

# THE PROMISE

THE TRUE STORY OF SPACE VISITORS ON EARTH AND HOW THEY WANT TO HELP HUMANKIND

DR. FRED BELL

# **THE PROMISE**

**DR. FRED BELL  
AS TOLD TO BRAD STIEGER**

**PYRADYNE PUBLISHING**

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Dr. Fred Bell began his career in science with the biofeedback and other experiments in 1952, at the age of nine. In his early teens he received educational grants to work on such subjects as atomic energy and particle physics. His late teens found him working with the U.S. Air Force and, later, Aerospace with Dr. Werner Von Braun. While studying with Eastern masters he became a contactee of the now-famous Pleiadian, SEMJASE. Brad Stieger has written a bestseller documenting some of Dr. Bell's experiences, entitled *The Fellowship*. Also a musician, Fred Bell has composed *The Fellowship: The Sound* to share the adventure of a super sensational chakra excitation and a musical journey through space and time. He is currently touring the world, giving lectures and concerts.

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James Nichols: Cover Artist

PYRADYNE PLEIDIAN TECHNOLOGY

# Introduction

**By Dr. Fred Bell**

I suppose that I was overshadowed by the Pleiadians even before my birth. Just as the electrical field of Aura directs its magnetic properties to the red blood cells during the fetal formation of the embryo to form human fingerprints, our uniquely identifying physical characteristic, so, it seems the Pleiadians look at the vibratory source of subtle energy fields to know from where comes the soul.

And so it was that they found me, and stood by me. I lived a restless life, racing cars and motorcycles alike, walking away from crashes that killed others. Yet, I always knew that there was something that I must do for mankind, not just for myself.

What is written on these pages is the dramatized story of my life, as it has unfolded to this very moment. The account of the automobile land speed test, the Air Force encounters, the NASA experiences are all true almost to the exact words.

Nearly all the characters are real people. Some of the names have been changed, and some of the men and women portrayed are composites of actual individuals who have interacted with me in this life.

The contacts with the Pleiadeans continue now, more than ever.

In the early years, UFO contactees were isolated and confined directly to their mentors, not because of favoritism, but because of the need for absolute clarity of purpose and vision.

When I began conscious telepathic communication with Semjase, the beautiful cosmonaut from the Pleiades, I made many errors and received certain information incorrectly. The ego was constantly interjecting my idealistic aspirations, which sometimes covered the truth that Semjase insisted on conveying. If other Earthlings had been involved in my contact experience, the confusion would never have been resolved.

Today, our involvement is in such decline, that by the time the “System” realizes how badly it is deteriorated, it may be too late. Our Global 2000 report states that certain negative aspects of the biosphere are irreversible.

Then there are incidents with the negative aliens, the so-called “Greys”. They may have given elements of their technology to the government, but the Pleiadeans are giving a counter technology to us that has great healing powers, both planetary and human.

And, the remarkable Nuclear Receptor that you will read about in this book really does exist!

The Pleiadeans are giving us a technology that can take us deep into the stars in a matter of minutes, or permit us to know not only whether a pregnant human female is carrying a boy or girl, but who the soul is and from where it originates. Such are only the beginnings of the many wonders of the Pleiadean sciences.



# Chapter One

Fred Bell heard the voice again. A soft, feminine, strangely familiar voice spoke in an almost musical tone. "Be on guard my dear one. There are those who would do you harm."

He slowed his pace and stopped to lean against a wall, momentarily disoriented. What was wrong with him? Dr. Fred Bell, champion of the scientific method, did not hear voices inside his head.

"Hey, what's the matter, Chief? You aren't getting nervous are you?" The smiling inquisitor was Eric Powell, his closest friend.

"Come off it, Eric," a spirited female voice teased. "Fred wouldn't be nervous about giving a lecture to a bunch of Flower Children!"

Clarification. Eric Powell was his closest male friend. That was Kim Kingswold speaking up to defend his sudden confusion. Kim was his closest female friend. The three of them had been steady allies since their high-school days in Laguna Beach, Class of 1957. Fourteen years ago.

"I am not nervous," Fred, said a bit too defensively. "...I thought I heard something."

"You heard the sound of the nuts falling from the trees, Chief," Eric smirked, glancing around him. "Whatever made you agree to speak at a gathering of metaphysical weirdoes?"

"The pot calling the kettle black!" Kim laughed.

"Be on guard my darling. Danger is near." Fred shook his head, leaning heavily against the wall. Like it or not, the words were coming from within his own skull.

And his father's medallion, the one he found in Egypt in 1939, seemed almost to be pulsating against his chest.

Fred's mother had only recently given him the lovely artifact with the almost luminescent emerald setting. He could not resist wearing it to his lecture presentation this afternoon. After all, his father, Dr. Paul Raymond Bell had found it, the father that he had never known, the father that had been murdered by the Nazis before his birth.

Could there be something wrong with the medallion? Could it be emitting some strange energy?

“Are you okay, Fred?” Kim was solicitous, reaching out to steady him. Even Powell had stopped kidding around and had moved a strong arm around his shoulders to support him.

“I’m all right,” Fred waved his hands in front of him. “It’s okay. Please.”

Eric stepped back, respecting his friends wishes, but Kim, ever the watchful mother, was slower to grant Fred his own space.

Fred looked around them. What was there to fear at a psychic fair at the Holiday Inn in beautiful, downtown Burbank, on a sunny California day in 1971?

“A Cosmetic Celebration of Creativity”, proclaimed the banners, promotional brochures; a three-day gathering of Futurists, philosophers, Flower Children, and psychics. Fred had been invited to speak because of his NASA background, his open-mindedness, and his recent breakthrough inventions designed to alleviate the nation’s growing population problem.

He had heard that feminine voice before. Where? When? Was it some warning mechanism that duplicated the tones in his own mother? No, the voice was not quite that of his mother ...though it was filled with love and tenderness.

But whatever the identity of the voice inside his skull, why was it uttering words of warning?

Fred scanned the area. Colorful booths offering a wide assortment of esoteric talent. Just inside the meeting room, tables were heaped with occult and paranormal paraphernalia. There seemed to be something of the atmosphere of the medieval carnival, a festive gathering of metaphysical merchants.

And they were all there: astrologers, graphologists, sand-readers, numerologists, Tarot card interpreters, witches, Eckists, Silva Mind Control representatives, healers, UFOlogists, ceremonial magicians, Indian medicine priests, and a host of other “isms”, and “ologies”, that had been born in a moment of revelation and inspiration. Here was a marvelous cross-section of the metaphysical community — the sincere, the sensationalists, and the seekers.

Who among them could possibly wish to do him harm? “Thirty minutes until the lecture, Chief.” Eric was wearing his regular uniform of blue sweatshirt, faded jeans, and scuffed Adidas.

Fred had never kept anything from Kim and Eric. “Look guys,” he began, trying to choose his words with some care, in spite of over two decades of being open with them. “I suddenly have a very particular feeling...a hunch...a premonition...”

“This is the right place for a prediction, buddy!” Eric laughed.

“Will you let him finish, you big lug!” Kim scolded, an impatient scowl narrowing her large brown eyes. She had dressed appropriately for the event in a beaded leather vest and colorful Spanish gypsy-style skirt.

“Eric, let’s just say that I want you to be extra vigilant today,” Fred said, deciding to wrap it up quick and easy for the moment. “You might have to reactivate some of those old football muscles”.

Powell sucked in his stomach, pulling himself erect to his full six-foot two. He had added a few pounds to his best playing weight of 210, but the extra bulk might come in handy if there truly was a threat in the area. “You got a bad feeling about some bozo here?”

Fred smiled at his friend’s unconscious assumption of the masculine protective stance. In one way or another, they had been protecting each other since they were kids.

“It is just a feeling, buddy,” Fred stressed. “I don’t want you punching out some Flower kid’s lights because you don’t approve of his beads and his headband.”

Kim shifted uncomfortably, glancing over her shoulder. “If Fred has one of those feelings, maybe we should just make our excuses and...”

It was Fred’s turn to interrupt. “No way. We are not leaving. I made a commitment to address the audience, and the show must go on.”

Eric snorted. “Look what is coming our way – Moby Dick!”

Fred and Kim turned with knowing smiles. Such a description could only apply to Brad Bronson, the well-known science fiction writer who would be introducing Fred this afternoon. The three friends smiled broadly as they beheld the nearly-300-pound Bronson

moving through the crowd like a great whale moving through a school of tuna.

“Welcome, my friends, to the New Age!” Brad greeted them. He wore an oversized black frock coat with a red and black checkered pocket handkerchief that matched his floppy bow tie.

“You really dig this stuff, don’t you?” Eric asked.

“Of course, you cynical twerp. Once we find a conscious connection with the cosmos, every facet of human existence can be enriched!” Bronson answered with his resonant bass.

“And these psychics are going to get us connected!” Powell pressed.

Brad was bending to kiss Kim’s cheek, so his answer was delayed until the greeting was consummated.

“My boy, it is the cosmic-spiritual impulse that dispels fear and insecurity in our personal lives and enables us to face our destiny with equanimity. These men and women only offer their insights to those who wish to hear them. If this is not your cup of tea, then put a lid on it and leave us alone. Run off and play in the traffic or something.”

Bronson and Fred shook hands, and the author’s eyes widened perceptibly as they made their first acquaintance with the emerald medallion.

“My boy, what a lovely...no, powerful...intriguing....”

“What?” Powell needed. “Is the internationally famous author at a loss for words?”

Bronson grunted and scowled at Eric. “The correct words, anyway.”

Then, redirecting his attention to the medallion: “Where did you get it, Fred?”

Fred explained that his mother had recently given it to him. “I don’t believe that it is truly Egyptian. And I am something of an authority on such matters, you know”, said Fred.

In the late 1930s, Brad Bronson had been one of the kings of the newsstand pulp magazines, and he had captured the imaginations of his *Weird Tales* readership by creating an entire subculture with its own eerie mythos and internal logic.

The most successful of his tales were centered on an ancient secret society of evil machines, set about wreaking havoc upon an unsuspecting world.

Dominating this nefarious union of wizards devoted to the powers of darkness, was a hellish master magician named Zobar.

His opponent, the agent of the forces of Light, was Dr. Sophia Solomon, an archaeologist, whose principal weapon in her fight against Zobar's legion of evil was a sacred ankh that had a special crystal set in its center. When activated by her mind, the crystal would direct a laser-like beam toward the ministers' negativity and cremate them on the spot.

As captivating as the Zobar D. Solomon tales were, by the 1930s, another mad genius, who had also created an entire subculture with its own evil mythos and internal logic – was unleashing a master plan of aggression against the world. The horror spawned by Adolph Hitler had transmogrified the stuff of nightmares into the pain of reality. When a true monster is clawing at the front door, a monster of imagination must be put aside for another time.

And so during the war years, Bronson has discontinued his tales of the occult and created such characters as Sergeant Crash Carter of the U.S. Marines, Buzz Benedict of the Flying Tigers, and Mad Dog Murphy of the Infantry.

In the '50s, when Fred was in high school, Brad was grinding out "B" movie scripts, such as *Lust of the Devil*, *Doomed* and *Children of the Slime God*. By the '60s he was once again established as a master of the strange and unknown, with the best-selling *Daughters of the Moon* and with non-fiction books that seriously explored the paranormal and the metaphysical.

A tall, commanding woman dressed in diaphanous green robes, a white turban, and a yellow sash caught Eric's arm as they passed a booth that declared her prowess as a reader of past lives. "You have the look of a teacher about you," she told Powell. "I'm already picking up that you were a high priest on Atlantis."

Eric tried to free his arm from her grasp, and as he did so, he found himself peering intently at the costume ruby that she had

taped to the center of her forehead, no doubt to energize her “third eye.”

“For fifteen dollars,” she was telling him, “I will give you a complete reading of three past lives.”

“No thank you....” Eric paused, his eyes seeking out her precise name and title from the placard above her booth “...Madame Kosma. I am having enough problems dealing with this lifetime. I couldn’t handle knowing about the trouble I got into in my past lives.”

“It’s a pity that you didn’t stop for a reading Eric,” Brad sighed.

“Yeah,” Kim agreed. “You were probably a pirate or horse thief.”

“Seriously,” Bronson continued. “Knowledge of your past lives can help you understand your present life.”

“We do have time, Eric, if you want to return to Madame Kosma,” Fred teased his friend.

“Not necessarily Madame Kosma,” Bronson shook his forehead, seeming to change his mind. “I would recommend others for a more meaningful past-life reading. I am really afraid that Madame Kosma will probably end up in a home for the terminally esoteric.”

Des McGowan, member of the program committee that had arranged for Fred’s lecture, approached the group, smiling broadly as he waved an arm expansively.

“Great to see you all!” he exclaimed, shaking hands all around. “What do you think of the crowd, Brad?”

“Looks good, Des,” Bronson assured him. “There must be three thousand people milling around right now. And that’s good for two o’clock in the afternoon.”

“Yeah, and there are another three hundred already in Ballroom C waiting for Fred’s lecture to begin,” McGowan grinned.

Des McGowan was impeccably dressed in a gray, three-piece suit, and presented an image of assured professionalism. Fred had often noted that the metaphysical community seemed divided sartorially between those who dressed as though they were conventional businesspeople and those who swathed themselves in the stereotypic wrappings of the gypsy, the swami, and the priestess.

As if a beacon light had beamed itself from Fred’s medallion, Des McGowan suddenly noticed the artifact. “My god, man, where did

you get that?”

Fred started to explain about his father finding it in Egypt, but McGowan interrupted.

“That’s not Egyptian, Fred. Oh, yes, your daddy might have found it in Egypt all right, but that thing is older than time itself.”

“I agree, Des,” Bronson said. “I don’t believe that it is Egyptian, either, but it is one of the most remarkable artifacts that I have ever beheld.”

“Oh, come on, guys,” Fred protested.

“It’s the energy that emanates from it,” Bronson said solemnly.

“The vibes,” McGowan nodded his head. “It’s the vibrations.”

“You know, Fred,” McGowan said, as he slid an arm around his shoulders and whispered conspiratorially, “a lot of folks are just waiting for you to come clean and admit that you have been channeling all those inventions from your spirit guide.”

“His ego would never permit it,” Bronson said, a bit too snidely for Fred to overlook his comment.

“Fred doesn’t need any help,” Kim jumped in, as always, to defend her friend against anyone. “He’s a genius.”

“Holy Shit!” Eric Powell chimed in.

“Come on,” Des coaxed, pulling Fred closer to him, “You were just a kid when you started coming out with those inventions. Maybe you are in contact with the Space Brother?”

Eric laughed at McGowan’s persistence. “I don’t know about Fred, but I would rather make contact with a Space Sister!”

Fred reached out his hand to the center of Des’s tie. “If I ever make such a contact, Des, you and Brad will be the first to know.”

He made a dramatic flourish out of glancing at his wrist watch. “And now,” he smiled, “I think it is show time.”

As they walked into Ballroom C, Fred reflected that so many factors in an individual’s life are but matters of perspective. From the cosmological reference point of Brad and Des, perhaps some spirit voice did whisper in his ear. What Fred called inspiration, his friends labeled spirit guidance. Who could say for certain?

There were times, he had to admit, when he felt that he might be in touch with something external to himself. More and more it had

begun to seem to Fred that 95% of all the “facts” that people were convinced that they knew absolutely for certain were but matters of their personal taste, their own opinions, and their own points of view.

Brad Bronson embarrassed him with an introduction that stressed his innovative research, his inventions, his accomplishments with NASA, and ended with statements about his wunderkind, a teenage genius.

As uncomfortable as those words might have been for Fred to hear, he had no way of knowing at that moment that they might well have served as his epitaph.

He had barely warmed to his topic when he once again heard the voice inside his head, “Now my dear one. The danger is now. The attractive blonde in her fifties, second row, center.”

Fred felt a particular wave of dizziness. He knew precisely the woman whom the voice had identified. She had been blessing him with the most beatific smile throughout the initial seven minutes of the presentation.

He took a breath to steady himself, then he directed his attention to the smiling lady. “Ma’am, you there in the second row...”

The smile disappeared from her face, and she began to shift uncomfortably, aware that over 300 pairs of eyes were upon her every movement.

“What is it you wish of me?” she asked, a soft German accent striking the words of her uneasy response.

“I was wondering if you had a question.” Fred’s eyes were seeking out Eric Powell.

His friend was at his usual lecture position – halfway from the podium, leaning against a wall. Their eyes locked, and Fred sent him a desperate unspoken message.

“I have no question”. The woman’s voice was stronger now.

“Perhaps you have a problem with my presentation?” Fred pressured her.

The woman was on her feet. “My problem is with you, Dr. Bell!”

The audience expressed its astonishment with a buzz of puzzled whispers and gasped speculations.

“Why do I present a problem to you?” Fred wanted to know.



“Because you are a thief! You have stolen from the Ancient Ones! You have stolen from them the gift of the Star Gods!”

Her right hand dipped into her large purse and pulled out a snub-nose .38 revolver. “You will pay for your interference!”

Eric Powell was there, as always. He chopped the revolver from the woman’s hand with a karate blow to her wrist. Within moments, two security guards were on either side of her.

“No, no, leave me be!” she screamed. “You cannot take me before I complete my mission! No, no!”

With Eric in the lead, the two husky men began to drag-walk the woman to the exit.

They were nearly out the door when she wrenched free from one of the guards with a twisting thrust of her body. Pulling against the grip of the guard who held her fast, she screamed out a rage of frustration.

“Dr. Bell, you must be stopped! You have something that doesn’t belong to you! You are a thief who has stolen the gift of the Star Gods! The Ancient Ones have decreed that you must be stopped...and you *will* be stopped!”

Then they managed to pull the woman from the lecture room, and Fred was left alone with 386 men and women who were looking to him for some kind of explanation.

## Chapter Two

Somehow Fred made it through another half-hour before the shock of what nearly occurred struck him with full impact.

His voice began to sound like a hollow echo surfacing from a deep well. The tips of his fingers began to tingle, and there was the sound of rushing water in his ears. He began to feel very much the way he did when he had hyperventilated due to pain or anxiety.

“Thank you for your kind attention”, he smiled weakly. “Now you know why a scientist must always expect the unexpected.”

There was a ripple of sympathetic laughter, then a burst of supportive applause. Fred knew that the audience could hardly wait to dash away to friends to tell them about the crazy lady that had come to blow Dr. Bell to another dimension.

“The police are waiting for you in the hospitality room,” Kim told him. “How did you know that lady had a gun?”

“What can I tell you?” Fred wondered rhetorically.

When they entered the hospitality room, they saw two police officers with note pads speaking to Eric Powell and Brad Bronson. Des McGowan was slumped on a couch in the farthest corner of the room.

“...No specific cult...no specific group,” Fred heard Brad saying as they grew nearer. “‘Ancient Ones’ could refer to any number of things. The goals of prehistory, for example. We would have to have more to go on, I assure you.”

One of the officers flashed Fred a narrowed-eye appraisal as he approached. “Are you Dr. Fred Bell?”

Fred nodded assent.

“I’m Officer Schmidt, sir. This is Officer Grove. We know that you are friends of Detective Lieutenant Neil Percy, and he will probably be following up on this investigation, but there are some basic questions that he will have expected us to ask. Okay?”

Fred nodded again, then dropped rather heavily into a chair beside Brad Bronson. Powell had assumed a typical posture against

a wall. Kim perched on one of the arms of his chair.

“Were you acquainted with Mrs. Kathryn Brodmer?” Schmidt asked him.

Fred gratefully accepted the glass of water that Des McGowan handed him. “May I assume that is the name of the woman that created a disturbance in my lecture?”

“That was the woman,” Officer Grove confirmed. “Did you know her?”

“Not to my knowledge,” Fred replied, shrugging his shoulders. “Should I know her? I mean, what did she say? Did she say that she knew me?”

“Dr. Bell,” Schmidt’s voice was firm. “That woman had a snub-nosed .38 in her purse. She told the security guards that she had been sent here to kill you.”

“By whom?” Eric Powell wanted to know.

Officer Grove sighed and forced a smile. “That’s what we would like to determine here, Mr. Powell.”

“Who would want to kill Fred?” Kim’s mouth was a big red “O” of surprise.

Fred felt the tips of his fingers tingling again. Kill Me.

Thank God for the voice, that beautifully feminine warning voice.

“Dr. Bell,” Officer Schmidt was saying, “she kept telling the guards about how some Ancient Ones had assigned her to kill you. She was angry with Mr. Powell because he had stopped her from killing you, completing her mission, as she kept putting it.”

Fred shook his head, as if to clear it of such an unpleasant reality. “I shall be forever grateful to my old friend Eric Powell for saving my life, officers, but I do not know Mrs. Bod...whatever. And I don’t hang out with folks more ancient than Brad Bronson.”

“You have never seen her before, to your recollection?” Officer Grove seemed determined to ask one more time.

“Never,” Fred repeated. “I’m sorry, officers, I was the intended victim here, remember?”

Bronson cleared his throat to summon his stentorian tones. “In laymen’s terms, officers, Mrs. Brodmer is a nut. Tragically, we live in

violent times. She must now be subjected to your police psychiatrists' speculations, not Dr. Bell's."

"Sure," Grove agreed. "Sorry about the whole thing, Dr. Bell. Thank God you weren't hurt. We'll be on our way now. Lieutenant Percy will be in touch with you and tell you whether or not we will need a statement from you."

The officers were scarcely out the door when Des McGowan asked Fred the question that everyone in the hospitality room was bursting to ask him. "Now that the fuzz have split, come on Fred; tell us how you knew the crazy lady had a .38 in her purse?"

