned about such an event. How did they even know about the birth and the surrounding events?

Could it be that these were indeed the prophesied End Times? And had the Messiah returned? Some thought He would just pop out of the sky with an army of radiant angels. Of course, those tended to be the ones that took every word in the Bible literally. Why, even Jesus spoke in parables to get His message across. Why not the Bible itself?

Combined with the recent disclosure of the true third secret of Fatima and rumors that the Papal Observatory had discovered some anticipated sign in the sky, maybe there was something to these rumors.

Carlo needed to tell Pope Emeritus Olivet what he had been hearing. Surely, he would be most interested. The Pope had insinuated, privately to him, that we are living in the time that had been prophesied. He didn't directly say it but one could infer it from the way he approached certain subjects. Maybe his resignation had something to do with some secret prophecy to which only the Pope was privy.

Chapter 12

Vermejo

It had been a tranquil three years in the jungle but cabin fever had started setting in. Sarah and Peter hadn't been in a proper restaurant since Laz was born. Pregnant Sarah teased Peter about it, "Darling, if we stay here too much longer, we may end up with a soccer team of kids."

"I agree, Hun. We sure could use a change of scenery but, what with the twins coming, we may need to ease into it. I'm sure that the Templars will want to have security covered just in case the boys decide to come early. I'll ask Jacques about it and see if he has any ideas that would suit us and allay their concerns."

Jacques heard Peter out and agreed that something could be arranged. The Templars had owned a majestic ranch in northern New Mexico for years. It was isolated but was close enough to Taos so that Sarah and Peter could have a "date night" in town at a real restaurant from time to time during their stay.

Sarah was thrilled when she heard the news. She had always wanted a pair of cowboy boots and the kids would love the mountains.

Vermejo Ranch, ostensibly owned by a media mogul for secrecy purposes, was actually an old Templar holding nestled in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It was not far from the Philmont Boy Scout Ranch and also near the sacred Blue Lake of the Taos pueblo people.

There, in one of its valleys, they had accommodations that would house them all in luxury. Joan and Laz would be able to see elk, and deer, and buffalo.

When they arrived, the Christoses were awed by the majestic beauty of the place. It could have been a national park. The crisp, cool mountain air was invigorating.

They would be safe here, and prepared. The Templars had air lifted, by helicopter, the state of the art, mobile neonatal unit in which Laz had been born.

Here the twins would be born. The Templar astrologers had consulted their calculations for the period around her due date for this place. There would be excellent

aspects for the boys. Now all they had to do was enjoy life and wait.

Chapter 13

Born Under Fire

Sarah and Peter had been enjoying a date night at Lambert's near the main plaza in Taos. It was a fancy restaurant for a normally casual town. But they wanted an upscale, elegant, restaurant atmosphere for this special occasion.

Lambert's was a white tablecloth kind of restaurant, the kind that they had frequented when they were dating. It brought back romantic memories to Sarah. It was just the kind of break she had been seeking. She would have liked to have been able to go down to Santa Fe and sample their excellent restaurants, but given the Templars' security concerns, this would have to do.

Sarah loved the fragrant smell that was in the air of the burning pinion wood from the kiva fireplace. It reminded her of the incense she smelled when she first saw the Ark. It was June but the night mountain air was a bit chilly. The plastered adobe walls of the restaurant were painted with subdued earth tones. It was a very tranquil place to have dinner and just take it in.

That tranquility was suddenly interrupted when Peter noticed a person, whom he had ignored before, sit down to a table across the room from them. He had seen the man several times around town. This was a little too coincidental for his liking. His brief Templar training had taught both he and Sarah to be more aware of their surroundings. Sarah remarked, "I don't mean to be paranoid but that man over there keeps popping up. I know this is a small town but I think we should be careful."

"Well, we have been followed around the globe and been fired upon by a small air force. And, this is the first time we've been away from our protected enclave. Maybe they've been waiting for us to pop or heads out of our holes," Peter replied.

After dinner, they put the theory to the test. Peter and Sarah took a convoluted route back to their Hummer. The man in the restaurant had followed them, discretely, back to their car.

As they entered the vehicle, Peter whispered to the driver sitting hidden behind the dark tinted windows, "We have company. Eight o'clock."

The driver nodded and looked in that direction. He knew how to handle it from here. He was a Templar assigned to the Christos' security team.

He steered the black Hummer out of its parking space and proceeded to the road north that would take them back to the ranch. He didn't know if there would be an ambush along the way so he called in to the ranch for backup. They would send a team to meet them as reinforcement, just in case.

The trip was uneventful. They were followed all the way to the turn off for the ranch. After giving a thorough description of the man to the Templar security team, they checked in on Laz and Joan and turned in for the night.

The next morning Sarah was feeling particularly uneasy. "Peter, it may be time," she said. With that, Peter dashed out to the kitchen and alerted the Doctor having his morning coffee.

Soon Sarah was in the mobile neo-natal unit and was going down the checklist with the attending nurse.

After a couple of hours of false starts, sirens suddenly broke the silence of the mountain air. Speakers blared out their warnings, "Alert, alert. This is not a drill. Unknown aircraft are approaching the ranch. Prepare for battle stations."