Fred could not suppress his laughter. "You guys are going to love this; I heard a warning voice inside my head. A lovely, lilting feminine voice warned me to watch myself. 'Danger was near', she kept saying.

"Your spirit guide!" McGowan shouted in triumph. "I knew it."

Powell was scowling at him. "No shit, man? You really heard a voice inside your head?"

"Naturally, it would be female," Kim sniffed.

"Who is this, 'she'?" Brad pursued.

"Don't know," Fred answered, "but seemed somehow strangely familiar to me. It was as if I had heard it before sometime long ago."

"Who do you think this Brodmer broad is?" Eric asked, brushing aside amorphous queries about feminine voices inside his friend's skull. "She told me that she had to kill you, that you had stolen something from the Star Gods."

"It seemed to be the sight of the medallion that set her off," Bronson commented. "For some reason, I, too, was alerted to her presence from the very moment we entered the Ballroom. I had no presentiment of an attack on you, Fred, but I did sense very strange energy flowing from her."

"Aw, man, you were eyeballing her because she was a good-looking blonde!" Powell laughed as he poured himself a cup of coffee.

"Truly, my Neanderthal friend, it was something more than her physical appearance," Bronson continued. "She really seemed under control until she saw the medallion."

“How do you know it was a medallion, Brad, and not the awful tie that Fred is wearing?” McGowan asked.

“You felt energy, Des, “Brad explained. “So did I, the moment we beheld that marvelous artifact. I could perceive a kind of psychic linkup the instant that Mrs. Bodmer connected with the vibrations of the medallion.”

“I felt...I thought I felt...” Fred was reluctant to express his thoughts, but decided to complete his sentence. “I thought that I felt a kind of pulsation emanating from the medallion when I heard the voice inside my head.”

It was as I first suggested, my boy,” Bronson said firmly, “there is a great deal more to that so-called Egyptian artifact than you supposed.”

## Chapter Three

Fred, Kim, Eric, and Brad went through the motions of an early dinner, but the traumatic events of the day had taken their toll even on Bronson's legendary appetite for seafood.

As a unit, they opted not to return to the psychic fair, but to drive out to Fred's home in Laguna Beach. The emerald studded medallion was placed in a wall safe, and the four of them collapsed on thick floor pillows to listen to music, watch the surf, and relax.

It was about ten o'clock when a knock at the door dispelled their well-earned reverie.

Powell got to his feet, and soon returned from answering the front door with Detective Lieutenant Neil Percy in tow.

Fred waved a greeting from his relaxed position on some overstuffed pillows. "I think you know everyone here, Neil."

Percy nodded his recollection of Fred's circle of friends, then helped himself to a beer from the refrigerator before he joined the others on the thick floor cushion.

"I'm off duty, Powell, so no snitching to the Captain," he said, to explain the bottle he brandished in his left hand.

"So, Fred, old horse," Percy asked before taking a swallow of the beer, "What do you really know about the Brodmer woman?"

"Nada, pal. Nothing. Zilch. At least I knew nothing about her until she tried to kill me. I presume that's what you meant?"

Percy took a moment to study the beer bottle, as if it could yield the clue to mysteries hitherto unfathomable. He was a stocky man, thick with muscles and a lifetime of hard knocks. "Our Mrs. Bodmer was a nut, a wacko – and a bigot."

Bronson shifted noisily on the couch, like a great bear awakening from hibernation. "A bigot?"

Percy looked over each shoulder, frowned. "Is there an echo in here? Yeah, Mr. Bronson, a bigot. She is a member of some kind of Neo-Nazi group that call themselves the "Knights of Atlantis."

“What the hell do the Nazis have to do with Atlantis?” Powell asked.

“A great deal, actually,” Bronson answered. “They were very much into the occult.”

“Yeah, well, anyway, this lady was into all kinds of Aryan supremacy bullshit,” Percy continued. “She was into astrology, Atlantis, UFOs, and stuff like that. We went through her bookshelves.”

“Of course, my clean fellow,” Bronson cautioned, “you are not suggesting that an interest in metaphysics is synonymous with Nazism?”

Percy took another long swallow of the beer before he answered. “I ain’t no philosopher, Bronson. But I figure that too many of these people who walk around looking up at the stars all the time could have all their brain juices run to the back of their heads and make them go crazy.”

The lieutenant drained the last of the beer and set the bottle down beside him. “Anyway, Ace, whether or not you knew her, this lady knew you. She even had a couple of pictures of you on the wall.”

“You’re putting me on,” Fred insisted with a burst of unbelievable laughter.

Percy crossed himself as a proof of his truthfulness. “Honest to Jesus-Mary-Joseph. I figured at first that maybe you were having an affair with her, but then she didn’t really seem your type.”

Kim threw a small pillow at Percy that caught him on a shoulder.

“You didn’t really believe that, Neil,” she contested.

Percy made a movement as if to cross himself again, then thought better of it. “Anyway, we found pages and pages of weird run-together handwriting next to her bed. It took the lab boys a little while to read it, I’ll tell you.”

“So?” Bronson prodded after Percy paused a little too long to milk the dramatic effect from his discovery.

“So it was a bunch of crap about how our friend here had stolen something from the Star Gods. Receiver....receptor. Something like that. And then she went on about how the Ancient Ones would be angry and the receptor must be returned to the Third Reich.”

Fred felt as though he needed another beer. Powell had anticipated his need and was already handing him one.

“There was more,” Percy smiled, accepting the beer in Powell’s other hand. “Ugly stuff about how she was going to cut out your heart and guts to punish you.”

“Okay, man,” Fred held up his palm as if he were a traffic cop. “Stop. I can do without that information.”

Kim shuddered. “Sometimes, Percy, you are so crude.”

Percy chuckled, as if he had gained another point on his own private vulgarity scoreboard.

“I would assume that you guys are running a complete checkout on this Aryan kook group?” Powell asked, no longer patient with Percy’s sang froid.

“Sure, man,” Percy scowled. “You think we’re gonna let anything happen to our old friend? We cannot assume that this Brodmer lady was acting alone. We must assume that other assassins will try to get Fred now that she has failed.”

Fred rolled his eyes ceilingward. “Oh, my. Sweet dreams, eh?”

“Fred,” Bronson spoke up, seeking to divert his friend’s attention from such dire thoughts as his own extermination, “I’ve been wanting to ask you what your mother said when she gave you the medallion.”

“Interestingly, she referred to it as a ‘receptor’, just as our crazy Ms. Brodmer did,” Fred said, pinching his chin thoughtfully between thumb and forefinger as he replied.

“Mom said that Dad had called it the ‘Emerald Nuclear Receptor’. She said that he had found it in the Temple of Hathor, the Egyptian goddess of love and beauty, which the ancients had dedicated to the Pleiades.”

Bronson cleared his throat, shifted his great bulk on the couch. “Sorry to speak of the matter, Fred, but I know that your father was killed in 1939. How did your mother receive the artifact?”

“An associate of Dad’s, a woman, brought it to Mom sometime in 1948. Somehow she had managed to harbor it during the Nazi occupation of Egypt and smuggle it to Mom as soon as she could get to America.”



“If this receptor thing has been hidden from the Nazis for over thirty years, how did they know that Fred would be wearing it today?” Kim asked.

“That is a very good question,” Powell agreed.

“The picture.” Percy shook his head impatiently. “She had a picture of Fred wearing the receptor pinned to her wall.”

“Oh, God,” Fred slapped his forehead. “I wore the receptor to the pre-festival press conference!”

“Bingo!” Percy nodded. “She clipped it out of the newspaper that announced the speakers for the metaphysical nonsense taking place at the Holiday Inn.”

“Oh, dear boy,” Bronson’s eyes were sad. “You’ve announced the possession of this object of the Neo-Nazis’ desire to the entire world!”

The sudden ringing of the doorbell startled all of them. When Powell answered the door, Kim was very glad that Lieutenant Percy was in their midst. She no longer cared how crude he could sometimes be.

The von Raeders were a tall, distinguished couple in their sixties. They were impeccably dressed, handsomely coiffed, and unerringly polite.

“I am Rudolf,” he said in a strong German accent. “My charming wife is Freya.”

And then, as if stepping aside to reveal two pet werewolves on a leash, von Raeder introduced their “associates,” Otto and Lars, two bully boys in their late twenties or early thirties, who looked as though they might weep themselves to sleep every night because they were born too late to have been Gestapo agents.

“We are also sorry to trouble you at home, Dr. Bell,” von Raeder clucked apologetically. “But we assure you that we come on a matter of utmost urgency.”

“We are also sorry that we interrupt you while you are entertaining,” Freya smiled shyly to cover a social awkwardness that seemed feigned.

“Could you please excuse yourself, Dr. Bell, so that we might speak with you in private?” Rudolf inquired, a single gold tooth

marring the total effect of the unctuous smile.

Fred found himself staring impolitely in open wonder at the audaciousness of his uninvited guests.

“Forgive me if I appear to be a somewhat unresponsive host,” he managed at last. “But I don’t remember inviting you to my home.”

“Of course you did not invite us, Dr. Bell,” Freya said, lowering her eyes as if to request a formal pardon. “But as we have said, we have come on a matter of great urgency.”

“Urgent to whom?” Fred wanted to know. “Do you realize that it is nearly eleven o’clock. Isn’t that a bit late to come calling upon strangers?”

“Ah yes, but Dr. Bell, you are not a stranger to us,” Rudolf pronounced enigmatically.

“All right,” Fred shrugged, his curiosity getting the better of his irritation. “Just who are you?”

“Could we speak in private?” Rudolf repeated his request.

Eric Powell broke what for him, had been a record silence. “This is as private as it gets around here, Hans.”

“Rudolf,” von Raeder corrected Eric, somewhat imperiously.

Then returning his attention to Fred, “May we speak privately?”

“These people,” Fred said, indicating Kim, Powell, Bronson, and Percy, “are my closest friends. They’re my family. Anything that you have to say can be said in front of them.”

“But Dr. Bell...”

Eric Powell cut off von Raeder’s protest. Those are the terms, Hans. Take them...or leave. Now.”

Otto and Lars made slight, guttural sounds and began to move their fingertips very slowly toward some unsightly bulges under their suit coats. Neither of the bully boys was as impeccably dressed as their master and mistress.

Neil Percy got to his feet. “Mr. von Raeder, before either of your oversized Dobermans do anything foolish, please be advised that I am a police officer.”

“Please, sir,” von Raeder laughed nervously, “there is no need to involve the police. We wish to settle our dispute with Dr. Bell quietly.

If those were not our wishes, we would have brought the police with us.”

Fred frowned his displeasure. He was becoming increasingly annoyed with the whole affair. Who were these Teutonic throwbacks who felt that they could invade his home? Who did they think they were?

And now they were making veiled threats.

“What dispute do you people imagine that you have with me?” Fred demanded.

The whole day was becoming a bit too much for him. He tried to maintain a pleasant disposition at all times, but now things were becoming too ridiculous to remain amiable.

The von Raeders glanced at one another, as if each were seeking unspoken approval from the other to speak aloud.

“You have something that belongs to us,” Freya finally responded.

“Oh, dear God,” Fred grimaced. “Here we go again!”

“Do you refer to the medallion that he was wearing about his neck this afternoon?” Bronson’s deep voice suddenly boomed out, like a roll of thunder from Mount Olympus.

Momentarily startled by Bronson’s query, von Raeder shifted uneasily, and once again stated a demand that he knew would never be met. “We really wish to speak with Dr. Bell in private. This matter is really the business of no one else.”

“Sure,” Powell smirked. “If it is so private, why did you bring the two stormtroopers with you?”

Von Raeder bristled at the question. “The war is long over, sir. There is no need to make such discriminatory reference to our associates.”

“Cut the bullshit, man,” Powell said, his voice only a few decibels below a shout.

Freya was in the process of losing her composure and her practiced courtesy. “You have the receptor that belongs to us and we want it back.”

“Darling,” von Raeder attempted to calm her, but he was too late.

“You must return that receptor to us at once or you will pay the consequences,” she said, her voice rising shrilly.

“Was that a threat, Percy?” Eric wondered. “Did I hear a threat?”

“It definitely sounded like a threat to me,” Bronson agreed.

“No question,” Kim chimed in. “If ever I heard a threat, that was a threat.”

“Are you going to send another hit lady after me, like Mrs. Bobkins or whatever her name is?” Fred asked, his jaw jutting forward in defiance.

“Things need not become violent,” Von Raeder was saying, doing his best to regain control of the situation. “We apologize for Kathryn, but she did not act on orders from us; she acted independently.”

“But you do know her, eh?” Percy scowled. “Maybe I should bring you folks down to the station house for questioning. I’m smelling a plot to commit murder here.”

“You cannot trifle with the Star Gods!” Freya von Raeder was screaming now. “They gave their blessing to the Third Reich. Your father stole from us our birthright!”

“The Third Reich?” Powell echoed, snatching the reference from the midst of her diatribe. “I thought you folks didn’t want us to go goose-stepping down memory lane?”

“We are the true owners of the receptor,” Rudolf von Raeder said angrily, dropping his efforts to pacify Freya and apparently making the decision to join her in a frontal attack. “We are the true owners, and we will have it back. But there need be no violence. There need be no such episodes as today’s unfortunate incident.”

“There had better not be,” Percy said, glancing directly into the eyes of Rudolf and Freya, then looking past them to nail Otto and Lars with unmistakable menace.

“Amen, there had better not be,” Fred reaffirmed.

“We are prepared to purchase the receptor from you,” von Raeder said.

“Why the hell do you keep calling it the receptor?” Fred expressed his exasperation. “It’s a medallion to me. An old Egyptian artifact. What is a receptor?”

“Ach!” Freya made a sound as if she were choking on a fishbone.

“The miserable son of a thief does not even know what he has in his possession!”

“One more insult directed toward my father and this conversation is terminated,” Fred said, declaring new ground rules.

“Hey, Chief,” Eric reminded him, “I think Hans here is about to make you an offer you can’t refuse.”

Rudolf made a slight bow to Powell, as if really acknowledging him for the first time. “We are prepared to pay you Five Thousand dollars for the artifact.”

Fred laughed. “Now that the negotiations begin, it is no longer a receptor, it is an artifact.”

“Dig deeper, man,” Eric rolled his eyes contemptuously. “Five Gs is peanuts.”

“Even as an antiquity,” Bronson shook his head, “it is worth far more than five thousand dollars.”

Rudolf’s lower lip began to quiver. “Seventy-five....”

“Let’s just cut the whole auction bit,” Fred growled. “The artifact...the receptor...the medallion – whatever label you want to stick on it – is not for sale. My father lost his life getting this object, and it is his legacy to me. I would not sell it for any price. Say goodnight, folks.”

“Your father was shot down like a common thief looting from the Star Gods!” Freya shouted, nearing either hysteria or violent rage. “He stole what is rightfully ours, and we will have it back!”

“I warned you, no more bad-mouthing my father,” Fred said quietly. “Eric, show these fun folks to the front door.”

“Your criminal father was killed for the receptor,” Freya spoke the unnecessary reminder. “Do you, too, want to die a thief?”

“That was a threat, Mrs. Von Raeder,” Percy said, underscoring her words, “and I am making note of it.”

Rudolf had his wife by the arm and was moving her toward the door.

“Be reasonable, Dr. Bell, this can end tonight.” His cultured baritone had been driven into a whining nasal plea. “I will make you a final offer of Ten Thousand dollars.”

“No sale, von Raeder,” Fred shook his head.

“You are a fool,” Freya shouted just before the door cut off her parting comments. “The Ancient Ones will not be thwarted!”

## Chapter Four

“You know, just before I went to sleep last night,” Fred said over breakfast the next morning, “I remembered where I had seen the von Raeders before. I mean, all the time they were here last night, I kept thinking, I’ve seen those two before.”

“Probably in your nightmares,” Eric said dryly.

Eric and Brad Bronson had decided to spend the night with Fred, just in case the von Raeders and their henchman returned and attempted to enter the house. Lieutenant Percy had seen Kim safely home with the parting word that he would definitely stay on top of the investigation regarding the Knights of Atlantis.

Brad paused in the act of heaping jam upon a slice of toast to inquire if Fred were certain that it was the same couple.

He nodded. “Yes, I am quite certain. The first time occurred when I was just a kid. I was playing on the beach by myself, building a sandcastle or some such enterprise, when this smiling lady with a German accent approached me and asked if I wanted an ice cream cone.

I looked up and her husband – Rudolf, I know it was – was stomping toward us across the sand with a chocolate cone melting over his fingers.

Well, my mother had warned me never to accept candy from strangers, and I knew that admonition applied to ice cream cones as well, so I told them ‘No thanks’, and kept playing in the sand.

When the man got there, he knelt beside me and asked if I had pretty things from Egypt in my house.”

Eric sat his coffee down and laughed softly. “Can you imagine, asking a six year old kid if there are any Egyptian artifacts in the house?”

Bronson grunted around a bite of his toast. “But in Fred’s case, the son of an archaeologist, he might have had several.”

“Good Lord, Fred,” Eric acknowledged Brad’s point. “You could have signed your death warrant right then!”

Fred nodded, pouring himself a refill on the orange juice. "It's a good thing that I was not really interested in such areas. I was already thinking about jet engines and racing cars.

I remember that she even drew what looked to me like a necklace in the sand. I guess I was suitably blank to discourage them. All I really remember about the visit was how incredibly messy the man's fingers became as he hung on to that melting ice cream cone.

"But it does seem obvious that they were checking to see if by any chance your father had somehow managed to get the medallion, the receptor, out of Egypt," Bronson observed. "The artifact must have disappeared, and they were not certain where it was."

"And they probably didn't really know where it was until they saw the picture of you in the paper – wearing the damn thing!" Eric said over the rim of his coffee cup.

"I'm sure that is true," Fred agreed, rising from the kitchen table to scramble the eggs in the frying pan that had been heating.

"Eric, remember that part-time job that I had in high school?" Fred asked.

"The old man Clayborne's curio and coin shop?" Eric asked.

"Right," Fred continued. "During the semester that I worked there I was approached several times by this lady – Freya von Raeder, I am certain – who asked if we had any unusual Egyptian curios.

"When I explained that Mr. Clayborne was primarily interested in American Indian curios, she asked if I, personally, had any such artifacts to sell.

Although she was always polite, she really began to get on my nerves. As often as I repeated my denials of having such relics to sell, she kept coming in – at least four times before the winter holidays. And then I didn't see her again. Until last night, that is."

"Holy, Moly," Eric slapped his forehead with an open palm. "Hey, Chief, I hadn't even thought of this for years – and I never even told you at the time – but now I am making the connection."

Bronson rubbed the bristle on his chin. "You certainly have our attention after that outburst, Mr. Powell. Please go on."

"It was probably when we were sophomores. I was walking home one night after football practice when a car pulls up and this creepy

guy with a German accent started asking me about you, Fred. At first he said he was an uncle or something and was trying to find you and your mother, so I wasn't that concerned.

"But then he asked me this weird question: Had you ever given me anything to keep for you? Anything that looked like it might have come from Egypt or from some faraway place. He kept on and on, asking about things like that until I cut across Monahan's vacant lot and ran home."

Fred served the eggs; put more bread into the toaster. "You know, this is beginning to feel like a very strange game that we have been playing with some very eerie opponents who were unknown to us.

When I was in that two-year intensive program at the Air Force Academy, I probably received thirty telephone calls from anonymous voices advising me to return anything that I might have stolen from anyone and reprimanding me for having taken something that did not belong to me. I always thought that one of the other guys in the program had a bizarre sense of humor. I always blew the calls off."

Fred placed the frying pan in the sink and retrieved the fresh toast. "Here is one that wasn't so easy to blow off, and I'm surprised that I didn't think of the incident when my mother gave me the receptor."

Bronson held up his coffee cup, and Fred refilled it. "I was in NASA at the time. I was taking a break in one of the lounges when a new employee approached. I can't remember his name, but I thought with his thick German accent that he was no doubt associated with either von Braun or Dr. Eric von Losburg.

"Anyway," Fred continued, "he smiled at me, then stepped over to a blackboard that was in the lounge and drew a design on it. He stepped back, grinning as if he had just drawn the Mona Lisa, and asked me if I have ever seen the object before. I know now," Fred grimaced, "that he drew the receptor."

"Who was the guy?" Powell asked.

"I don't know," Fred admitted. "He asked me what I thought of the design, and I just mumbled something to be polite. It didn't look like any craft that would fly and that was really all that I was interested in at that stage of my life."



“Then the guy put some Egyptian-looking hieroglyphics alongside the design and asked if they meant anything to me.”

“The man was persistent,” Bronson commented, dipping a crust of toast into his coffee. Brad was a Bunker of doughnuts, toast, and pastries.

“I recall eventually becoming annoyed with the joker,” Fred said. “I began to ask him some questions, such as why he thought such symbols and designs would be of any interest to me. I remember getting a bit impatient and asking him if he had made a wrong turn and had intended to work at the museum instead of NASA.

“He started to laugh, then erased the design and the glyphs. He said that he had just been fooling around and that he hadn’t meant anything by it.”

“I never saw the man again,” Fred told his friends. “I described him to a number of the other personnel, but no one was able to identify him. I doubt very much if he ever was a NASA employee.”

The three men sat quietly, finishing their breakfast. It was as if they were trying to digest Fred’s strange experiences along with the scrambled eggs and toast.

When the telephone rang, it seemed to serve as a summons to return to the matters at hand: How best to deal with any future threats from the Neo-Nazi Knights of Atlantis.

“It’s some cat with a thick German accent,” Eric Powell frowned. “Do you want to speak with him?”

Fred sighed, and looked to Brad for a sign of guidance. Bronson merely shrugged his massive shoulders and reached for a toothpick.

“He says he must talk to you,” Eric added. “He says that he was with your father when he was killed.”

## Chapter Five

Dr. Wolf Grunewald was a bearded, wild-haired man in his mid-seventies, who stood nearly six foot four and had the look of a mad prophet in his eyes.

That afternoon his face was dark, clouded with anxiety and concern. He introduced himself as a professor of archaeology, acknowledged the identities of Fred, Eric, and Brad, and then it was apparent that he chose to waste little time with amenities.

“Young man,” he challenged Fred, “do you have any idea that the medallion you so blatantly wore around your neck to pose for newspaper pictures is a revered object which many of the ancients referred to as the ‘Philosopher’s Stone?’”

Fred frowned, glanced at Bronson, his mentor in such discussions.

“Philosopher’s Stone was to serve as a catalyst in accomplishing the alchemical transmutation of base metals into gold,” Bronson replied to his friend’s unspoken question. “Of course now we know that the alchemical experiments were but metaphors for a much more serious and ambitious goal. The alchemists truly wished to transform themselves into spiritual gold, thus to become more godlike.”

Bronson’s comments were enough to trigger Fred’s own memories. Always a voracious reader, he now recalled perusing volumes that detailed how the oldest Greek texts on alchemy dated back to the second century before Christ and were purported to have been copied from an ancient scroll that had been found in a column of an Egyptian temple. The text was consistent with writings from other traditions, such as the Chinese, the Indian, and the Jewish.

In both Western and Asiatic alchemy there is a tradition that certain formulas for prolonging human life, for healing, and for transforming the human structure, were given to a number of special adepts by great god-entities through human master teachers. This transfer of hidden knowledge was said to have been made at the

literal beginning of time, that is to say, at the very beginning of our cultural tradition, perhaps 7,000 years ago.

“If you know anything about alchemy, my friends,” Dr. Grunewald said, “you will know that some of the ancient texts state that the secrets were part of a much older tradition, incredibly older than our own, which existed in a great, but vanished, terrestrial civilization.”

“The so-called Atlantis,” Eric scowled menacingly. “As soon as I heard the German accent I should have known that you would be another of the weirdo ‘Knights of Atlantis’.”

Dr. Grunewald flinched. “The von Raeders have been here? Oh, dear God, it is worse than I feared. Why did you wear the receptor in public, Fred? Did you think your father died to provide you with costume jewelry?”

“Hold on, Dr. Grunewald,” Fred warned him, taking offense at his remarks. “I was just given the artifact by my mother. I wore it out of respect to my father’s legacy, not to defame him.”

“And he certainly had no idea that he was going to risk threats and assassination attempts by wearing the object,” Bronson put in a supporting observation.

Dr. Grunewald leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees, and cradled his head on the heels of his hands. “It is all my fault. I should have sought you out sooner. But I was not certain that the receptor had survived the Nile. I saw your father run from the pyramid. I knew that he was wounded. I never saw him alive again, but somehow, I knew...”

“The receptor caused my father’s death, didn’t it?” Fred asked in a quiet voice.

Dr. Grunewald lifted his head and smiled wryly. “Indirectly, I suppose. But it was the Gestapo that killed your father.”

“The Gestapo?” Bronson questioned. “In Egypt, in 1939...and on an archaeological dig?”

“Please, Dr. Grunewald,” Fred began, “I have so many questions. Please tell us what happened in Egypt.”

Once again the aging archaeologist leaned forward on his knees, almost as if he were addressing the toes of his worn shoes.

“Ach, I was one of your father’s professors at Heidelberg. I recognized at once his promise. I took him on his first dig.”

“To Petra,” Fred smiled, remembering his mother’s account of the adventure. “To search for signs of the ancient Nabatearis canal system. That was where my mother and father met.”

“Ja,” Grunewald chuckled heartily at the memory. “A saucy American girl from Sarah Lawrence. Paul at first had eyes for an attractive assistant professor from Leeds, in Great Britain, but your mother, Natalie, won his heart. So when he graduated with his doctorate in 1933, your father emigrated to America, and Germany lost another fine scientist.”

Grunewald went on to explain how he and his young protégé had continued to correspond. Their special area of research had been the translation of ancient accounts that told of secrets that had been imparted to early humankind by benevolent beings from another dimension or existence, or by the “Stars Gods” from another planet.

In all the traditions, there seemed to be a consensus that once the great secrets were communicated to certain of humankind’s more perceptive ancestors, the knowledge was “sealed,” which is to say that it was carefully hidden from the masses.

Then, roughly 2,500 years ago, certain ancient texts began to be discovered and a long period of occultation came to an end. The primeval revelations once again became accessible to a select number of adepts, who were able to gain the secrets from an arcane priesthood, and only through a specific and arduous process of initiation.

At about the same time, Grunewald and Bell began to note ancient references to various artifacts, “power crystals,” “transformers,” “receptors,” that the Star Gods had apparently left behind in the care and keeping of the wisest of the ancient ones. Such devices could truly serve as “Philosopher’s Stones,” accomplishing greatly accelerated transmutations and illuminations.

“I was so absorbed in my teaching, my research, and in my correspondence with Paul and other seeking souls, I had lost track of what was happening in Germany,” Grunewald’s long sigh seemed to trail off into a soft gasp of regret.

“I have never been a political person, I sadly admit. If I had been more alert, I would have begun to notice the rise of the Nazi party. But I, like so many intellectuals, did not take them seriously until Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor in 1933.”

Cursing the ineffectiveness of hindsight to solve any problem, Grunewald bemoaned the fact that he had remained ignorant of Hitler’s obsession with the occult. Atlantis, in the Führer’s view, was a land peopled by supermen who were, in turn, instructed by Higher Beings who were their superiors.

Disagreeing with Plato that the rich civilization fell because of its insatiable hunger for power and its moral perversity, the Nazi racists attributed the end of Atlantis to a corrupting of the pure, white, Atlantean-Aryan blood by demoniacal and inferior races of the Asian-Semitic type. In their view, the giants who did survive the floods and cataclysms went on to found the great civilizations of Egypt and Assyria.

One of Hitler’s mentors had been Dietrich Eckart, the motivating force behind the Thule Society. Eckart wished to establish a rallying point for all occult societies of like persuasion to come into full bloom and to merge with the ancient Germanic traditions. Hitler’s choice of the swastika, or gamma cross, as his party’s emblem, was influenced by his desire to present a universal symbol that would link up all the religions and magic societies based on symbolism.

“In our own research,” Grunewald explained, “we had begun to find more and more references to the Pleiades and the Star Beings who visited Earth from the ‘Seven Sisters.’ Ancient texts, particularly those discovered in Tibet, presented evidence that the very forefathers of the human race had come to this planet from the Pleiades.”

“Fascinating”, Brad Bronson interrupted. “Today, in 1971, we have only recently been exposed to the so-called ‘ancient astronaut’ hypothesis. Yet you are telling us that you were freely discussing such a theory in the 1930s.”

Grunewald laughed a minor correction. “Not freely, my friend. You remember that I am referring to private correspondence among a handful of confidantes. There was, of course, Paul here in the United

States; Dr. Neville Bolting in Great Britain; Dr. Jacqueline Hillman in Munich; and Dr. Omar Cadafa in Cairo.”

Bronson set down his coffee cup before he responded. “And the great irony is that the Third Reich that was being constructed around you, my dear Dr. Grunewald, was making a secular religion out of many of the same hypotheses.”

“Or at least very similar hypotheses,” Grunewald granted the point with a slight nod of his lion-like head, then continued his narrative.

“Paul was becoming increasingly excited about a dig to attempt to find the tomb of the Pharaoh Egedefre, which he had become convinced would yield actual artifacts of a Pleiadean visitation in Earth’s prehistory.

“In 1936 or ’37, Hitler had, unbeknownst to us, begun an ambitious effort to obtain as many ancient power relics as possible. He sent expeditions after the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy Grail, the Spear of Destiny that had pierced Christ’s side while he hung upon the cross.

“Then, it seems, a party searching the Carpathian Mountains discovered an old castle that was rumored to have been the dwelling of the legendary St. Germaine. In the crumbling library, the Nazi expedition found another of the ancient Tibetan manuscripts that spoke of the number of scientific artifacts from the Pleiades that had been given throughout Egypt.

“According to the Tibetan script, whoever possessed these devices could control secret universal powers. Hitler went berserk when he learned of the references to extraterrestrial power devices. He screamed that he had to possess such artifacts for his complete development of the master race.”

“This is pretty wild stuff, Doc,” Eric Powell exclaimed, rising abruptly to his feet. “I gotta have a beer to let all this heavy stuff go down. Anyone else need a cool one?”

Grunewald ignored the slight putdown to take advantage of Powell’s offer of refreshment. “I would love a beer. Have you any German beer?”

“Budweiser, Schlitz, Strohs...they’re all German beers.” Powell frowned at what he thought was a silly question.

Grunewald shook his head slowly in disbelief, then emitted a deep chuckle. “Any will do splendidly, thank you.”

Fred opted for a refill of orange juice. He wanted nothing dulling his senses as he learned of his father’s fate at the hands of the Nazis. Bronson asked for another cup of coffee. It was clear that he, too, wanted all of his wits about him. Fred had noticed that Brad had been taking notes throughout Grunewald’s dissertation.

“The storm clouds of war were gathering darkly in 1938,” Grunewald resumed his recitation of the find in Egypt. “In spite of a worsening political state, none of our circle was interested in politics. We were scholars bonded by a common love of humanity and its history. Regretfully, we were all too blind to the realities of current events all around us.”

The group of friends had at last managed to meet in Egypt in early May of 1939. Serious programs against the Jews in Germany had begun that previous November. German troops had entered Prague in mid-March, and France, Great Britain, and the United States had notified Hitler that they did not recognize the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia by Germany.

Although the five archaeologists feared that a global confrontation was imminent, none of them were precognitive enough to know that the dogs of war would be unleashed in just four months, when Hitler invaded Poland in September.

“How did you manage to find the receptor?” Fred could not help asking, wishing to hurry Grunewald on with his story.

“Ach, that’s a very interesting question, my boy,” Grunewald nodded, motioning to Powell for another beer. “We conducted a séance. The spirit...or the Pleiadeans...told us where to look.”

## Chapter Six

As Dr. Wolf Grunewald recreated his account for Fred and his friends, it was almost as if the past were revived and brought into focus so that it might be experienced by others through the residual energies of those who had been center-stage.

Grunewald, Dr. Jacqueline Hillman, Dr. Neville Bolting, and Dr. Paul Raymond Bell arrived at Dr. Omar Cadafa's office at precisely quarter past nine that May morning in 1939.

Bolting was a tall, thin man in his mid-sixties, with muscles and sinews still strong from years of digging into humankind's past. He had a pencil-thin mustache, and he spoke in a rather high-pitched voice, but the cultured British accent managed to make every word sound very important.

Dr. Jacqueline Hillman, then in her late thirties, stood about five-foot seven, with bright blue eyes and dark brown hair that she wore fashioned in braids. As was her custom, she wore a Cherokee-styled dark over-blouse, belted with beadwork at the waist. Her skirt was fawn-colored leather.

Although Dr. Paul Bell had a habit of squinting to emphasize a variety of verbal gambits, his blue-green eyes were kind, albeit inquisitive. At that time, he wore a well-trimmed mustache and a Van Dyke beard. Of medium height, he was compactly built and in the prime of his mental and physical prowess at the age of thirty-three.

Grunewald had been the wunderkind of German archaeology. He was the author of three books and several monographs. Now in his mid-forties, his imposing height and powerful build allowed him to move into mentorhood with more than his fair share of style and élan.

Dr. Cadafa, a sensitive, soft-spoken scholar, was puzzled by the request of his friends.

"You ask to see the tomb of the Pharaoh Djedefre." He said the words slowly, as if to divine any hidden meaning. "That, I am afraid,



is a favor that it is out of my power to grant, simply because the tomb, if indeed it ever existed, vanished several thousand years ago.”

Dr. Bell was puzzled. All the ancient texts indicated that they would receive a most important clue to the Pleiadeans and their power crystals at the tomb of Djedefre. Had they spent so much time studying yesterday that they had forgotten to inquire into today?

“May we at least see the site where his pyramid might have been?” Bell asked. “I truly feel that this is important, Dr. Cadafa.”

The Egyptian smiled expansively. They were his guests, of course, and their wishes would be granted.

“But, my dear friends,” Cadafa prefaced their journey into the brilliant Egyptian sun, “all of us have pursued mysteries of which the average man and woman can but guess – perhaps care – but little. I must tell you that I have labored for years attempting to solve one of the greatest enigmas in Egypt: Where is Djedefre’s burial chamber?”

By mid-afternoon they had climbed a small, windswept hill near the village of Abu Rawash, fifteen miles west of Cairo, five miles north of the great pyramids of Khufu, Khafre, and Menkaure. Limestone and the red granite rubble lay scattered amidst pieces of statuary.

“Behold that shattered monument before you,” Cadafa pointed with the tip of his pipe towards the remains of what had obviously been intended to be a pyramid.

“It would have been of such a size that it would easily have rivaled the three great pyramids of Giza. And somewhere beneath tons of debris may lie the burial chamber and the mummy of our lost Djedefre, the son of Khufu, the half-brother of Khafre, the uncle of Menkaure.”

Grunewald was immediately seized by the mystery. “What do you think happened? Some war or revolution smash the hell out of it?”

Cadafa smiled at his colleague and shrugged. “That is the puzzle that has brought me to the point of boiling madness.”

Bolting pulled his sun helmet a bit lower over his eyes. “And you have no records at all of what happened to the poor old boy?”

Cadafa shook his head sadly, as if reporting a shame that had befallen a close relative.

“All we know, my dear friends, is that somewhere about 4,600 years ago Pharaoh Djedefre was either so feared or so hated or so envied or so...Allah knows what...that his immediate successors did their utmost to obliterate all evidence that he had ever lived.”

“That’s astonishing,” Paul Bell blinked his eyes against the bright sun to scan the football-sized chunks of red granite and limestone that were strewn about the site of the demolished pyramid.

Jackie Hillman nodded quick assent. “Especially in view of how many times the ancient texts mention him in connection with the Star Gods and your new research.”

“We’ll have a long session one of these nights to fill you in, old man,” Bolting assured him. “Now, please continue with your guided tour.”

Cadafa cleared his voice, pointed towards the ruins with his smoothly polished briar pipe.

Oxford-educated, the Egyptian archaeologist loved his briar pipe and his English tobacco almost as much as he loved to explore the mysterious sites in his native land. “We know that, judging from the base, Djedefre’s pyramid would have been higher than his papa’s, old Khufu’s, which is 480-feet tall. This would have made juror’s peak closer to the sun.”

“A point of significance,” Bolting remarked, “since the ancient Egyptians worshiped Ra, the sun, and revered the pharaohs as sun gods in life and after death.”

“Quite so,” Grunewald said, smacking his lips around a cigar that he had just lighted. “But it would appear that Djedefre’s pyramid didn’t get much time to stretch toward the sun.”

“That is true,” Cadafa agreed. “Someone applied a system of destruction so methodical and so thorough that we estimate that it must have taken hundreds of men more than a dozen years to break up every single block, every piece of statuary.”

Grunewald puffed his cigar reflectively. “Unless they used an atom bomb, or something.”

The five associates stood for a moment or two in silence. It was rather well known in scientific circles that German scientists had been working on such a device since the turn of the decade.

Paul stiffened, shot Grunewald and Jackie a knowing glance. "Or some other power source of which we have no knowledge. A power source directed by the Pleiadeans."

Cadafa shook his head thoughtfully. "It would have to be some incredible power source to be capable of totally demolishing a pyramid that took years to build."

"Well," Bolting sighed, "however they did it to the old boy, they jolly well smashed his pyramid to cinders."

"And so well," Cadafa added, "that all records of his memory were destroyed and all surviving members of his family got their names obliterated at the Giza necropolis."

"Is there anything like this anywhere else in Egypt?" Dr. Bell wanted to know.

"Not of which we have any knowledge," Cadafa replied. "It would seem that we are left in mystery, forever doomed to fanciful speculations about why such an effort at such destruction was made here."

Jackie Hillman shuddered. "This has been a place of violence many times over the centuries. Wolf... You and Paul were here before. Your souls expressed themselves here before."

"What do you mean, Jackie?" Bell appeared startled by his colleague's sudden flow of puzzling statements.

"Jackie is speaking of a past life," Grunewald said bluntly, hoping his friends would accept the statement at face value for the moment and not interrupt the flow of psychic impressions that were coming to her.

"A past life?" Paul tried to receive a more direct answer, but Jackie was speaking again in strange kind of lilting voice.

"Wolf and Paul received initiation here. They were priests of the Light. They served Djedefre. They died with him in his fight against the evil ones..."

"Jackie," Grunewald asked, moving a protective arm across her slender shoulders. "Could you pick up anything if we held a séance

here where the vibrations are strongest?" She trembled, hunched her body against his chest. "P-p-perhaps."

Bolting frowned his confusion. "She can't be cold. It's well over a hundred degrees today. What's wrong with her? Is she ill?"

The deep masculine voice that suddenly issued from Jackie's mouth startled Bolting, Cadafa, and Bell into wide-eyed wonderment.

"The pits over there. Tonight would be a good time!"

"Good God!" Bolting gasped. "She has a voice like a foghorn. How does she do that?"

Grunewald grinned around his cigar. "That's Black Hawk, her spirit guide. That's what the shivering was about. That's how she announces her presence."

"The spirit guide?" Bell echoed, arching a questioning eyebrow.

"Is Jackie a medium?" Bolting asked. "That's quite a surprise, Wolf. You never mentioned that the two of you had become Spiritualists. I heard it was quite the rage in Austria some years back. It's always been rather popular in parts of Great Britain, of course."

Grunewald produced a couple of tentative clouds of smoke from his cigar. "Neither of us is really a Spiritualist in the formal sense of that term, Neville, although we are spiritual people – as I believe all of us gathered here to be. Jackie received this...gift...when she spent some time with Cherokee Medicine Priests in Okalahoma."

Neville nodded solemnly. "And did I hear you suggest a séance for tonight?"

"Are you all willing?" Grunewald felt Jackie leaning against his legs for support. She had slumped to the parched earth of the hillside after Black Hawk had left her.

"Ah, I've got it," Bolting announced. "You're suggesting that the spook who speaks through Jackie might somehow get acquainted with the spooks who prowl the desert by night."

"Very loosely stated, yes," Grunewald acknowledged, as he knelt to check her pulse.

Cadafa, who had been silent ever since Black Hawk had joined their party so unexpectedly, was compelled to voice another pragmatic consideration. "But what of the language barrier? In point

of fact, I don't know anyone who speaks the dialect of 4,600 years ago."

Grunewald explained that there was no language barrier on the Other Side.

"Black Hawk will interpret and send the impulses in energy waves to Jackie's brain. It will be her voice box and her language storehouse that will do the talking. Black Hawk can only use the mechanisms that she can make available to him. Whatever energies exist here at the pyramid site will be translated into thought and language impulses which she understands."

Bolting shrugged his wiry shoulder dramatically after a few moments of silent reflection. "I'm game."

Paul shook his head and laughed. "Why the hell not?" If we can get any information that will help us crack the mystery of the Star Gods from the Pleiades, I'm willing to give it a shot. Purely in the interest of science, I say, let's give the spooks their chance!"

## Chapter Seven

They returned to the ruins that night around eleven o'clock. The moon was nearly full, and there was a majestic arrangement of clouds moving over the arch of the star-dotted sky.

Demonstrating a swift expertise which gave testimony to his years in the field, Neville Bolting built a comfortable fire against the night chill.

Soon the five of them sat with their backs against the remaining wall of a shepherd's hut. Grunewald clutched two heavy blankets which he held ready to drape over Dr. Jacqueline Hillman when the cold presence of Black Hawk entered her slender frame.

They had sat for several minutes in total silence, staring thoughtfully into the fire, when Bolting broke the reverie with a whisper, "Shall we sing a hymn or something? It seems to me that I've heard of people doing such at séances."

"That won't be at all necessary," Grunewald replied. "Jackie is beginning to make contact. I'm watching her."

Bolting seemed almost disappointed. "Whatever you say. However, I am up to a verse or two of Amazing Grace. You see, my Uncle Simon was a Methodist minister. I used to have a rather good voice, actually. One summer I won first prize at youth camp. I sang Amazing Grace then, too, as a matter of fact."

"Most interesting," Cadafa said.

"Oh, I suppose it's not all that interesting, I admit," Bolting smiled sheepishly. "Just an anecdote to pass the time, don't you see?"

Cadafa smiled. "I did not mean that it was 'interesting' that you had won a prize for singing as a youth," he explained. "What I found interesting at that moment was my seeming to catch a glimpse of a shadowy form directly behind Dr. Hillman."

Paul Bell agreed. "I saw it, too. Or I thought I did."

Jackie began to gasp and shudder, as if a piercing chill had struck her with the unexpected impact of a pail of ice water being doused over her body.

Grunewald draped a blanket over her trembling shoulders.

She dropped her head between her knees, then sat sharply erect, sucking air noisily through clenching teeth.

“Greetings, my brothers.”

The mouth issuing the salutation was Jackie’s. The voice was the baritone thunder of Black Hawk.

“Welcome, Black Hawk,” Bell and Cadafa returned the amenity. Grunewald had given them all a quick course in séance etiquette.

Bolting mumbled something, then sat up straighter and a bit nearer to the fire. The Englishman found it difficult to become involved in the experiment, but his impeccable manners would restrain him from disrespectful behavior.

“Please, my brothers,” Black Hawk importuned them, “visualize a golden circle of light moving around you. Visualize this golden light becoming a shield of protection against forces of negativity. “Please take a moment to do this now”.