Within seconds Templars were dashing to and fro to reach their assigned posts. One of the parked Templar "angel" craft vertically took off to get a bird's eye view of the situation.

The pilot radioed in, "Templar Command, this is Blazing Sword. We have three incoming bogeys. Do not know the nature of their mission. Send assistance. Stat."

"Roger that, Blazing Sword. Scrambling six angels now. Keep advised."

Fortunately, the Templars had maintained a secret base in New Mexico for years. Its wide open spaces allowed them the freedom to train pilots there. It would only take the six "angel" craft minutes to arrive at the ranch. Hopefully, it was only a reconnaissance run by their enemy.

The Templars at the Vermejo ranch only had a small Tesla energy defense shield to protect the neonatal unit. The Templars had only built a few screen generators as they

were still under development. The few that existed were all employed to protect the Christos family.

Peter and the kids were in the birth unit with Sarah and the medical team. They would be safe there.

As soon as the three bogeys came into firing range, they opened fire with a strafing run on the ranch house. As they climbed for a second run, they were met by six angels which proceeded to fire upon them. It took only seconds for the intruders to realize that they were outgunned. They bugged out heading north along the mountain chain.

Minutes later the after attack, the silence was broken by the wailing of the twin boys that had just been born.

Exhausted from her labor, Sarah complained to Peter, "Why is it that every time I have a boy we get attacked? I could understand why in the case of Laz but why for these boys?"

Chapter 14

Home Sweet Home

It was good to be back in the jungle. It seemed odd but true. Their compound seemed like a little oasis in a threatening world. After their harrowing experience at Vermejo, it was a welcome return to normalcy.

Except now, normal consisted of Peter, Sarah, Laz, Joan, Jeremy and Zack. They had decided to name the newborn boys, Jeremiah and Zachary, but already had their nicknames picked out as well.

It was a little disconcerting that leaving their secure zone for the first time and having a simple date night out resulted in a violent attempt on their lives. The enemy seemed to have eyes everywhere, even in the most out of the way places.

It wasn't long before they established their new family routine. It was a happy home. Since the twins were born, Laz would sit with them and play. They seemed to play some kind of unspoken game known only to themselves. They could keep at it for hours.

Joan and Laz shared an affinity and love for nature and the outdoors. They were constantly going outdoors and running around. They spent hours watching butterflies and frogs. They loved the sound of a gurgling stream nearby their house.

At night, Peter would teach them about the stars and how to identify the constellations. His dad had taught him this. Not only was it fun, but it had come in handy for navigation at sea when he began sailing.

Another popular game that Peter's father had played with him was also popular with his kids. His dad called it "yogi". His dad would have young Peter lay down, face up, with arms down straight at his sides. He told him to relax and not to be stiff. His dad would then place his arms, bent 90 degrees at the elbows, straight out from his body, much like the forks on a forklift truck. From a crouched position, he would scoop young Peter up and stand up with Peter laying horizontal before his eyes like the floating lady in a magic show.

Peter had learned that, if he stiffened up due to fear, it didn't work and his body would buckle. Relaxing actually made it easier to stay straight as a board. Years later he learned that this "game" was actually based on yogic energy flow techniques and also used in Aikido. Now it was just plain fun to Peter, Sarah, and the Christos kids.

All in all, they were a happy family, seemingly oblivious to the tumultuous events that lie ahead of them.

Sure there were little incidents, as Sarah and Peter employed their own unique blend of parenting techniques on the kids. They used the French adult centric approach, which laid out boundaries and expected children to adapt to a grown up environment and life's frustrations, mixed with a touch of Mexican playful permissiveness. They treated their kids as intelligent young people and encouraged them to think independently. Most importantly, they taught them to be happy by themselves. That came naturally to Laz.

Chapter 15

Discovery in the Jungle

Lazarus was an adventurous little boy and loved to explore the grounds of the Christos compound. One day, in His wanderings, He stumbled upon the tracks of an old narrow gauge railroad that disappeared into the lush, dense surrounding jungle.

He decided to follow it to see where it went. After what seemed to Him, forever, the tracks led to a small clearing. In the middle of it stood a small stone pyramid like He had seen in His reading. But this one was much smaller. It was only about thirty feet tall.

He walked up to it and was surprised by a black man in a yellow caftan walking out to meet Him. "What is your name, little one?" the man asked.

"Lazarus," He replied.

"What's yours?"

"You may call me the Guardian."

"What do you guard?"

"Ah, so the time has come, has it, for you to meet my charge?"

"I suppose so," little Laz replied.

"Well then, let me show you." The Guardian then led Laz into the pyramid. Inside, in the middle of its stone chamber, stood a wooden box, embellished with gold, upon the top of which sat two golden angels facing each other.

"Do you know what that is?" he asked the boy.

"I'm not sure, but it seems familiar."

"It is the fabled Ark of the Covenant between God and man," he answered.

"I've heard my parents talk about it. Something about when they were married. What does it do?"

"Well, among other things, it talks. You might call it a messenger for God. And, it also has been used as a source of great power that helped your ancestors to win battles and protect themselves."

"Can I talk to it?"