“And, Dr. Bolting, if it will assist you, please look upon this as a mental exercise. I assure you that it is quite important.”

Bolting closed his eyes. “Well, where’s the harm in it,” he sighed. “Very well, Black Hawk. I am now visualizing a golden circle of light, totally enveloping me and serving as a buffer against any nasty blighters that might be mulling about.”

“All of you have excellent mental energy,” the spirit voice remarked. “You have a very strong aura, a veritable force field.”

“We may need it,” Paul Bell said glancing over his shoulder into the darkness.

Given the circumstances, one could easily imagine some hideous night creature standing at the edge of the circle of light, watching them, waiting to pounce on them if they relaxed their guard for even an instant.

“I know why you have gathered in this circle tonight,” Black Hawk told them. “You have chosen a place where energy is very thick and heavy. That is good to receive the information that you seek, but you must guard against spirit possession. Those who would possess you are also very strong here.”

“In that case, I shall most certainly concentrate on that aura of golden light,” Bolting said, edging an inch or so closer to the fire.

“Is Black Hawk not somewhat uneasy, being so far from his home in the United States?” Paul whispered to Grunewald.

“On the Other Side, there are no geographical boundaries,” Grunewald answered him. “All is an Eternal Now...an Eternal Where. The demarcation lines of Time and Space are totally obliterated.”

“Black Hawk,” Cadafa asked politely, “may I make an inquiry if the spirit of Pharaoh Djedefre is here among the ruins?”

Jackie’s head jerked sharply to one side, as if listening to a calling voice.

“Yes, the spirit energy of the Pharaoh Djedefre is here,” Black Hawk replied. “He is very sad that he was not able to destroy the Disciples of Belial. Because the Pharaoh and his priests were opposed to the work of the Warrior-Priests of Atlantis, terrible revenge was wrought upon his memory and his family.”

“Belial?” Paul repeated. “That’s Hebrew...”

“It means a person of baseness...a wicked person,” Grunewald supplied.”

“The prince of the devils,” Cadafa refined the definition. “Closely identified with Beelzebub or Satan.”

Bolting was aching to stretch his long legs. “Are any of you familiar with such a cult or a religion as the ‘Disciples of Belial’?”

“Could be a genetic form of devil worshippers,” Paul Bell speculated.

Black Hawk had more information, “The Disciples of Belial came to Egypt from the great land beneath the waters, Atlantis.

“Those warrior-priests claimed to have knowledge directly from the Star Gods that could control the forces of the Earth and The Djedefre with rituals that were already many thousands of years old. They said that they would serve his kingdom for a price, a terrible price that would have delivered all of Egypt into their hands.

“This is most puzzling to me,” Cadafa spoke in soft, measured tones. “Do any of you understand what is being relayed to us?”

Paul nodded solemnly. “It sounds as though what we are hearing closely parallels what we have been translating from certain of the



ancient Tibetan texts. I need to hear more though..."

"Many thousands of years ago," Black Hawk was saying, "in a time shortly after the Star Gods returned to their home in the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades, a secret council of magicians on the continent of Atlantis decided to seize the secret teachings and the power weapons of the Star Gods and to make them their own, for their own greed and for their hunger to establish dominion over others."

Bolting cleared his throat a bit louder than he had intended. "But can all this be real? We cannot prove that Atlantis existed to our scoffing colleagues. How could we establish the existence of a group of evil magicians named the Disciples of Belial, the warrior-priests of Atlantis?"

"On the other hand," Grunewald shrugged, "it is all starting to sound very much like that old occult order known as the Knights of Atlantis. They claim to trace their rites and rituals back to the lost continent."

A tone of urgency hastened Black Hawk's words. "Djedefre is saying that the Disciples of Belial were real in his Earth-time, and he says that they are still real in your Earth-time. They rule in a place of No-Time, where they grow stronger and stronger. Their kingdom in No-Time permits them to be everywhere in Earth-time, not just here in Egypt."

Bolting wanted so very much to stand up and stretch for a moment. "What does all this 'No-Time' chatter mean?"

Cadafa said nothing, but seemed to be studying the entire situation as objectively as possible.

"The Disciples of Belial are in a place between the Earth-world and the world of the Grandfathers a higher, more spiritual plane," Black Hawk patiently explained.

"A limbo," Paul said. "They live in a kind of limbo."

"But they are not helpless there," Black Hawk's voice was firm with warning.

"All whom they seduce on Earth serve them in spirit there, and they seek to possess as many human bodies as possible. Even now, through their great disciple, Adolph Hitler, they are possessing hundreds of thousands of men and women in Germany. Even now,

they are seeking the lost tools of the Star Gods in order to make their armies invincible.

Grunewald would never forget what happened next. Through some incredible kind of thought transference or time displacement or soul memory, he was able to see himself and Paul Raymond Bell in the robes of ancient Egyptian High Priests. They were standing before a pharaoh on a throne, a pharaoh he knew to be Djedefre.

They were in a chamber of some sort. In addition to Paul himself, and the Pharaoh, there were several other priests and men who appeared to be soldiers.

Djedefre was speaking in a very impassioned manner. He was telling them of a threat to the combined kingdoms of Egypt, to the entire known world.

He was commanding his priests and his soldiers to follow him and to destroy the Disciples of Belial.

He had been wrong, the Pharaoh admitted, in welcoming the order of warrior-priests to his court. They were disciples of darkness who practiced human sacrifice and who did other cruel and heinous things to add to their own selfish ends.

At that point in the séance, Grunewald was pulled from his strange and powerful vision by the sound of Dr. Jackie Hillman's sobbing gasp and the production of a voice that sounded as though it was echoing from the bowl of a great cave.

He knew at that moment that Black Hawk had surrendered his control of Jackie to another spirit entity. He also knew that it was to the Pharaoh Djedefre to whom the transfer had been made.

At the same time that the spirit of the Pharaoh spoke, Grunewald could see everything as it had happened over 4,600 years ago.

He beheld a combined army of priests and soldiers marching against the warrior-priests of the ancient Atlantean order of the Disciples of Belial.

"I could see my soul energy as it expressed itself then," he explained, "and I knew that it was I. In the same manner, I could recognize Paul Bell by his soul essence. It is, of course, the soul energy that remains timeless and consistent, regardless of the outward physical appearance of the present incarnation."

The High Priest of the Disciples of Belial spoke from a balcony on a great tower and told the Pharaoh's army what fools they were to oppose them. He gravely informed them that they had power crystals that could dissolve any army that opposed them. The Egyptians must join them, rather than oppose them, for, he warned, they could never defeat them.

Even in the event of their physical deaths, the High Priest informed the Egyptians, the Disciples of Belial triumphed. Through their great magic they had created another world just before the world of the gods. When any of their number died, their spirits possessed the physical bodies of the living whom they had initiated into their order. In death, they became all the more powerful.

They promised much to those who joined their order – wealth, the pleasures of the flesh, earthly power. They were merciful to those who served them. It would be madness not to join them.

Pharaoh Djedefre and his loyal priests could not be swayed by false promises. With cries of praise to the forces of Light, the royal army attacked the invaders.

They had not the slightest chance against the Disciples of Belial. They were lifted into the air by unseen forces and dashed to the ground. Many of the soldiers burst into flames, the flesh melting from their bones. The warrior-priests possessed powers beyond the Egyptians' imagining, beyond their gods' powers to aid them.

Through his past-life memory vision, Grunewald saw several of his friends stagger to their feet to take the vow of servitude to the Disciples of Belial.

The soul essences of Paul Bell and Grunewald were among a handful of Egyptian priests who defiantly proclaimed that they would never serve the forces of darkness, even if it cost them their physical lives.

It was at this point in the séance that Grunewald's full consciousness came back to the present moment, and he became aware of a series of gasps and sobbings which were shaking Jackie Hillman's body. Tears coursed freely down her cheeks as the entity Djedefre continued to utilize her body to explain how the brotherhood of darkness had destroyed his dynasty.

“My pyramid was nearly completed,” the spirit entity cried out in anguish. “It would have risen far higher than my father’s. It would nearly have touched the sun, but the evil ones destroyed it.”

“Incredible,” Bolting gasped incredulously. “The Disciples of Belial destroyed the pyramid with their black magic?”

“How long did it take the dark brotherhood to destroy your massive pyramid?” Cadafa asked, his curiosity triumphing over his bewilderment.

“In but the blinking of an eye,” was the surprising answer that the spirit essence of Djedefre uttered. “They used the crystals which they had stolen from the God-men of Atlantis, the inheritors of the Star Gods from the Pleiades.”

“Those were very great crystals indeed, if they demolished a pyramid of gigantic blocks of limestone and granite in the blink of an eye!” Bolting shook his head in controlled disbelief.

“The Disciples of Belial told me that they destroyed my pyramid in revenge for my daring to oppose them,” the spirit of Djedefre said, his voice rising to wail.

“They said that they would use me as an example for ages to come. They would obliterate all records that bore my name and the names of my family. It would be as if I had never been.”

“If all this happened before death,” Cadafa spoke up, “then you never were entombed in your burial chamber.”

“That was my death!” Djedefre exclaimed, his voice becoming a keening cry. “Their magic transported me to my burial chamber. Then I screamed in horror as they brought the pyramid down around me...before the chamber had been properly prepared with my Star Boat to the Gods!”

The wail rose in pitch until it had become a ghastly replication of Djedefre’s dying scream of terror and anguish.

After nearly two minutes of complete silence, Djedefre’s voice came again, but this time it sounded as a whisper of thankfulness.

The spirit essence of the ancient Egyptian pharaoh lifted the hand of Dr. Jacqueline Hillman to point a forefinger at Paul Bell. “It was you, my dear and loyal priest, who put the evil brotherhood to rout.”

Paul had begun to perspire freely in spite of the night's chill. At first the idea of a spiritualistic séance had offended his scientific sensibilities. He had gone along with it only because of his respect for Grunewald and his fondness for Jackie Hillman.

But somehow, in spite of his reservations, the information that his friend's mediumship had produced was striking strangely responsive chords somewhere deep in his psyche.

The spirit entity continued its bizarre account of an event in ancient history that would never be told by an orthodox history book.

"You, Bell, Grunewald, together with a small group of my most loyal priests who had been sentenced to lifelong slavery, threw all thought of personal safety to the winds and seized the emerald receptor of the Star Gods."

According to the spirit essence of Djedefre, the soul essence that was now Paul Raymond Bell – and was then an Egyptian priest – boldly rushed forward and ripped the Star God's medallion from the chest of the astonished High Priest.

The soul essence that was now Grunewald threw himself on the swords and spears of the Disciples of Belial. Other priests loyal to Djedefre did the same. Each man willingly sacrificed his life in an attempt to reclaim the Star Gods' receptor for the forces of Light.

Although the Egyptians' rebellion lasted but a few hours and ended in the total massacre of all the priests of Pharaoh Djedefre, the young priest who snatched the medallion had somehow managed to escape. He found sanctuary in the Temple of Hathor, goddess of joy and love, and was able to create an energy field around the structure that kept the Disciples of Belial away.

"He was assisted in this goal by a beautiful Star Goddess," Djedefre said. "Although the Star Gods may not interfere in the events of human history, they can serve as instructors, guides, and teachers. It was through the guidance of the Star Goddess that the receptor was kept from falling again into the hands of the Disciples of Belial."

The séance was ended at that point. Grunewald pointed out that Jackie had been entranced far longer than was healthful for her

psychological well-being, and Cadafa was growing concerned by the lateness of the hour and the long journey back to Cairo.

Very little was said during the drive to their hotel, but the next morning over breakfast, the conversation was lively and the varying viewpoints sometimes heated.

Had the evening been nothing more than an entertaining diversion before they set about the seriousness of an extensive dig? Was it really possible that alleged spirits, speaking through Dr. Jacqueline Hillman, could offer information of value that could be substantiated?

“We have always been the open-minded mavericks of archaeology,” Neville Bolting said over his fourth cup of tea. “But can even we put credence into the validity of our ‘experiment’ last night? I don’t mean in any way to slight your belief structure, my dear Jackie, but can this mean all that spook talk about evil magicians destroying a pyramid be at all true”?

“What can I tell you, Neville?” she shrugged, seemingly untouched by the debate which her mediumship had provoked. “Black Hawk’s information has hitherto always been most reliable. It is up to you to accept it or reject it”.

Dr. Cadafa finished the last bite of his toast before he contributed to the discussion. “Can we really solve one of the greatest mysteries of Egypt so handily...and so bizarrely? Which of us will be the first to commit such a tale to the literature of archaeology?”

Dr. Paul Bell rose to his feet and set his napkin atop his plate. “I care little for academic acceptance at this point, my friends.

“In my opinion, everything we heard last night corroborated the information that we have gained from the ancient Tibetan texts and other volumes of forgotten history. Something within my very essence believes in the communication which was given to us through Jackie’s mediumship. Since we were told that the Temple of Hathor shelters a prize beyond all human, I choose to set out at once for Denderah.”

Grunewald swallowed his coffee with a noisy gulp, rising to stand by the side of his former student.

“It probably goes without saying that I agree with Dr. Bell. Those who wish may join in our journey to Denderah and the Temple of Hathor.”

The harsh voice that intruded upon the privacy of their breakfast conversation startled every member of the group. “I am hereby informing Dr. Grunewald and Dr. Hillman that they will not be going anywhere without first providing me with a complete report of what they are doing here in Egypt!”

Although the voice was guttural and commanding and strove to be demandingly masculine, it was strangely feminine in its tonal quality.

Grunewald emitted a bear-like growl at the intrusion, then turned to face the unwelcome guest.

His mouth dropped open in astonishment, and whatever expletive he might have unleashed on the man faded away with a soft gasp of surprise.

He was looking into the cruel, deep-set blue eyes of Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the Gestapo.

## Chapter Eight

“Heydrich is onto the purpose for our expedition in Egypt,” Grunewald told his friend when they met later that evening for dinner. “We must be very careful from here on out.”

“But how could the Nazis know?” Paul Bell asked doubtfully, as if his disbelief could somehow disallow the reality of Grunewald’s warning.

“The paper that I gave at Munich last summer,” Dr. Jackie Hillman explained. “The article that Bolting published in the International Archaeologists Journal. The seminar that Grunewald conducted in Vienna in 1936. The monograph that you, Dr. Bell, published on The True Meaning of Alchemy Among the Cathars.”

“The Gestapo have been piecing it all together,” Grunewald sighed, setting aside his knife and fork, his appetite vanishing along with their hopes for a successful dig.

“Plus,” Jackie added, her voice trembling with rage. “They have been intercepting our correspondence.”

“The miserable swine,” Bolting hissed before taking a large swig of his gin and tonic.

“But can they know everything that we have uncovered?” Bell refused to acknowledge the uncomfortable fact that they had been discovered in their secret quest.

“How could they?” Cadafa joined Bell’s protest.

Grunewald slapped his palm against the table for emphasis. “I would like to think that we are much more resourceful and far less helpless than rabbits against hawks.”

“How much do they know?” Bolting asked, squaring his thin shoulders to except the worst.

“They are basing most of their hypothesis on ancient occult lore, the theories of Rudolf Steiner and other mystics, and many of the same Tibetan texts which we have been translating,” Jackie answered succinctly.



“They are primarily pursuing the great power sources in order to assure world victory for the Third Reich,” Grunewald added, his mouth forming a grimace of distaste.

“Expeditions are even now after the Holy Grail, the spear that pierced Christ’s side, the Ark of the Covenant, and so on. In the opinion of Hitler and his advisors, perhaps the greatest power of all would come from the artifacts left behind by extraterrestrials in Earth’s prehistory.”

Jackie Hillman picked idly at the crust of her dinner roll as she spoke. “Steiner wrote that the Atlanteans, the people of our prehistory, had been largely guided and directed by a higher order of beings who interacted and communicated with the smartest, the strongest, and the most intellectually flexible of the early humans.

“Eventually, these select folks produced what might be called demigods, divine human beings, who, in turn, could relay instructions from higher intelligence.

“Throughout history,” Dr. Hillman continued, “there have been those within the larger, evolving human race who have been descendants of those divine human hybrid beings, men and women who are animated by higher ideals, who regard themselves as children of a divine, universal power.”

Paul Bell studied the white wine that he had set to swirling in his glass. “And I imagine,” he said, as if divining a message from the sparkling liquid, “that the Nazis consider themselves as these divine human hybrid beings.”

“Or,” Grunewald added, “those aware humans who are preparing themselves to become such beings so that they might be acceptable to the Star Gods when they return to the planet.”

“Steiner tells us about the emerging Sixth Post-Atlantean Race that would be children of the divine universal power,” Dr. Hillman stated. “These beings will be able to initiate those men and women who have developed their faculty of thought so that they might better unite themselves with the divine.”

Grunewald quietly unwrapped the cellophane from a long, thick cigar, placing it between his lips. “Heydrich showed us their

translation of hieroglyphic records that apparently described spacecraft in Egypt in 1482 B.C.”

Cadafa loosened his tie, then bent forward to light Grunewald’s cigar. “Hmm,” he thought out loud, “you said 1482 B.C.? That would be during the reign of Thutmose III.”

“That is correct,” Jackie Hillman confirmed her colleague’s memory. “And according to the records, Pharaoh Thutmose himself went for a ride on a spaceship.”

“Go on,” Bell urged.

“By all means,” Bolting grinned. “It is at least somewhat reassuring to discover that those Nazi knuckleheads can actually think.”

“It was a warm winter’s morning,” Grunewald said, emitting thick clouds of cigar smoke as he repeated the Nazis’ discovery. “The hieroglyphics describe the spaceship as a ‘circle of fire’. It emitted a sound, as is indicated by the inscription stating that the object ‘had a voice’.”

“And there was more than one spaceship,” Jackie told them. “The hieroglyphs go on to say that after some days had passed, the things became more numerous than ever.”

Paul Bell had allowed himself to accept one of Grunewald’s cigars and between somewhat noisy puffs; he asked if the ancient records contained any detailed description of the craft.

Jackie nodded. “They were described as extremely bright...brighter than the brightness of the sun. They were relatively small, according to their translator’s figures, about 16 feet in diameter.”

“Heydrich theorizes that they were probably some kind of reconnaissance vehicles and that there was a larger spaceship much farther away, perhaps even orbiting Earth,” Grunewald commented.

“But what was this you said about Thutmose himself entering a spacecraft?” Cadafa asked. “Or were you just joking?”

“Heydrich told us,” Jackie Hillman answered, “that the ancient records reveal that Thutmose ‘flew up to the sky’ and learned the

'mysterious ways in heaven'. The Nazis believe without a doubt that such passages describe a voyage into space."

"Is there more?" Bell persisted.

"Thutmose III was transferred from a smaller vehicle to some kind of airbase that was orbiting the Earth," Jackie went on. "There he met with extraterrestrial beings which he believed to be gods. After conferring with them and viewing space, the pharaoh was returned to Earth via the smaller craft."

"And that was 3,400 years ago," Bolting shook his head in wonder.

"And according to our findings," Bell pointed out, that would have been an interplanetary visit in comparatively recent times. "Remember, they believe that Atlantis was originally colonized by the Star Gods. Since Egypt appears to have been one of the more advanced of the Atlantean colonies after the mother continent was destroyed in a series of cataclysms, they are convinced, as are we, that there are artifacts of the Star Gods hidden throughout this country."

Paul Bell coughed on cigar smoke and placed the thick cylinder of tobacco in an ash tray. "Yes, and I believe the information that came to us through your guide Black Hawk has great validity. I believe that we should pursue that communication and begin to dig near the temple of Hathor at Denderah. I have always believed that a smaller vault or temple lies buried near the large edifice. I feel intuitively that the medallion of which the spirits spoke will be found there."

Grunewald shifted uncomfortably as he tapped a glowing section of cigar ash into a tray." And Jackie and I agree with you. But you must please understand that Heydrich and his Gestapo agents are watching us like..."

"Yes, yes, I know," Paul finished the sentence for Grunewald. "Like hawks. They watch us like hawks."

"Paul," Jackie began, unconsciously lowering her voice as if unseen spies strained to catch her every word. "You must not underestimate Heydrich. You must clearly understand with whom you are now dealing."

“That pompous goose-stepper has no more control over me than him,” or you would have spent the afternoon accounting for your actions as Jackie and myself did.”

“But remember, dear Paul,” Jackie seemed sorry to remind her friend of the true reality of the situation. “You are not now in Los Angeles. You are in a foreign country that grows increasingly under the influence of Germany. You are far away from home at a time when another terrible world war seems inevitable.”

Paul Bell grew quiet, suddenly very lonely for Natalie, his wife, and the very center of his life. Both of them had understood the grim political scene when he left Los Angeles. Paul begged Natalie to try to understand that the expedition was something he simply had to do.

“Himmler himself appointed Heydrich Sturmführer in 1931,” Jackie said. “Then a couple months later elevated him to Sturmbannführer and took him to Munich.”

“That would be the equivalent to a British major,” Bolting stated. “Correct?”

Grunewald nodded, then provided a thumbnail sketch of Heydrich. “In July of 1932, Himmler entrusted him with the task of reorganizing the Security Service and promoted him to the rank of colonel, a Standartenführer. Then, in 1934, Himmler decided that Heydrich was gifted enough to direct both the Gestapo and the S.S., which had now become the Sicherheitsdienst, the S.D.”

Jackie could not suppress a shudder. “And he is so cruel that he makes Attila the Hun seem like a friendly pastry baker. He makes even the most savage of the Gestapo torturers tremble before him.”

“And in spite of his impeccable mode of dress and his seeming respectability,” Grunewald continued, lowering his voice as if to avoid secret Gestapo listening devices, “he is sexually imbalanced. I have it on good account that he prowls the cheapest dives and consorts with the coarsest of prostitutes.”

Paul Bell found it difficult to believe that they were describing the ramrod stiff marionette with the high-pitched voice that had interrupted their breakfast that morning.

He would sketch Heydrich as a tall, slim, well-built man who definitely possessed the highly prized Germanic virtue of a fine military bearing. His eyes had seemed peculiarly Mongolian, heavy-lidded, almost slanted beneath an abnormally high receding forehead. Heydrich's ears were a bit too large for his long, oval face, and his long, straight nose stopped above unusually full, thick lips.

But most of all Bell recalled with interest the man's high-pitched, almost feminine voice. It seemed so strangely out of place in such a masculine and athletic male body.

"Cadafa, do you still have the connections at Denderah to put together a digging party 'chop, chop' in a hurry?" Bell asked, turning his thoughts away from monstrous Gestapo agents and back to the medallion of the Star Gods.

"Yes, Paul," the Egyptian smiled enthusiastically. "We are going ahead with dig, the Nazis be damned!"

"The Nazis be damned!" Paul Raymond Bell had come to fulfill his destiny, the very reason he had been born. He would not allow any strutting madmen to interfere with his reclaiming a gift from the Star Gods.

## Chapter Nine

Denderah, a town in Egypt, is situated on the western bank of the Nile, about forty miles north of Thebes. It is only a day's travel by rail from Cairo, but it is a giant step back into the past.

They had all followed Paul Bell to the Temple of Hathor – Wolf Grunewald, Jackie Hillman, Neville Bolting, and Omar Cadafa. Cadafa's contact in the area, a resourceful Egyptian named Mustafa, had a crew of twenty good diggers eager to earn shiny coins from the crazy foreigners who wanted to sift sand.

Now it was Paul Bell's vision that guided them. "I am convinced," he would address his colleagues repeatedly as they sat around the campfires at night, "that the information that Jackie relayed through her mediumship is correlative with the translations from the ancient texts. And I am certain that an object of great power rests somewhere in a smaller temple or a library near the larger building dedicated to Hathor."

It was now mid-June. They had been only two weeks at the site, and Reinhard Heydrich and a number of his men had visited them four times.

Dr. Bell had managed to avoid a confrontation with the Gestapo chief on his first visit, but it seemed unavoidable upon his second "invasion" of the excavation area.

"I resent your terming our friendly visit an 'invasion,' Dr. Bell," Heydrich frowned, protesting the archaeologist's choice of words in that voice that was pitched two tones too high for his body.

"I cannot see that you have any business interfering with our work, Herr Heydrich," Bell said firmly, deliberately lowering his voice to emphasize the contrast between their tonal qualities. This is an international dig. It is not sponsored by Germany."

"But two of your colleagues are German, and my nationalistic zeal urges me to come to rejoice in their endeavors," Heydrich smiled unctuously.

“They are busy ‘endeavoring’ to dig holes in the earth,” Paul Bell indicated the work crews with a nod over his shoulder. You are welcome to pick up a shovel and lend a hand.”

Heydrich glanced at his hands, tightly embraced by black leather gloves. For the first time, Paul noticed how small they were, like a woman’s.

“These are the hands of an aristocrat, if you please,” Heydrich replied. “They are not meant for crude manual labor.”

Paul had heard awful stories from Grunewald and Hillman about just precisely with which kinds of terrible tasks those hands had busied themselves.

Heydrich was a master of torture. Even those citizens suspected of minor crimes were beaten as a matter of course. If one should be unfortunate enough to actually be arrested, he could expect to be kicked, lashed, and burned with cigarette butts. If there was the slightest suspicion that the prisoner had not told all that he knew, teeth would be filed, nails torn out, and electric wires would be placed on the most sensitive areas of the anatomy.

“Don’t trifle with the man,” Jackie Hillman had warned him. “He is a pervert, a sadist, who would just as soon cut your throat as shake your hand!”

Heydrich folded his arms across his chest. His heavy-lidded blue eyes narrowed to thin slits. The high pitched voice did not quaver as it delivered an unmistakable threat: “Dr. Bell, you will turn any artifacts of an extraterrestrial origin over to me. That must be clearly understood by you.”

Paul Bell took his time lighting a cigarette from the pack that Cadafa had left lying on the tent table. So it was true. The Nazis truly had been seeking power objects from the Star Gods.

“Heydrich,” he answered the man coldly, “I am an American citizen. As I have already reminded you, Germany is not paying our bills for this dig.”

Heydrich’s demeanor remained calm. “You are a German by heritage, Dr. Bell. Where is your nationalistic pride? To whom should you deliver such a prize, should you unearth it, other than to your Führer?”

“He’s not *my* Führer,” Bell corrected him. “If we are fortunate to discover any extraterrestrial power devices, they will belong to the world.”

“You fool,” Heydrich managed to insult without excessive rancor warping his speech. “Don’t you understand that the world will soon belong to us? You talk of the Star Gods. Can you not comprehend that Hitler is himself a god-man, and he is transforming Nazi Germany into a race of supermen so that we might be prepared to embrace the Star Gods when they return?”

Bell tried to walk away, but the Gestapo leader caught his elbow and held him fast. The hands, although small, were remarkably strong, and they clutched at him like steel bands. It was obvious that Heydrich intended to have his say.

“Return to Germany as a hero,” he offered Bell. “Even now, other expeditions are gathering the Holy Grail, the Spear of Destiny, and the Ark of the Covenant. When you bring the Führer a receptor of the Star Gods, he will crown you with glory. He will make you a Knight of the New Atlantis.”

Paul knew that the man spoke irresponsibly. To his knowledge, none of the holy artifacts had actually been located – in spite of Hitler’s obsessional desire to possess them.

The archaeologist shook free of Heydrich’s grip. “I must return to my work. If you have simply come to observe as a tourist, please try not to get in anyone’s way. If you have come to interfere, I shall have you and your thugs forcibly removed from our camp.”

Heydrich broke his icy composure to laugh contemptuously at the threat. “You are far from America, Dr. Bell.”

Paul shrugged. “And you are far from Germany. Your rules don’t apply here.”

Heydrich was not used to having anyone defy him. “As the new lords of the Earth, our rules apply whenever we want them to be obeyed. Besides, you must have noticed those four stalwart young men who accompany me. I have, you see, brought some of Germany with me. And believe me, Dr. Bell, there are many more of such fine examples of Hitler’s servants in Cairo.”



“Did you say ‘serpents’ or ‘servants’?” Paul asked as he turned on his heel and strode purposefully away from the Gestapo chief.

Then, since he could not resist looking back to observe the man fuming, he added: “I am warning you once again not to interfere with our work here!”

The next day, three of the “fine examples of Hitler’s servants” joined the digging crews.

“We had no choice,” Jackie Hillman tried to explain to the angry Dr. Bell. “You must remember that Wolf and I have families back in Germany. We cannot so arrogantly defy the strutting bastard.”

Later, when Grunewald and Bell were having a game of chess near the campfire, the older man spoke pleadingly to his former student. “Paul, we asked you not to make waves with Heydrich. All that your defiance has accomplished is to have three spies placed directly in our encampment.”

Paul would not be chastised for his contempt for Heydrich. “I have not spent all these years translating musty documents and seeking the glory of the Star Gods only to turn our prize over to a madman and his sadistic henchmen!”

“Perhaps it would be best if you returned home to America,” Grunewald commented. “The international political scene worsens with every day.”

“I can’t leave now. Not now, Wolf.”

“But if war should break out and you become stranded here...” Grunewald pointed out. “You could be trapped here – away from Natalie – for years.”

The very words brought pain. The thought of being separated from his beloved Natalie for such a lengthy period of time brought an anguish of the soul.

“She knows the risks,” Paul said, steeling himself against the emotional rush. “We discussed the matter thoroughly. She knows the importance of this mission.”

It was on June 24 that Paul Bell borrowed one of the expedition’s trucks and decided to drive to nearby Thebes to visit one of his favorite marketplaces in all of Egypt. Perhaps he would find something wonderful to send to Natalie back in the States.

In addition to an errand of the heart, he decided that he simply needed a break from the routine. They had now been at the dig for a month without finding any trace of a supplementary building to the Temple of Hathor. They were becoming restless and impatient. Everyone else had already taken a day or two to rest. He had doggedly stayed at the site. Now it was his turn to indulge himself in a change of scenery or he would be liable to explode into a screaming tangle of frustration and confusion.

## Chapter Ten

Dr. Paul Raymond Bell was seated in a small outdoor restaurant with a marvelous view of the Nile. He was enjoying his second bottle of Egyptian beer when he became aware of two things: It had grown dark, and there was a woman standing bedside his table.

“If you come with me, you shall receive that which you seek,” she said in a soft, musical voice that was somehow strangely familiar.

Paul chuckled, assuming his bold visitor to be a woman of the streets. “You – and any woman – may have generically that for which you think I am seeking. But I receive such a feminine blessing only from my lovely wife. Now, please be a nice lady and leave me alone.”

Her laughter was like faraway tinkling bells. “You have misunderstood me, Paul, my dear one. I come not to violate your marriage vows.”

At the sound of his name, he looked up, startled, confused. Although the woman was clothed in the traditional multi-layered feminine costume of the region, her brilliant emerald-green eyes seized his complete attention as they stared at him from above the veil.

“W-who are you?” He was cautious, suspicious of the green-eyed woman in a nation overflowing with dark-eyed native women.

Again the melody of her laughter. “No, I am not a Nazi spy come here to seduce you,” she said, reading his thoughts.

“Then how is it that you know my name?” he demanded.

“I have always known your names,” she answered.

“What do you mean my names?”

“Your name has not always been Paul, after all. Five thousand years ago, it was something very different. And before that...”

Who was this woman who was playing games with him?

Once again she answered his unspoken question. “You would best remember me as Semjase.”

At the sound of her name, Paul was caught in a swirling vortex of strange, beautiful memories that whirled around him so rapidly he was unable to seize any of them firmly enough or long enough to make complete sense of them. "I...know you," was all he could at last manage to utter.

"Most certainly, my dear one," the woman conceded. "Now please do come with me. We can speak no longer in this public place. Those Nazi spies about whom you are concerned are not far from here."

Without another word, Paul rose, tossed some money on the table to pay for his food and drink, and then followed the mysterious lady into the night.

Wolf Grunewald found him late the next afternoon, sleeping soundly behind the wheel of the truck he had borrowed for the drive to Thebes.

Paul rubbed his eyes and accepted a drink from the canteen of water that his friend offered him. He squinted against the setting sun, looking around him at the great expanse of wilderness. "How did I get here?"

"You tell me," Grunewald grumbled. "We were worried when you did not return last night. I set out this morning, and I have spent the day searching for you."

"How...how did you find me?"

Grunewald's face was solemn. "It seemed as though I heard a voice...a woman's voice...inside my head, directing me to you."

The brilliant green eyes...the melodic laughter...the memory of Semjase returned to Paul. And with the recollection of the woman came so much more.

"It was Semjase," Paul said, his voice but a whisper.

"Who? What?" Grunewald leaned closer to hear.

Paul's hands reached out to clutch at his friend's arms. "My dear Wolf," he gasped, "I believe that I was on some strange aerial vehicle last night. I was on a spaceship with a woman from another world. Her name is Semjase.

"She told me that she had known both of us – you and me in prior life experiences.

“Although she is very beautiful and appears to be a young woman, she is somehow many hundreds of our earth-years old. She led you to me.”

When Grunewald broke his brief silence, his response astonished Paul: “I believe that is true. Last night, several villagers and those of us at camp sighted a strange aerial vehicle that appeared to be glowing in the dark sky. Some thought it to be a sign of God or Allah.

“Heydrich at first took it to be some kind of experimental aircraft, but now he, too, is convinced that it was of extraterrestrial origin.”

Paul Bell shook his head, and took another drink of water. He was still groggy, as if awakening from a deep sleep or a trance state. “And Heydrich? What of him and his men?”

“They, too, search for you, my friend. They somehow believe you to be connected with all of the strange signs in the sky. And it would appear that they are correct. You are.”

Paul returned the canteen to Grunewald. “It is good that they are searching for me. That means that they are away from the camp. We must return as soon as possible.”

“You would be foolish to return to the lions’ den,” Grunewald warned him.

Paul’s eyes widened excitedly, and his laughter was unrestrained. “Who cares about those simple-minded clods?” He roared. Look what I have!”

Reaching inside his shirt, Paul withdrew a golden medallion with an emerald in its center. “She called it an ‘Emerald Nuclear Receptor’, Wolf. It somehow transfers power into the brain. It can transform an ordinary man into a superman. It can teach us the science of tomorrow as it is known today on her planet.”

Grunewald’s mouth dropped in awe. “She...the woman Semjase...the alien...she gave this to you?”

Paul nodded, unable to stop the sudden tears that had begun to fill his eyes.

Then, ever the scholar, Grunewald asked, “What are all these lines and markings? Some are raised. Do they somehow focus energy?”

Paul replied that he had few answers. "I know, however, that the instructions that she gave me will all return when I wear the receptor."

Grunewald wondered about the "instructions" that Semjase had provided.

"We spoke all night," Paul sighed, shaking his head in wonder. "It is all so unbelievable."

"You are now like Elijah," Grunewald said, slumping down in the seat beside his friend. "You have been taken to heaven in a fiery chariot."

"It was not heaven," Paul smiled his correction. "But compared to Earth, it was the closest thing to it."

Paul started the truck and told Grunewald to lead him back to their camp as quickly as possible. It would soon be nightfall. They had things to do before Heydrich and his men returned to the encampment.

It was after midnight when the two men entered the Temple of Hathor.

"Our most expansive dreams are about to be realized," Paul said. His breath had begun to come in short gasps, and he forced himself to restore calm before they proceeded down the hallway to the room with the vaulted ceiling.

"This has to be the one," he said, as much to himself as to Grunewald. Then, directing the beam of his flashlight upward, he rewarded himself with an explosive "Eureka'!"

"Yes," Grunewald shrugged, wanting to be included in the discovery.

"See there, on the ceiling," Paul pointed out. "The star cluster of the Pleiades. Semjase and her...kind...are from the Pleiades, just as we suspect."

"To my knowledge," Grunewald asserted, "this is the only temple in Egypt with the Pleiades on its ceiling."

Paul unfolded the ladder they had brought with them, bade Grunewald to steady it for him as he climbed it, and then set about pressing the ceiling in various places. "Semjase told me that there is a hidden chamber above the ceiling."

Grunewald watched his friend make several unsuccessful attempts before his scholarship exerted itself. “Paul, perhaps Alcyone, the central star of the constellation. Maybe it is also the central point in the map that reveals the entrance to the hidden chamber.”

“Of course!” Paul chuckled. “You always were the only teacher I ever had who knew more than I did.”

A push on Alcyone, and a panel slid back revealing a small room above them. Paul pulled himself up into the space, then re-emerged to call down to Grunewald.

“Come up, I’ll give you a hand.”

Grunewald shook his head sadly. “I could never make it. You go ahead.”

You must!” Paul argued. This is why we were born!”

“Please, Paul,” Grunewald choked back his tears of frustration. “I could neither fit through that panel nor pull my bulk into it. Go on ahead.”

Sensing that time was at a premium, Paul accepted the reality of the situation.

His flashlight beam identified another small room ahead of him. He approached the room cautiously, and just before he entered, he picked up a small bit of fallen stone from the aging floor and threw it across the threshold.

As the projectile passed through the opening, it was vaporized by a bluish-green ray.

“Thank God. I am remembering Semjase’s instructions,” he slowly exhaled his gratitude for avoiding disintegration.

He entered the room and looked about for an indentation in the exposed door sill.

After a moment of searching, he located a small, recessed circular pattern. He removed the medallion from his neck and inserted it into the indented area.

“A perfect fit,” he said aloud, wiping away the sweat from his eyes with a sleeve. It was almost unbearably warm in the secret temple chamber.

“Dear God, please make it work after all these centuries!”

His prayer was rewarded with the sound of a faint metallic whine as the protective device was being deactivated.

The room, dark as a hundred midnights, began to glow faintly, as if the walls had been painted with a luminescent paint. All around him now, Paul would perceive a wide variety of objects and icons – none of which were Egyptian.

“Atlantis,” he decreed, saying the word as if it, too, were a kind of prayer. “It is just as the ancient Tibetan texts told us.”

He could now see that the room appeared to be pyramid-shaped, about twelve feet wide and eight feet high.

As his eyes climbed the full height, he noticed an emerald colored case embedded in the apex of the ceiling. In the bottom of the case, which hovered but a couple of feet above his head, was another recession that he knew would once again match the medallion.

Almost immediately after he had placed the receptor into the recession, he heard a soft ticking. In a few moments, the capstone dropped from the ceiling and into his waiting hands.

Quickly, recalling Semjase’s instructions, he placed the capstone on a coffer-shaped table in the middle of the room. As soon as the object was securely placed, its sides fell away to reveal a number of emeralds and an ancient papyrus covered with sand script captions and a large engraved picture.

Paul carefully pressed the papyrus on the table so that he might better examine it. The picture was of a beautiful girl with long hair and large, glowing eyes. “Semjase,” he muttered. “She appears to be timeless.”

Focusing the beam of the flashlight on the papyrus, he read the captions aloud.

“We are from a place of time eternal. Our quest is forever locked in your heart, dear one. In love we shall ring among the contents. “This strikes a familiar chord,” he mused. “It must be that I am to take it with me.”

As Paul retreated from the secret room, a document fell unnoticed from his pocket and landed on the chamber floor.

He had no sooner exited the room when a previously unseen door slid into place with a soft scraping sound and sealed it for another



portion of eternity.

The same action occurred as soon as he returned to the main room and to his waiting companion. The panel in the ceiling closed with a kind of finality that indicated it would be extremely difficult to reopen it.

In a great exuberant rush of words, Dr. Paul Bell tried to describe the priceless treasures of the Aantediluvian civilization and of a world even older.

“Atlantis!” he exclaimed, embracing his friend. “Artifacts and objects that will boggle the senses. And objects from the Pleiades! Creations of a technology that will defy our science!”

“I want to hear about all of it, Paul,” Grunewald smiled, blinking back tears of joy commingled with sadness. “But I truly believe that you must now leave us. You must return to America. You must get away from here at once with your new knowledge and your new treasure.”

Paul looked into the face of his old teacher and friend, and he felt tears come to his own eyes. “I suppose that you are correct. We must take no chances that this knowledge will fall into the hands of the Nazi warlords.”

“We must pray to almighty God that one day there will be Germany – and a world – that will be ready to receive the eternal blessings of our brothers and sisters from the stars,” Grunewald uttered the words as though pronouncing a benediction.

He embraced Bell again, then indicated that the younger man should follow him.

The two men left the Temple of Hathor and were descending the steps when the high-pitched male voice shattered the darkness:

“Herr Doctor Bell! Doctor Grunewald! What are the two of you doing here after dark?”

It was difficult at first to determine how many flashlight beams were assaulting their eyes, but Bell was certain that Heydrich had at least three men with him.

“Where else would two archaeologists rather be than in some old temple after dark?” Grunewald smiled, trying a bit of humor and the casual approach.

Paul went on the offensive. "Herr Heydrich, I warned you that this was our dig. How can it even enter your mind that you have any right to tell us where to be in our camp and on our excavation?"

"Ah, ja," Heydrich laughed in mock terror. "We must respect your orders or you will have us forcibly ejected. Is that not what you threatened?"

"Your memory appears sounder than your manners, Herr Heydrich," Paul told him.

"Then you are now going to have us forcibly ejected?"

Heydrich had come within a few feet of them. Paul could hear the low, guttural sounds of his men laughing and sneering at them. He remembered the warnings of Jackie Hillman not to trifle with this sadistic man who loved to torture, to maim, and to kill.

He could now see the Luger pistols in the hands of the Gestapo agents.

"We are finished with the playing of games, Herr Bell," Heydrich said firmly. "We saw the aerial vehicle last night. We know that you made some kind of contact with it. If you have discovered any artifact of the Star Gods, you must surrender it to the glory of the Third Reich."

Paul felt icy beads of sweat moving down the small of his back. Was there no deliverance? If only Semjase's spaceship would hover above them and send down rays that would disintegrate Heydrich and his Gestapo stooges.

But he remembered the words of the beautiful teacher as she informed him that they were not permitted to interfere with the actions of humans or to alter the course of human history. She had already violated many of the Council's precepts by materializing to hand him the receptor.

Paul now realized what a risk the spacewoman had taken by entering the vibration of Earth to give him the precious object.

And what now if the receptor fell into the hands of the Nazis and they used its powers to fashion terrible machines of war?

"Search them!" Heydrich ordered his men.

Paul lurched to his side, and in his fear, he clumsily dropped the ring that he had taken from the capstone. He felt a sickening wave of

nausea sweep over him as he heard the ring clanking down two or three temple steps.

As Bell got down on his knees to search for the fallen ring, he realized Grunewald was right. He still had the receptor.

Paul ran for the Nile. He ran for life. He ran to give hope to the world.

He heard the thudding sounds of pistol butts and barrels striking his friend. Then he heard the shots, the bullets zipping by him and into the night.

The thought of his old friend being beaten caused him to turn, to hesitate, to consider going back to help him.

That was when the bullets struck his chest and slammed him backward into the Nile.

## Chapter Eleven

Tears glistened on the furrowed cheeks of Dr. Wolf Grunewald as he completed his account of the death of Dr. Bell's father. Kim Kingswold had quietly joined the group during the course of the narrative, and she held Fred's hands tightly in her own.

Brad Bronson handed the elderly archaeologist a steaming cup of coffee. "Thank you, my friend," Grunewald said, acknowledging the courtesy.

Eric Powell had been visibly moved by the story, but his mind was not contented to accept the tale as it was. "If the last time that you ever saw Fred's father alive...and if he sank into the Nile wearing the medallion...how is it that Fred now has the object in his possession?" he asked.

Fred wiped his eyes on the handkerchief that Kim handed him, then broke his period of silence. "I was going to give you a few moments to refresh yourself with a cup of coffee, but I, too, was going to ask for the conclusion of the story."

"Yes, Dr. Grunewald," Bronson added his comments. "In literary terms, you have given us the climax to the story, now we want to hear the ending."

The man shifted his bulk on the couch. "I am sorry. My mind wandered with the sorrow of the memory of seeing my dear friend – your father, falling into the Nile.

"It was, of course, very dark, and the Gestapo probed the night with their flashlights, attempting to find some sign of Paul. Heydrich was cursing them for being trigger-happy fools. 'If we do not find his body, we will never gain the receptor!' he shouted, over and over."

"They knew that my father had been given the receptor by the spacewoman?" Fred asked, crinkling his brow. "How did they know?"

Grunewald shook his head. "I can only guess that one of the Gestapo must have observed us when we returned to the camp. I was so dazed and bloodied from the beating with the pistol butts that when he asked me if it were true that Paul had the receptor in his

possession, I answered with a roaring 'yes' and gales of laughter. 'And now the Third Reich shall never possess it,' I mocked him again and again, until he kicked me into unconsciousness."

"And Dr. Paul Bell fell into the Nile wearing the receptor?" Powell persisted.

Grunewald pursed his lips thoughtfully and nodded his leonine head slowly. "He was severely wounded, but he was not yet dead. Somehow he made his own way to Dr. Hillman, who started out with him in a boat to Cairo."

"Jacqueline Hillman," Fred recalled. "When you first mentioned her name, I recognized it as that of the woman that Mother said gave her the receptor."

"Ja," Grunewald repeated. "Dr. Jacqueline Hillman. I did not know what happened to Paul or to Jackie until I saw her again at U.C.L.A., where she was giving a seminar in 1965. She had changed her name to Greta Schmidt, but I recognized her at once. For twenty-six years I had no idea that Paul had survived the Nile or that Jackie had not been murdered by the Gestapo."

Grunewald told them that after Jackie and he had embraced and wept in one another's arms, they went to a restaurant where she explained what had taken place in those last few days of June 1939.

Dr. Jacqueline Hillman had been awakened by the shots. She remained in her tent for nearly an hour before she went to investigate. She feared Reinhard Heydrich, and was not eager to confront the Gestapo.

She found herself by the Nile, drawn there by a soft female voice which she somehow heard directing her inside her head. It was in the bushes there at the edge of the Nile that she saw her wounded colleague, Paul Raymond Bell.

With sudden courage, she managed to get him into a boat and to slow the bleeding of his wounds. Then she set out rowing for Cairo or some larger city up the Nile.

For the first several hours, Bell was delirious. He spoke of being with a woman, of watching a sunset with two suns setting. He said something about sunsets being forever and that the life everlasting

must be returned to the universe. Over and over again he repeated the name of "Semjase".

With the first light of dawn, Paul's mind seemed to clear. He removed the receptor from around his neck and handed it to her.

"Dear friends," he bade her, "take this to Natalie in America. Do not let the Nazis find it. It contains the keys to many secrets that will strengthen the next generation. My son will find it invaluable in his quest in his new life."

Jackie could not help questioning her dying comrade. "But Paul, you do not have a son."

Bell smiled and his countenance seemed illuminated with joy. "The woman who gave me this medallion also informed me that Natalie is even now discovering she is with child, that the last night before we parted..."

"In the Temple of Hathor is the secret of the Pleiades and it is prophesied that the one who discovers the secret will have a son...and I found the answer. Someday, my son will return to the temple and complete what I have uncovered. He will be assisted by a stranger who is at once his soul mate."

The smile of joy was replaced by a grimace of pain. Paul pulled her closer to him. "Dear, Jackie, guard the receptor with your life. Swear to me that you will let no one possess it but...my son...ever!"

She gave him her oath, and within a few moments he lay dead in her arms.

"I never asked how she had managed to survive," Grunewald said softly. "Her eyes held much pain, but no regrets. She had always believed in miracles. Perhaps her spirit guide, Black Hawk, led her through the terrible years of war in North Africa."

"Mother told me that Dr. Hillman had given her the medallion sometime in 1948," Fred stated.

"And that certainly is a miracle in itself," Grunewald remarked. "How could she have managed to have kept the receptor hidden all those years?"

"And how did she manage to get it through customs with all the inspectors keeping their eyes peeled for artifacts taken wrongly from Egypt?" Brad Bronson put in an observation of his own.

“Jacqueline Hillman was a remarkable woman,” Grunewald sighed. “I thank God that I was able to see her again after all those years.”

“You speak of her as if she is no longer with us,” Kim had noticed.

“She was murdered...and quite horribly mutilated two years ago, in December of 1969,” Grunewald said in a hoarse whisper.

Kim gasped and clutched at one of Fred’s arms. Fred felt as though he had suffered the loss of another dear one whom he had never known.

“The police in Madison – she was teaching anthropology at the University of Wisconsin – said that it was the work of some diseased mind...some psychopath,” Grunewald said bitterly.

“I agree that it was the work of some diseased mind – a mind eased by lust for power. I fear that someone of the old guard of the Knights of Atlantis recognized her as a woman that they believed had been dead thirty years.”

Eric Powell scowled his distaste. “The Knights of Atlantis? The same Neo-Nazi creeps who came here last night?”

Grunewald snorted his anger. “There is nothing ‘neo’ about them, my friend. They are the Disciples of Belial from Atlantis. They are the ancient ones from a world before our own who have always attempted to steal fire from heaven and to pervert the blessings of the Star Gods.”

Kim nudged her friend. “Fred, this is all so weird.”

“Indeed, Kim,” he agreed. “But somehow all so familiar. I remember once when I was about four or five years old. I was playing in our backyard, you know, just kid stuff with toy cars or G.I. Joe.

“Then I felt a presence, and for whatever reason, I started to stare at some scattered clouds that were floating by overhead.”

“Suddenly, I saw a silver, luminous disc shoot across the sky, and I swear that I heard a warning about the murderous woman in the audience.”

“Do you remember what the voice said?” Bronson asked him.

Fred was strangely silent for a moment. “Yes, I do, Brad. And, you know, it’s odd that I didn’t recognize the voice yesterday. As I think of

it now, I have heard that voice a number of times in my life.”

“So what did it say when you were a kid?” Eric prompted.

“It was something like, ‘Soon, my darling – or my beloved or something like that – soon’.”

“Jeez,” Eric grinned. “Even at five the guy is fantasizing about women.”

“It wasn’t like that, Eric,” Fred protested.

“Of course it wasn’t,” Kim seconded the protest. “Fred has always been high-minded.”

Powell winked at her. “Maybe sometimes a little too high-minded, huh?”

He was very much aware that quite often during her twenty-year friendship with Fred Bell, Kim had yearned to become more than “buddies.” She had frequently confessed her frustration to him, Fred’s best male friend.

Grunewald had completely ignored the peripheral conversation and had remained focused on Fred’s recollections of the female voice and the silver disc.

“It seems true, that which your father told Jackie Hillman. You, too, are in contact with Semjase. It has to be something that has resulted from both a spiritual and a physical evolution. Centuries ago, a seed of some kind was planted within the Bell genes.”

Bronson was beginning to find the conversation growing more fascinating by the moment.

“Perhaps it was genetic,” he agreed. “As it says in the scriptures, you know, about the daughters of men being considered fair and attractive to the Sons of God, the Star People.”

Grunewald seemed inordinately pleased that someone was keeping up with him.

“Ja,” Herr Bronson. Fred is now in the process of being activated by some higher dimension of reality. And now that he has the receptor in his possession, he will become even more sensitive to the transmission of the Pleiadeans.”

“Exactly,” Bronson nodded enthusiastically, totally in psychic “sync” with Grunewald.



“From some higher dimension of reality or consciousness, the Star Gods, the Pleiadeans, appear to be transmitting activating memories to people like Fred, people who bear within them the spiritual seed of the extraterrestrials. They are reminding their Starseed that even though they may exist on Earth, their consciousness is not of the Earth.”

“Precisely!” Grunewald returned the enthusiasm. “That has to be how it works: Higher intelligences are projecting their consciousness to the descendants of those into whom they implanted their spiritual seed thousands of Earth-years ago. A network of higher intelligences who care about the people of this planet are reminding their spiritual inheritors that it is now time for them to begin caring about their fellow creatures in a most active and productive manner.”

Grunewald poured himself another cup of coffee. He was warming to the topic at hand.

One could easily imagine him as a professor sharing his excitement with his students. Fred found himself visualizing how his father must have become excited by the man and his ideas.

“What does it mean to be human?” The elderly archaeologist asked rhetorically. “Shakespeare marveled at what a piece of work humanity was: ‘How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god!’”

Grunewald cleared his throat, then sipped his coffee. The knowledge granted us by the Pleiadeans may prove to us that an organized program of genetic engineering was conducted on Earth by agents of an extraterrestrial civilization of advanced technology.

“Judging from certain discoveries which have been found of the skeletons of great giants, of tiny humanoids, of man-beasts with horns and tails, this entire planet may have served as a unique living laboratory for a number of experimental programs.

“The question of what it is to be human now begins to acquire dramatic and startling new answers. We may all be the dust of the Earth that has been blended with the cosmic stuff of the Star Gods.”

Bronson felt compelled to inject a note of caution. “But we must be ever vigilant so that we keep those who have too much of the

dust of the Earth in them – such as those wretched Knights of Atlantis blokes – from mucking things up and fouling up our contact with the Star Gods.”

“Amen to that!” Grunewald raised his cup in a salute to his newly discovered intellectual ally.

“And speaking of those creeps,” Eric Powell wanted to know, “what happened to this Heydrich monster?”

Grunewald smiled expansively. “Well, at least we need not concern ourselves with that brute. He was assassinated in Czechoslovakia in May of 1943.”

“Three cheers,” Eric grinned.

“But with a terrible price,” Grunewald lowered his eyes and his voice grew solemn. “The entire Czech village of Lidice was exterminated in reprisal for the murder of the Gestapo chief.”

“The butchering swine!” Eric spat contemptuously.

“”And what of the ring that Heydrich took from my father?” Fred asked.

Grunewald rubbed the stubble on his chin reflectively. “As near as I could determine, it passed to a Professor Keitel, who now resides in Hamburg. You see, I was kept on at the encampment in Denderah, ordered to search for additional relics of the Star Gods.

“Then, on September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and Neville Bolting returned at once to Great Britain. On September 3, England and France declared war on Germany. I sat out most of the war in Cairo, living on the kindness of Dr. Cadafa.”

Fred suggested that they adjourn to get some dinner at the House of Mei Ling, a nearby favorite Chinese restaurant. The entire day had been spent in a near-trance like state as Grunewald had explained the details surrounding the death of his father. The elderly archaeologist had brushed aside the mists of a past that Fred had never known existed.

“Why did you wait so long to meet me?” Fred asked Grunewald as they exited his home.

“I shall truly never be able to answer that question,” Grunewald admitted. “So many times I have wanted at least to talk to you on the

telephone, but I feared that my presence might bring the sick minds of the Knights of Atlantis, the Disciple of Belial, to torment you.

“Please remember, it was not many years ago that I learned from Dr. Hillman that you – or your mother – did indeed possess the receptor. As far as I knew, it sank with your father into the Nile in 1939.”

Grunewald suggested that they take two vehicles since the hour would be late by the time they finished dinner and he should be returning to his apartment.

The plan seemed sensible, and Fred tossed Grunewald the keys to his van. “I’ll ride with Wolf,” he said. “I want to ask him some more questions about my father.”

Grunewald lowered his voice and placed his hand on Fred’s shoulder as they walked toward the battered 1960 Chevy station wagon that the archaeologist had indicated as his automobile.

“Fred, understand one thing clearly. We are truly approaching a kind of spiritual Armageddon, a great clash between what may be called the Forces of Light and the Forces of Darkness. There is a day of decision and division on this planet that is fast-approaching – a day in which the awful fears and the dreadful nightmares of generations of humankind will be found to be very real.”

“You are very concerned about these Disciples of Belial, the Knights of Atlantis, becoming more active, aren’t you?” Fred asked, giving his father’s mentor his own full and serious attention.

“They are far more active and pervasive in their influence than you can guess, Fred. I am a scientist, but we have too much permitted our scientific dogmas to block a true view of the universe.

“Well, my son, I tell you that those dogmas are about to be torn down and scattered. Soon all people must face the grim reality that our religions, our politics, and our technologies will not, of themselves, prove to be substantial allies in the conflict that is about to take place on this planet.”

Grunewald paused to unlock the door on the driver’s side of the wagon.

“Thank god, Fred, there is help,” he continued, raising his voice so Fred could hear as he walked around the front of the car to get in.

“It is as the inspired seers and holy ones of all time and of all cultures have tried to tell humankind – there truly exists higher intelligences who are concerned about our spiritual and our physical well being.”

Fred opened the door, had one leg in the wagon when Kim shouted the words that saved his life.

“Fred, you idiot! You tossed me the wrong keys!”

He mumbled his apologies, got out of the station wagon, fumbling in his pocket for the correct keys.

Grunewald chuckled, and placed his own key in the ignition.

“Don’t throw them so hard,” Kim winced. “They’ll hurt my hands!”

Fred stepped away from the Chevy, moved closer to Kim, so that he could lob the keys to her with an understanding toss.

He heard Grunewald begin to grind away at the starter switch.

Then a thunderous blast knocked him off his feet, slammed him to the sidewalk, and smashed him into unconsciousness.

## Chapter Twelve

Fred Bell was walking along a path in the thick forest outside of Bluff Creek in Humboldt County, California. Bounding ahead of him was Mackie, his brown and white mutt of part rat terrier and part undetermined parentage.

The funny thing was that Mackie had been dead for years. He was killed when Fred – he was called Billy, then – was visiting his Grandpa Walter at his cabin in the wild forest region of northern California.

“Go with the memory dear one.” It was the same voice that he had heard at the “Cosmic Celebration of Creativity”, warning him when the woman Kathryn Brodmer had wanted to kill him. “It is important that you remember your interaction with Mackie.”

Fred leaned heavily against an oak tree, feeling its rugged bark scraping his palms. Somehow, he was thirty-one-year-old Fred and nine-year-old Billy at the same time. He was skipping down the forest path in that exuberant little body in its new blue jeans and black and red striped sweater – but his consciousness retained an adult awareness in a kind of shimmering astral body.

Fred looked about for the source of the voice. He knew now that it had to be the entity Semjase. Why wouldn't she reveal herself to him as she had materialized for his father?

“We are showing you this time with Mackie for a very good reason,” Semjase told him. “We Beings of Light can often use animals and pets as instruments of instruction for our special seedlings on Earth. As you used to hold Mackie in your arms, you were also receiving instructions – being programmed, if you prefer – with teachings from your spirit mentors.”

“I could talk to Mackie!” Fred said with the same fervor with which he asserted that unrecognized truth when he was nine.

“Yes,” Semjase agreed with a ripple of melodic laughter. “You could talk telepathically to Mackie and to other dogs and cats – and

sometimes to plants and trees. As you talked to Mackie, you were being activated on your Earth mission.”

Mackie had been just a small puppy when he had come into Billy’s life. They had been inseparable companions for four years when Billy’s mother permitted him to take Mackie along with him for a three-week stay at Grandpa’s cabin up north. The boy and his dog went for long walks in the woods and held marvelous conversations about the Great Web of Life and every living creature’s special part within the pattern of existence.

Fred watched as Billy [Billy, William, had become known by his middle name Fred, when he entered the Air Force] and Mackie sat down to rest on a weathered concrete slab next to the old abandoned sawmill.

“Oh, no, don’t!” Fred shook his head and looked away from the scene. “I know what day this is. I don’t want to watch!”

Semjase’s voice was gentle but firm. “Go with the experience, Fred. It is important for you to relive this moment in time. Go with the rhythm of that time. Step totally into the picture.”

Mackie’s ears pricked. His nostrils twitched as he picked up a scent. His large brown eyes stared intently at a shadow that breathed and moved.

“It is lynx,” Mackie told him. “Large one. Rapid. It crazy. It come bite at us.”

Billy had frozen for a moment, then carefully looked around until he spotted the large cat’s eyes staring glassily at them from a stand of tall grass.

“We gotta run!” Billy said in a frightened whisper, quickly assessing the seriousness of the situation. “We gotta get out of here!”

“You run,” Mackie said. “I keep from you.”

“You are too small for that big cat,” Billy argued. “We must run together.”

The lynx was moving toward them, swaying in the crazy-sick dance of an animal afflicted with rabies.

Mackie spoke again, urgently. “Nose tell Mackie...man with gun shoot squirrels...top of hill. You see?”

Fifty yards away, almost all the way up a steep incline, sat a man with a .410 shotgun cradled in his folded arms.

“Him kill big cat!” Mackie shouted. “Run now!”

Billy stood up to argue, but when the rabid lynx hissed and spat, he set out running as fast as he could make his short legs pump. Behind him he heard Mackie growling a warning at the big cat.

He was halfway up the hill before he heard the first of Mackie’s yelps of pain. “Mister! Mister! Come quick! There’s a rabid lynx after my dog!”

The man was startled at first, then he seemed angry with the boy who was disturbing his preying silence. He waved for Billy to be quiet. Billy had to shout the plea twice before the man understood.

He did come to shoot the rabid lynx, but it was too late to save Mackie. Billy’s dearest friend in all the world lay dying, his throat cruelly ripped open, his red life fluid soaking the grass all around him.

Billy fell to his knees, cradled Mackie in his arms. Hot tears coursed down his cheeks. Mackie’s voice in his head was very weak: “Billy, I try not yelp and cry...but it hurt too much.”

“Why did you stay to fight him?” Billy sobbed. “You were too little to fight him. You knew that.”

“If Mackie run with Billy...cat bite Billy. Billy not run fast.”

“But...”

“Mackie love Billy!”

“But you’re dying!”

“Not bad thing. Mackie...die...happy.”

“But you’re leaving me. I can’t live without you!”

“Billy live. Mackie always be with Billy Mackie...love...”

Billy could hardly hear the man talking behind him. “That was a good ol’ dog you had there. Really something the way he held that big cat off so you could get away. Really a brave little shit. He had to know he couldn’t fight a big ol’ crazy lynx like that.”

Mackie gave one last sigh, his merry brown eyes stared into Billy’s, but no more words formed in Billy’s head. Mackie was gone.

“They really are man’s best friend, all right,” the man was going on. “But a big boy like you shouldn’t cry and carry on so. You got to

be a man about such things.”

Tears were streaming unashamed down Fred’s cheeks once again. It was as if the two moments, separated by twenty-two years of linear time, had become melded into one eternally painful spasm of sorrow.

“Courage, unselfishness, unconditional love,” Semjase was saying. “Those are just a few of the lessons that Mackie came to teach you. Plus the great understanding that there is no death, only a change of worlds.”

Fred was no longer in the forest. He seemed somehow to be suspended in outer space. Wolf Grunewald stood before him, waving farewell.

“Oh, God, no!” He gasped as he began to remember the explosion.

As Grunewald turned to walk away from him into swirling clouds of purple mist, Fred caught a glimpse of another man who had approached Grunewald and placed an arm around his shoulder. Fred knew that the man was his father, Paul Raymond Bell. At his father’s feet trotted a small brown and white dog, part rat terrier, part undetermined parentage.



## Chapter Thirteen

Fred opened his eyes and met pain. It was better with the eyes closed. It was better staying in that in-between universe. Maybe he could find Mackie. Or his father.

“Bill, what’s the matter? Why are you staring at me like that?”

Kim Kingswold had narrowed her large brown eyes and was pushing her tiny nose up into his face. “Come on Bill. We’re supposed to be looking for fossils and stuff!”

It was happening again. Fred had projected into another scene from his past.

Ohmigod! He watched incredulously as the living theater of yesterday played itself out for him.

He was seventeen. Ivy League haircut. Button-down pink shirt, charcoal slacks. It was 1956.

“It is 1957!” The gentle feminine voice of Semjase corrected him.

“Oh, oh,” Fred sighed to the air around him. “Another learning experience, I guess. This one can’t be so bad. Not like losing Mackie. This has got to be the field trip that Mr. Self took us on to the Ortegas. That’s the time I found the meteorites.”

“Get into the picture, Fred,” Semjase ordered. “Now!”

“Bill!” Kim was whining now. “You pulled me away from the others and dragged me into the bushes. Jeez, the girls are going to tease me about whether we made big passion or not. And Mr. Self is going to blow his stack. We’re supposed to be in groups of threes and fours.”

Bill plucked a blade of grass and nibbled at the whitish, tender shoot. “Naw, Kim, I don’t want to be with any of the others. You’re the only one with the right vibrations.”

Kim rolled her eyes upward in frustration. “You always say something weird like that. I’m not vibrating, you nut case.”

“It’s the energies that you project,” Bill tried to explain as he took Kim’s hand and helped her step on the safe stones to cross a stream. “It’s the feelings that I get from you. We are compatible.”

“Sure,” Kim grumbled. “We’re together all the time. The two of us and that jerk Eric Powell. All the girls ask me what you’re like. Half the high school girls have a crush on you.”

Bill didn’t appear to be listening to her. “I have a strong ‘vibe’ that we should keep walking north.”

Kim continued with her plaint: “But they all want to know why you always act so...so...reserved. A lot of the girls think you’re a snob. Mr. Stuck Up. I tell them that it’s not that. It’s just that you would rather study science and archaeology than go to a drive-in movie or something.”

Bill caught at the tail of her last sentence. “I like movies. Kim, we went to the drive-in movie two weeks ago.”

“Yes, we did,” she scowled. “Me, you, and Eric the jerk. You know, Bill Bell, we’ve known each other since we were seven years old, and you’ve only kissed me once. At my thirteenth birthday party when your mother gave that surprise party for me.”

Bill grinned, bent to kiss Kim on the cheek. “That’s twice,” he laughed. “Now stop babbling so and follow me.”

“Yes, Bwana,” she groaned, shaking her head in self-commiseration at her own plight.

That’s when Bill heard the sound.

The adult “Fred” within him now understood. “I heard Semjase again then,” his greater awareness said, thrilled with the discovery. “Her craft emitted a high-pitched whistle. At first it kind of hurt my ears as it got louder. “Would you just...sit down on that big rock over there and wait for me? I won’t be long. Please?”

Kim pouted and sat down on the rock. “Mr. Self is going to murder us. Mom is going to kill me. My life is over at seventeen.”

Kim turned to look in the direction in which Bill had disappeared. Several small birds suddenly rustled and flew from the brush.

“He probably just has to go to the bathroom,” she pacified herself by speculating.

Bill walked over a small rise and beheld a shimmering Light Vehicle hovering noiselessly a few inches above a meadow area. He noticed that the thick carpet of grass was being flattened by some

unseen force. He felt no fear, no apprehension. He approached the aerial vehicle as if in a dream.

A small sound to his left caused him to turn quickly and encounter a woman with long golden-brown hair. She was wearing a one-piece space suit.

“Dear God, it is you!” the Fred aspect exclaimed. “I met you then! Dear God, you are so beautiful. Why don’t I remember this?”

“It was not yet time,” Semjase explained in a soft, musical voice that filled his head. “I only wanted to give you something to activate more of your ancestral memories of your true home in the Pleiades.”

Fred watched in astonishment as the seventeen-year-old Bill accepted by one who cares deeply for you.”????

The teenaged boy stood with his right arm outstretched, accepted both the objects and the commands.

“Now return to your little friend,” Semjase bade him. “Show her your prizes. But they are not for the others.”

Kim was startled by the whirring sound emanating from over the rise where she had last seen Bill walking. More birds took suddenly to flight.

Then she seemed to hear something over her head, moving skyward very quickly. She glanced upward, but saw nothing.

When she redirected her attention to the rise, she saw Bill coming toward her. He seemed to be stumbling slightly, as if he were somehow disoriented. As he drew nearer, he appeared to be somewhat pale.

“Are you all right?” she asked. “What’s happening? What are those things in your hands?”

Bill stretched forth his hands so that she could observe their treasure.

Kim’s lips pursed themselves into a tight little “O” of wonderment as she studied the objects that Bill thrust toward her.

They were about three inches in diameter and were silver and gold. There seemed to be something like emeralds embedded in them.

“These are meteorites,” he told her.

“Wow!” Kim squealed. “They look like precious gems or something. Let’s hurry back and show Mr. Self and the kids.”

“No, Kim,” Bill told her. “These are for us.”

“Bill, do you think so?”

“I found them, didn’t I?” He argued with decisive finality.

“Here, put yours in your pocket. Don’t show anyone else. At least not on the trip. At least not until several days have passed.”

Kim shrugged. It was too nice to give up, anyway. Mr. Self would just put it in a cabinet in his classroom. “But we’d better come up with something to show for our secret rendezvous out in the woods.”

Bill nodded in agreement, tilted his head to one side, as if he were listening to a faraway call.

“Over here,” he said to her. “Let’s look over here. To the right.”

They walked together for about twenty feet. Bill stooped, picked up a good-sized quartz crystal which was partially covered beneath some brush.

“This is for Mr. Robert Self!”

Kim’s anxieties began to smooth the moment she saw the prize to present to their science teacher. “Groovy, man! But how did you know where to look?”

“I heard it calling to us. Didn’t you hear it?”

Bill was always teasing her like that. “Sure,” she crinkled her mouth. “Like rocks talk right? And how did you find the meteorites? They came from outer space. Do you speak to things from outer space, too? C’mon, Bill, let me hear you say something in Martian? You know, ‘take me to your leader’ or something.”

“Let’s just say that I was guided,” Bill replied. “Now let’s hurry back before Mr. Self starts checking the class roll and notices that we strayed off a bit farther than he intended.”

The soft, swirling purple mist began to move around Fred once again, and his nostrils picked up the acrid smell of burning rubber, hot metals, oily and greasy rags.

When the mist cleared, he saw that he was once again seventeen-years-old. He was in metal shop at Laguna Beach High School.

As things came into sharper focus, Fred found himself moving more completely into the picture.

He was working on a medium-sized jet engine. The rest of the class was working on basic metal objects, such as shelves, wrought iron furniture and fixtures.

Eric Powell was at his side, helping him. A couple of uncompleted rockets lay nearby on a cluttered workbench.

“This is gonna be such a boss engine, man,” Eric was saying. “What are you going to do with it, Bill?”

“I told you yesterday, Eric. Put it in a car and go for the land speed record.”

“You said that, man, but are you for real?”

Bill nodded, continued adjusting a delicate section of the mechanism.

One of the fellows who was customizing a '48 Ford had turned on a car radio, and the voice of Elvis Presley filled the shop, begging his lady love not to be cruel.

“Shut off that musical garbage!” shouted Mr. Hennessey, the shop teacher. “That new rock and roll trash is fit only for jungle savages, and that Elvis is an immoral pervert, the way he swings his body when he sings. Besides, you teenaged hoodlums are still supposed to be in a high-school class, you know!”

The radio silenced at once. Mr. Hennessey was a burly man who had once played semi-pro football before his knee shattered.

“I dont know how you learned all these things,” Eric shook his head in smiling wonder. “You have got more projects in here than the rest of us jerks put together. Only your stuff is so far ahead of ours, you make me and the other guys look like them jungle savages old man Hennessey was raving about.”

“Hey, Powell, it’s no secret. You know I take some night classes at the university. Have for years,” Bill replied. “Hand me that five-eighths socket wrench.”

“Is that really where you’ve disappeared to on the nights when I call you and your mom says that you’re not in?”

“Sure,” Bill grimaced as he carefully tightened the head of the small bolt. “You know that my father was a professor there. My

mother enrolled me in a special science program when I was very young, around seven or eight.”

“I’ve never heard of that kind of thing,” Eric frowned his evaluation. “I guess it’s because you’re some kind of genius and all, right?”

Bill blinked away some sweat that had pooled near his right eye. “You could probably do it too, man, if you weren’t like most of the guys in this school who are too busy chasing skirts to realize that such programs exist for all who can qualify.”

“Yeah, maybe,” Eric smirked. “But I naturally qualify for girl chasing- and it’s a lot more fun!”

“So, then,” Bill quizzed him, “why are you always without a date for all the big dances and formal affairs?”

Eric shifted uneasily, his macho façade punctured. “Well, I haven’t found the right girl yet. But I will.”

“Don’t bet on it, Powell.”

“Hey, thanks a whole bunch, pal,” Eric winced. “So am I a leper or something?”

Bill was sorry when he realized that he actually hurt his best friend’s feelings. “I simply meant that the right girl will come along as soon as you stop fooling around and discover your true spiritual purpose.”

“Now what is that supposed to mean, ‘spiritual purpose’?” Eric wanted to appear indifferent, but it was obvious that he wanted to hear more.

“That means,” Bill paused to find the right words, “doing what feels best to you and not what others ask or expect you to do. And above all, it must be something that does not harm another.”

Eric rubbed his hands together and chortled. “Well, girl chasing feels great to me, and I can’t see that it harms anyone.”

Bill sighed. “You are beyond all hope, Powell.”

“So tell me, guy,” Eric decided to change the focus of the conversation. “What about Kim? Is she your ‘right girl’?”

“She’s a very special girl,” Bill answered. “A very special friend.”

Fred felt himself spinning away from the scene. The purple mist had embraced him like a pulsating cocoon. For a moment it seemed

very tight...too tight.

He opened his eyes and blinked. Kim Kingswold was smiling down at him.

“Eric!” She laughed as tear glistened in each of her eyes. “He’s awake!”

Fred had a moment or two of difficulty in sorting out his new environmental reality and making sense of it.

He was in a hospital. His left hand was bandaged. It felt like his head was, too. He was lying flat on his back.

“Kim,” he said in a rasping whisper. “You are a very special friend.”

## Chapter Fourteen

Kim Kingwold leaned forward and kissed Fred. "You bet that I am a very special friend!"

"Move in for the kill, Kim," Eric Powell teased. "Maybe when he's weak Fred will agree to marry you."

Kim rolled her eyes ceiling-ward and made no effort to muffle her groan of displeasure. Her cross to bear for the past twenty years had been named "Powell."

"I must assume that I am in the hospital," Fred said, trying to prop himself up on his elbows. Even talking hurt, to say nothing of attempting to sit upright in bed.

"Laguna Memorial," Kim told him. "Room 1287."

"Grunewald?" Fred was certain he knew the answer, but he wanted confirmation.

Kim lowered her brown eyes for a moment before answering. "He didn't make it."

Fred nodded. How incredible to think that such a remarkable man as Dr. Wolf Grunewald, a close friend of his father's, had entered his life only to be taken away in a matter of hours.

"It was a cheap pipe bomb," Powell said, moving closer to the edge of the hospital bed. "Percy is on top of the case. We all know it was those Neo-Nazi scumbags."

Fred noticed that Powell's left hand was bandaged. Kim had a band aid above her right eye and another on her chin.

"Hey," he whispered. "You guys got hurt, too."

"That's to be expected, hanging around with you," Powell grinned. "It goes with the territory."

"And what about me?" Fred couldn't put off the question any longer.

"Your left hand is pretty badly burned," Kim said, giving it to him straight. "You probably have a concussion. Maybe a fractured skull. They want to keep you here in the hospital for a few days."



“No biggie, Fred,” Powell assured him. “Observation, you know. You got shaken up and tossed around.”

As if in answer to an unspoken question, Kim told him that Brad Bronson had moved in to watch his house.

Fred smiled. “You’re taking turns guarding the receptor?”

“That’s what we want the bad guys to believe,” Eric winked. “We took a vote; we decided the receptor would be safest here with you.”

Fred managed to pull himself to a sitting position.

She reached into her purse, removed the emerald receptor, and placed it around Fred’s neck.

“Chief,” Eric explained, “we talked about it until late last night. Brad agrees with us. Something has been set in motion...something big. Maybe we don’t quite understand what it is, but we feel that this lady astronaut from outer space is going to watch over you...just like she did your father.”

“Let’s hope that she does a better job with me than she did with my father,” Fred said grimly.

“Don’t talk like that!” Kim scolded. “Nothing’s going to happen to you. Not now. Not while you wear the receptor.”

Fred held the medallion in his right hand, rubbed the emerald in a circular motion with his thumb. “So you guys really feel that things are about to kick into high gear on the planet Earth?”

“Yes,” Eric said seriously. “And you know me. I don’t too often get ‘feelings’.”

Fred tried to grin, but it hurt his face. “That’s what has me so surprised,” he said in the rasping voice that the accident had left him. “You usually only feel things like hunger, thirst, wet, cold, hot, dry...things like those.”

Eric frowned his annoyance. “C’mon, Fred. I’m serious. I mean, why, all of a sudden should a crazy lady try to kill you, two Nazi aristocrats and their pet monsters pay you a visit, and that nice old doc Grunwald get blown up?”

“And all that, right after we hear about the death of your father, the woman from the UFO, and the Nazi quest for extraterrestrial artifacts,” Kim added. “Something really big is about to happen.”

A tall redheaded nurse entered carrying a tray. When she saw that Fred was awake, she set down her burden and reached for a thermometer. Just before the door closed behind her, Fred caught sight of a policeman outside the door to his room.

“You promised to call me if Dr. Bell awakened,” the nurse chided Kim and Eric as she moved the thermometer under Fred’s tongue.

“He just now opened his eyes, ma’am,” Eric said quickly, hoping to pacify her.

The nurse noticed the receptor on Fred’s chest, stifled a giggle. “That’s lovely, Dr. Bell. I didn’t think you seemed the ‘hippie’ type. Maybe we can fit you in a Nehru hospital smock.”

“We brought it as a surprise, ma’am.” Eric supplied. “You know, let the sunshine in and cheer up old Fred.”

“Yes, of course,” the nurse laughed. “I understand. A joke. It’s cute. Well, actually, it is lovely. Rather expensive for a joke, wouldn’t you say?”

“Nothing too good for our buddy,” Eric insisted.

The moment the nurse recorded his temperature and left the room, Fred asked about the policeman at the door.

“For your protection, Chief. Like I just said, nothing’s too good for our buddy.”

“Lt. Percy thought it best,” Kim explained. “Until he arrests the von Raeders or their henchmen – or both.”

Fred nodded. “I see. If Neil thinks it best.”

He was becoming very sleepy. He assumed that he was pumped full of painkillers.

Eric was saying something, but Fred was having a lot of trouble paying attention. And Eric’s voice was starting to sound so very far away.

Fred put his right hand over the receptor. The beautiful purple mist was swirling around him again.

“Bill, don’t be so high and mighty!” Kim shouted at him. “You’ve got help!”

Fred blinked his eyes in wonder. Once again it was 1957.

He was back in the metal shop at Laguna High School. He had been working late, installing the jet engine into the race car that he

had just constructed. Kim was with him in the metal shop – as were Miss Elaide, the school nurse; Mr. Henderson, the principal; Mr. Lansing, the biology teacher; and Mr. Self, the history teacher.

“Help?” He wondered aloud. “Help with what?”

“It’s as we’ve told you, William,” Mr. Henderson narrowed his eyes and restated the problem. “Our attendance is off by over 25%. We’ve got some kind of epidemic in high school.”

Mr. Henderson was a balding man, tall, narrow-shouldered. He seemed to wear the same black three-piece suit every day. Bill often fantasized that the principal was like a comic book character who always wore the same clothes, like Donald Duck with his sailor suit.

“And it is not the flu bug,” Miss Elaide interjected. She had unusually thick eyeglasses, but was otherwise a very attractive woman in her late-forties.

“No, it is not,” Lansing agreed. “We’ve lost several fish in the fresh water aquariums lately. As you know, the Laguna water supply is in one of the few still operating from independent wells.”

Miss Elaide cleared her throat, as if to signal her wish to speak again. “I’ve done some checking, and half the town is ill as well.”

Lansing seemed momentarily resentful of the interruption, then continued, “I’ve run tests on the water supply, and I have found that it has abnormally high levels of petroleum by-products contained in it.”

Bill shrugged. “I’m busy with my jet car. We graduate in just a little over a month, and then I’m on my way to Bonneville Flats to set a land speed record.”

Mr. Self was becoming visibly annoyed with his student. “Bill, all of us here recognize your brilliance. We are proud and astonished at the same time whenever we learn of one of your inventions. But all that knowledge and skill doesn’t count for much unless you use it to help people.”

Kim was pouting, her lower lip jutting forward above her determined chin. “You’ve got to help, Bill.”

“You are a gifted person, Bill Bell,” Mr. Self went on. “It would seem to me that you could surrender some of the time that you spend on your hobbies to attempt to solve a problem that is affecting your entire community.”

“So why didn’t your generation start to worry about polluting the streams and the air supply?” Bill demanded. “Why didn’t your generation start to search for a solution – instead of just perpetuating the problem?”

“Hey, man,” Lansing shook his head sadly. “You can dump on the older generation all you want, and with darn good reason. But that won’t solve the problem.”

He walked to a bench where Bill had placed some rockets. “Look at it this way,” he said, picking up a rocket that Bill had just completed. “What good will this gadget be? And what good will your mighty jet car be...in a planet whose children die of pollution?”

“Come on, Bill,” Kim argued. “Mr. Self, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Henderson, Miss Elaide came here to ask for your help. Maybe it was their generation and the ones before us that got us into this mess, but they have the courage to face it and ask for help. They want to do something about it. Don’t be so darned high and mighty!”

Bill laughed, put down the rocket that he was about to mount in his car. “You know, esteemed faculty members, Pinocchio had Jiminy Cricket as his conscience. I guess that I am stuck with Kim Kingswold. She has the unique ability to wake me up the moment that I think I have it all together – and I really don’t!”

There was a swirl of purple mist, and Bill Bell was working industriously in Mr. Lansing’s laboratory.

He hunched over a long cylindrical object with a glass tube along one side. In front of it was a smaller unit, similar in appearance.

Standing around him, assisting whenever he indicated he required an extra hand to reach a tool or a pair of legs to “go for” a piece of equipment, were Kim, Eric, Mr. Self, Mr. Lansing, and Darla Weiss, Kim’s friend.

“That’s an impressive-looking device, at any rate,” Mr. Self chuckled somewhat apprehensively. He had just arrived in the lab at the end of the school day. He set his briefcase full of test papers in a corner and indicated his willingness to help.

“It’s more than impressive-looking,” Kim spoke up, the perpetual cheerleader. “It will work!”

Bill was somewhat embarrassed by Kim's enthusiasm, but he was pleased that she was always there to support him.

"I hope it will work," he commented. "The mechanism involves some new concepts – or I should say, new to our science. I'm using primarily pyramid energy coupled with ultra-violet."

"Pyramid energy," Lansing repeated softly, but added no further comment.

Bill continued his explanation: "The carbon filter in the front of the device stops the heavy pollution, but it has a disadvantage in that it will accumulate harmful bacteria after a while. To alleviate that problem, I have included an ultra-violet light which will control both the bacteria and the algae."

Kim, ever curious, had to ask about the pyramid-shaped structures.

"Well, as you know, Kim, I've been doing a lot of reading about the Egyptian pyramids. I am convinced that the ancients were well aware of an energy generated in the pyramid that can speed up the cellular reproduction techniques – like a sort of revitalization process. I believe that this was the process that they used to preserve their mummies for thousands of years. And I further believe that one day soon modern science will verify as fact, what I have suggested in theory."

"So, Chief?" Eric Powell asked, frowning his confusion. "Does that mean we'll turn into mummies now when we drink the water?"

"Sounds to me more like it's a fountain of youth," Darla hypothesized.

"Neither, guys," Bill laughed. "But thanks for playing. Actually, it will revitalize our drinking water considerably."

Mr. Lansing delicately traced a forefinger along the lines of the device that Bill was completing. "I'm a recent college graduate in physics. Why don't I know about such theories?"

Bill shrugged. "I suppose, Mr. Lansing, that it's because science sort of moves from solid and concrete ideas based on hard research. Most scientists want to play it safe with the already known. I am fascinated by research involving the life force.

“For example,” he continued, “I subscribe to the *International Journal of Radionics*, published in Great Britain. Not too long ago I sent for some papers on Kirlian photography, which shows the presence of life forces or ‘auras’ around all living things. A lot of the papers were in German and French, but my mom helped me translate them.”

“Hey, guys,” Eric warned them, “this is absolutely wild. I’ve seen it work. Should I run outside and get a leaf from one of the oak trees out in back, Chief?”

Bill agreed, and tried to explain further the techniques of Kirlian photography while Eric went for the leaves.

Although the research had only recently been shared with other investigators and scientists, Seymour and Valentina Kirlian had actually begun their experiments with the capturing of life force fields on film in the late 1930s. Kirlian, an electrician and amateur photographer, and wife Valentina had discovered that they could photographically reproduce a peculiar luminescence which appeared to issue from all living things – but was invisible to the human eye. They required neither lens nor camera to capture such a wonderful sight. They needed only to lay film in contact with the object to be photographed and to pass through the object an electric current from a high-frequency spark generator.

As he spoke, Bill had moved his friends and faculty to a large black box with a viewer on the front. Next to it was some high-voltage equipment.

I’ve put this together from some plans that were in *The Psychotronic Experiment*, which is published in Germany,” Bill told them. “When Eric returns with a leaf, we’ll place it on one of these glass plates. The high voltage from the power supply is present on one side. We’ll be putting out between 75,000 to 200,000 electrical pulses per second. The specimen will be sandwiched between the plates and insulated by them. This process electrifies the specimen and the surrounding atmosphere grounds out – or dissipates – the charge inducted to the specimen.”

Mr. Self was brave enough to ask Bill to slow down a bit.

Bill smiled his recognition of their collective problem of trying to embrace a new concept in such a condensed manner.

“The theory is that if there are visible life forces present, they will enhance the conductivity of the electricity of the specimen. In a dark room, this phenomenon is visible.”

Eric returned with a half dozen large oak leaves. Bill selected one, placed it between glass slides and installed it in the large black box. He switched on the high voltage and indicated that everyone should look into the box.

“Amazing,” Lansing verbally confirmed Bill’s explanation. “I do see a glowing field around the leaf.”

Bill seemed as pleased as if he were a young boy proudly displaying a new toy placed by Santa under the tree on Christmas morning.

“Now let me show you something even more amazing.”

Bill turned off the unit, opened it, then pulled out the leaf and tore it in half.

In the manner of a stage magician showing that he had “nothing up his sleeves,” he displayed the torn leaf, then placed it back inside the box.

As he switched the box back on, he asked Mr. Lansing what he expected to see on the second occasion.

Lansing smiled, somehow aware that things were about to get a bit more complicated. “I imagine that we’ll see half a glowing leaf.”

“Don’t bet money on it,” Eric Powell chuckled.

Mr. Lansing quickly looked in the box. “Good Lord!” I don’t believe it. The entire force field, the aura, is still there.”

“Believe it!” Bill assured all of them. “Life forces are not physical or concrete.”

Mr. Self felt that he had correctly added “one plus one.” He took another look in the box, then said to Bill, “So you are telling us that pyramids somehow channel this same vital force.”

“Yes,” Bill answered, indicating the water purifying device over which he had been laboring. “In this case, we will be revitalizing the purified water. It will be similar to pure spring water – even though it comes from a tap.”

His words were beginning to acquire that peculiar echo as he spoke, but Bill continued, even though he could see wisps of purple mist curling around his feet.

“Mr. Lansing, I suggest that you connect the device to your aquariums before you connect it to the main water supply for the school.”

He could see Lansing’s mouth shaping words, but no sound reached his ears. The purple mist was now all around him, and he found himself moving ahead just a bit further into Time.

Bill was observing a moment of the Eternal Now in Mr. Henderson’s office. Mr. Lansing and Mr. Self were present.

Mr. Henderson, ever the officious principal, was asking Mr. Lansing for a progress report on the water purification experiment.

“It’s gone better than I had expected,” Lansing answered. “I had to put a wire cage over the fish.”

Mr. Henderson shuffled some papers anxiously, fearing the worst. “You had to cage the fish?”

“Well,” the science teacher explained, “after about three days, not only did the fish in a treated tank regain their health, but they actually began leaping out of their aquarium. We examined one on that camera device of Bill’s, and we found that the fish had an aura twice the size of that of another fish that was still in an untreated tank.”

Mr. Henderson leaned back in his swivel chair, crossed his hands on his lap and laced his fingers in satisfaction. “That is amazing. Connect the purifier to the school’s main water supply at once.”

“I told you that the boy was a genius,” Mr. Self said smugly.

“We’re not the only ones with that opinion of William Bell’s potential?”

“Uncle Sam, gentlemen,” Mr. Henderson answered, his eyes saddened by his own pronouncement.

Uncle Sam! The words reverberated in Bill’s expanded consciousness. So they had been snooping around after him even then!



## Chapter Fifteen

Uncle Sam!

Once again the purple mist had tightened so around him that he felt as though he were a caterpillar struggling to burst free from its cocoon.

“So you’re ready for the Air Force, huh, kid?” The sergeant at the recruiting station grinned his question around the tip of a ballpoint pen that he had been tapping absently against his lower teeth.

“Yes, sir,” the eighteen-year-old Bill answered respectfully. “I feel that it would offer me an excellent opportunity for advancement.”

The sergeant sniffed somewhat disdainfully. “Maybe. Sure not much going on, though. I mean, there’s no Korea happening. Just a lot of stuff in Israel, Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza strip. That’s mostly United Nations business. I doubt that we’ll get pulled into a real shooting war there. Ike sure as hell made a better general than a president, if you ask my opinion.”

Bill felt awkward in the sudden silence. The sergeant just sat there staring at him, once again tapping the bottom row of his teeth with the tip of his ballpoint pen.

Did the sergeant actually want Bill to ask his opinion about current events? Was he supposed to agree or disagree with the sudden impromptu international survey of 1957?

“We already ran a security check on you,” the sergeant spoke again.

Bill shifted his weight to the other foot. “Did I pass?” He asked with an anxious chuckle.

The sergeant nodded. With one exception.”

Again the silence. Bill had no option than to question him: “An exception, sir?”

“In your birth certificate,” the sergeant replied. “We found an error in your birth certificate. Your mother evidently married your father, then divorced him, then remarried him again.”

Bill was incredulous. “I’ve never heard of it, sir.”

“Happened before you were born.”

“Are you certain?”

The sergeant fixed Bill with a look of seething frustration and restrained anger. He could not have looked more contemptuous if Bill had asked permission to burn the flag.

“The Air Force doesn’t make mistakes, boy. You had better fasten that truth to your brain forever if you want to survive for more than twenty minutes in the Air Force!”

“But what is the error that you found?” Bill was courageous enough to ask.

“According to official records, your first name is Fred,” the sergeant told him after another brief period of stony silence.

“Correction, sir. That is my middle name.”

“Not any more, mister,” the sergeant uttered the words with absolute finality. “We go by the book, and the book says that you are Fred Bell.”

Bill...Fred saw little point in pursuing the argument. At least they hadn’t discovered his true name to be Alice. After all, all he was really asked to do was to shift his first name to his middle name and vice versa.

Later, when he telephoned his mother to inform her of the strange circumstances of his name reversal, she told him in a puzzled voice that two government agents had stopped by the house and given her the same information.

The purple mist was again enveloping Fred in its tendrils. There was a blue swirl of faces, scenes, voices, and he found himself at the Air Force Academy in Boulder, Colorado.

It was 1958. He was in the midst of a remarkable kind of two-year intensive program. He and a number of cadets were segregated and treated in a manner peculiarly different from the other young men.

As the mist cleared further and focused, Fred was sitting in the second row in a classroom in the Engineering Building. The instructor was in the process of explaining radar procedure.

“The two primary radar sets that you will be training on are an ANFPS 26 height finder and an ANFPS 35 search set built by a combined effort of General Electric, Westinghouse, and Sylvania.”

“Your future officers will be responsible for their maintenance, operations, and security.”

The instructor pointed to a chart, continuing his lecture, “Your planned position operators will use this chart to identify different aircraft commonly called ‘bogies’.”

As Fred studied the various shapes of a wide variety of aircraft, he was drawn to a strange, oblong object.

He raised his hand. “What type of aircraft is that, sir?”

“That, Cadet Bell, is classified as a UFO...an Unidentified Flying Object.”

Fred felt an eerie shock of memory as he found his attention repeatedly drawn to the object.

After a few moments, he again raised his hand, apologized for the interruption. “Sir, are these...UFO...common?”

“In some areas, they are quite common,” the instructor replied without hesitation.

“What areas, sir?”

“Around the polar areas and other remote regions, such as certain sections of Washington State and Northern California.”

“Where in Northern California?”

The instructor was still being courteous, but it was becoming apparent that he wished to move on to other areas more in keeping with his lecture topic. “Point Arena. A land mass in Northern California that extends out to sea.”

Fred wrote down the location in his notebook. “Sir, why, being a Californian, have I never heard of this type of activity?”

“Because, mister, it is classified.”

“Why?” Fred asked, realizing that he was beginning to sound to the other cadets like a small boy asking his father why the sky is blue.

The instructor grasped both ends of the blackboard pointer, one in each hand, and began to pace. “These objects are classified because they out-fly, outmaneuver, and outclass anything and everything that we have. These objects demonstrate technologies far in advance of anything that any of our intelligence gathering agencies have detected anywhere here on Earth.”

“Are you saying, sir, that these objects are therefore ‘not of this Earth’? That they are extraterrestrial?”

An anonymous cadet from a back row made a high-pitched, falsetto sound of “oooo-oooo-oooo-oooo”...like the theme music to a science fiction movie, such as *War of the Worlds* or *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

The instructor searched the classroom for the comedian, his eyes icy enough to freeze beer in a mug. He was now becoming visibly irritated with Fred’s persistent questioning. “I mean exactly that, Cadet Bell. These things are extraterrestrial.”

“Sir, where are they from?”

“That, Cadet Bell, is classified information!”

Fred glanced about the classroom. Some of his fellow cadets were making no secret of their boredom with the subject of UFOs.

Others seemed to be urging him on to make additional inquiries of the instructor.

“Sir, I have a security clearance. So do all of us in this particular group. How can things be classified when we are all cleared for this kind of information?”

The instructor seemed almost to be gritting his teeth when he answered: “The Air Force policy is that such information is transmitted on a ‘need to know’ basis.”

“Well, sir, I truly feel that I have a great need to know.”

As the purple mist gathered around Fred once again, he now saw clearly that there are no such things as coincidences. On graduation day when the assignments were handed out, Fred found that he was assigned to Point Arena AFS, California, 776th Radar Squadron.

From his present state of heightened awareness, Fred viewed Point Arena as if he were high above it. He saw clearly the huge 400-foot antennas and domes. The magnificent view offered a 300-degree perspective of the mountain and far, far out into the sea.

And then, with astonished omnipresence, he found the office Base Commander Lt. Colonel Bunting, looking at a sheaf of documents describing the incoming troops.

“Sir, here are the new arrivals. Looks like we have a hot-shot OCS graduate named Fred Bell for whom Uncle Sam has special plans.”

Bunting paused in his lighting of a cigar. "I was hoping that our outfit would never have to become involved with one of those 'Never-Never Land' graduates."

Sergeant Franks chose his words carefully. "Then there is truth to the rumors, sir? Children with special abilities being watched by government agents? Whiz kids being groomed to do their best, then being whisked away to the armed forces?"

"Sergeant," Bunting warned the man, "remember that this is top secret. Any breach is considered treason, and the court martial that would follow would be most biased."

"Don't worry, sir," the sergeant assured him. "Thirty years in here has made a believer out of me."

As if he were watching a hidden camera screening of his life, Fred saw himself getting off a bus that arrived at Point Arena in the mid-afternoon. He was carrying a duffel bag and walking with a few other new trainees.

Sergeant Franks arrived, greeted him with a salute, and welcomed him to Point Arena.

He was seated in the officer's section in the mess hall. The attitude of most of the men around him was one of indifference.

Then lieutenants Blakley and West were speaking to him.

West was a lanky, taciturn New Englander from Vermont. Although he seemed austere and reserved, his basic goodwill was never too far from the surface.

Blakley was of medium height, well-built, with piercing blue eyes. His sandy-colored hair would be totally undisciplined if he did not tame it with a regulation Air Force crew cut.

"Did you come here to add to the confusion," Blakley asked Fred, "or to bring order to chaos?"

"We hear the scuttlebutt is that you're some kind of hot dog science expert," West added.

Fred extended his hand to each of them in greeting.

"You'll be working with us on the 35 and the 26 sets," Blakley informed him. "West here is the Watch Commander."

"I suppose that I'm the Engineering Liaison?" Fred asked somewhat rhetorically.

“You got it,” West punctuated his words with a friendly wink. “You’ll be working between the Air Force and General Electric, mostly. Westinghouse and Sylvania are rarely here, ‘cause G.E. built most of the complex. Finish your lavish chow, and I’ll give you the blue ribbon tour.”

In just a few minutes, Fred and West were entering the High Security Compound. A guard, whom West saluted and identified as Jim, told the lieutenant that General Electric had checked into the “scope dope room.”

“The scope dope room is a high security area where a top-secret to crypto clearance is required,” West explained. “That’s where the viewing screens to all the radars are centralized.”

“And what is G.E. doing in there?” Fred asked.

“Trying to determine if there is a system malfunction problem on the screens of the PPI, the pyramid-positioned indicator screens,” West replied. Then, pointing to the right, indicated the 26 Height Radar Set.

“That little guy next to it is an IPS 6 backup unit. Combined, they look up 25 miles into space and out over 100 miles into the horizon. The screens that you will see in the scope dope room will be measured in altitude.”

The next stop on West’s “blue ribbon” tour was the nine-story ANFPS 35 Search Set.

“It looks out 400 miles in any direction,” West said, sounding a bit like a proud father.

“It can tell us how far away things are. The 35 and the 26 are part of a system that extends and repeats itself from the North Pole down to Mexico. This system is called NORAD, ‘The North American Radar Defense System’. All of our information, as well as that from sites like this one in the chain, send data to a central computer located inland at Beale Air Force Base. It is from there that scrambles take place if a bogie is sighted.”

“How fast can our craft be airborne in the event of a scramble?” Fred inquired.

“In the event of an unidentified, we can get our aircraft in the air for a look-see in less than five minutes,” West replied. “Our fighters

travel at over Mach 3, so that if an enemy were sighted 400 miles out to sea, we could greet him long before he reached the mainland.”

“An invisible warning barrier that nothing can penetrate,” Fred said, assessing the incredible technology around him.

West was silent for just a beat or two. “Virtually nothing.” They entered the screen room, and Fred beheld rows of six-foot-tall computers.

To the left was a shredder to be used to destroy documents, and rows of lockers containing “safe” files. To the right was a room with a black curtain hanging from the doorway. Just inside was a guard. Beyond, Fred could distinguish an array of different pyramid-positioned indicator screens. Behind each one was either blue or green, and all were on and sweeping.

West introduced Fred to Louie Long, one of the operators.

“Any activity today?” West asked.

“No, sir, but last night large numbers of them came in. Or at least the screens said that they were there.”

“Did you notify Beale?” West asked, checking a clipboard as he spoke.

“No, sir,” Long answered. “Not until G.E. gives the screens a clean bill of health.”

“All right. Has Jones arrived yet?”

“Do I hear my name being taken in vain?” growled a burly man in a three-piece suit who had entered unnoticed as West spoke.

Fred was introduced to Duncan Jones, the General Electric representative.

“Jones,” West said, his voice and manner very serious, “we need a clean bill on these PPI’s. We keep getting a lot of high speed activity bogies, and we cannot verify them.”

Jones grimaced. “Last week we changed some noisy components. But I’ll take another look if you feel there’s still a problem.”

“We know there’s still a problem,” West replied.

A voice on the intercom summoned Lt. West to the Base Commander’s Office.

“Carry on, Lt. Bell,” West told Fred. “Get back to you as soon as I can.”

Jones scowled in exaggerated impatience and disgust. “You Air Force slobbs are too damn hard on these screens. Or else you don’t know what the hell you are doing.”

“Long,” Fred questioned, mustering a tone of authority as an officer, “what is going on around here? What is all the mystery with the screens?”

Long motioned Fred to follow him. “Hey, Jones, since you’re going to tear things apart, I guess we might as well take a break, huh?”

Duncan Jones shrugged. “Sure, might as well take advantage of the situation, kid.”

When they were several feet out of Jones’ hearing range, Long confided to Fred that they seemed almost to be under siege.

“Practically every night large numbers of UFOs come in from space about 200 miles out,” he said. “They descend at 20,000 miles an hour! They are from 40 to 5,000 feet long, and they head south to Mexico at 5,000 miles per hour.”

Fred felt that his mouth must have dropped open in astonishment.

“But because the equipment is new, sir,” Long added, “we cannot verify whether it is a malfunction or real!”

“What about other sites?” Fred suggested. “Any one check them?”

“They are in the same position, sir. Canada and Alaska are too far north with the descent being here. San Pedro in the south has new equipment like us, so they are in the same predicament.”

Other men had begun entering the screening room. Long whispered anxiously. “I hope I didn’t violate any security regulations, sir.”

Fred assured him that he would not reveal his information; that he would seek confirmation from other officers.

He sat down heavily in a swivel chair before a quiet screen. This was incredible. “Under seige”...by large numbers of UFOs... every night?

Why were such things were kept secret from the public? Would there be panic?



But the space craft did not seem hostile. With their technology, they could seize the world at any time if such a goal were their intent.

Over the next several days, the “bogies” continued to appear on the radar screens. Fred studied the situation, puzzled over it quietly, then, one evening over officers’ mess, asked West and Blakley, if in their opinion; the blips could be extraterrestrial vehicles.

Lt. West only grunted around a chicken leg, but Lt. Blakley turned the question back on Fred. “You’re supposed to be the hot-shot science whiz kid. Do you think the bogies are UFOs from outer space?”

Fred pushed his empty plate to one side, leaned forward on his elbows, idly rubbing the tines of a fork under the thumb of his left hand. After a few moments of reflection, he answered, “I’ve always tried to take a scientific approach to life. The essence of science is its openness to all data.”

“Is that a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’?” Lt. Blakley wanted to know.

West cleared his throat, making a decision to enter the conversation. “You know, fellows, I have sometimes speculated that maybe us hairless apes here on earth are really some extraterrestrial astronaut’s science project. Maybe we’re seeing all the bogies because the guys in the space ships are so disgusted by their laboratory project that they’re coming back to wipe us out and start over again.”

“You morbid creep,” Blakley scowled in distaste. “That theory is depressing. I don’t want to consider myself the property of some bug-eyed monster.”

“Why bug-eyed monsters?” Fred picked up on the negative description. “What if they’re human, like us?”

“I like that better,” Blakley quickly agreed. “Maybe we sight so many UFOs at our particular radar installation because they recognize us guys here at Point Arena as the smartest humans on the planet. They might be coming to take us to their world and treat us like royalty.”

“I don’t think they could possibly be human, like us,” West argued. “Humanoid maybe. Like maybe they’re reptilian or some kind of amphibious creatures.”

Fred conceded the point. “There could well be more than one species of space traveler. That wouldn’t be quite as good, would it, Blakley? Being treated like royalty on the Planet of the Snakes.”

Blakley shuddered. “Yecch. Snakes are cold-blooded critters. Think of what it would be like to make love to a snake woman. Talk about frigid! Talk about cold!”

“Oh, hell, Blakley,” West laughed. “That’s the only kind of woman you ever get anyway!”

The mess hall conversation terminated in good-natured banter and verbal rough-housing, but two days later, Fred was once again able to have a private conversation with Private Louie Long.

“I just can’t figure out why everyone acts as though they’re afraid of something,” Fred admitted to Long. “And now you tell me that we may have reason to be afraid. Of what?” Long took a deep swallow of his coffee before he set the cup down on the table and put his feet up on an adjacent chair.

“It all began about six months ago, sir. It was when we got the FPS 35 installed and it was operational. Before that, all we had was the old FPS 8, which looked out to sea about 100 miles. When the 35 went on line, we could look out 400 miles. And in some cases, with weather permitting, 500 miles. One evening we saw a few bogies.”

As Long went on to describe the scene, Lt. West, Duncan Jones (the G.E. man), and a few others had been present. Long remembered shouting for everyone to observe the screen.

“It was covered with bogies,” he told Fred. “I asked, ‘Is this an invasion, a broken radar, or what?’ “

Jones said that it had to be broken radar. The objects were moving too fast and coming down too hard to be real. The “G” forces alone would crush anyone inside – if the objects truly were airborne vehicles.

Jones turned off the scope and opened the service panels. After a minute or two, Louie Long saw the G.E. representative turn pale and close up the panel. Without another word, Jones switched the unit back on.

“But then I noticed the objects again,” Long continued his account. “They had turned south and were headed toward Mexico.”

“Long,” Fred asked, a note of pleading coloring his question. “You must have filed a report on all this?”

Long laughed bitterly. “Of course I did. And as I left, I handed it to a guard. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw him dump my report in the shredder.”

Fred was shocked into momentary silence. “They shredded your report?”

Long nodded, dropping ashes from the cigarette he had lighted that hung on his lips. He closed his eyes, like a school boy reciting a poem: “DDS Form 332. ‘400 miles of tracked UFOs. Speed 20,000 miles per hour to 5,000 feet from space. Executed right hand turn and resumed horizontal speeds of 5,000 miles per hour toward Mexico.’ Quote. Unquote.”

“That’s incredible,” Fred shook his head, as if awakening from a bad dream. “You would have thought that they would have learned from Pearl Harbor. In 1941, they ignored the radar sets because they were new. In this case, the radar looks out into space, instead of just over a section of the Pacific Ocean. Did you ever report this?”

“Lt. Bell,” Long had to remind him, “you know that anything that goes on in the scope room is classified. You can’t even mention it in the compound.”

## Chapter Sixteen

Fred felt tormented by the inner struggle which raged within him over the destruction of evidence indicating the intense UFO activity in the Point Arena area. The whole stressful situation boiled to a head for him about seven weeks after his assignment to the radar unit.

It was late one night in the scope screen room. All radar sets were functional. Louie Long was on the screen. Other personnel were working at desks or radar sets. Fred was studying some charts at the rear of the room.

“How do you like the midnight shift, sir?” Long asked.

Fred shrugged, stifled a yawn. “It’s quiet.”

Long chuckled. “Not tonight. Look at the screen.”

Fred looked in amazement at the bogie activity. “Is the set working okay?”

“Perfectly,” Long eliminated all future questions in that vein. “The G.E. rep just left.”

The other personnel in the room began to speak in excited bursts of staccato conversation. Fred felt his body begin to tremble with the thrill of encountering the unknown. “There must be 200 UFO’s coming down!”

“You’ve got a good eye, sir. According to the computer, there are 187. Their trajectory is toward South America. Descent speed is 20,000 MPH, leveling at 5,000 feet.”

“What...what are you going to do, Long?” Fred asked.

“Why, sir,” the private replied in a matter-of-fact monotone, “I am going to do what I always do. I am going to fill out my DDS 332 form and hand it to the sergeant of arms when I go off duty.”

When the shift ended at 5:30 A.M., Fred made it a point to be standing by the coffee machine just outside the door to the scope room. As the new personnel entered with a new sergeant of arms, he observed the former guard walk around to the shredder. Within moments, Louie Long’s report of the mass invasion of UFO’s had been transformed into meaningless strips of paper.

“Sergeant!” Fred snapped at the guard. “What are you doing destroying those reports? They contained vital information.”

The man looked bone tired. His dark-circled eyes seemed to be pleading with Fred not to give him a hard time...not to keep him from his bed for even a few moments longer.

“Those are my orders, sir.”

“From whom?” Fred demanded. To hell with the man’s obvious fatigue. He was going to answer some questions.

“Higher up than I think you will want to go, sir,” he answered.

Fred regarded the man carefully. It was apparent that he could not possibly know more than the limited amount of information that some superior yelled into his ear when ordering him to carry out an order.

He dismissed the man, resolving to call upon Base Commander Bunting that afternoon.

Lt. Colonel Harry Bunting seemed to be expecting him. He sat securely behind his oversized desk, smugly, as if he had sheltered himself in an invulnerable fort. A large man who enjoyed long, thick cigars, he appeared to be sighting at Fred down the barrel of the tobacco, as if we were trying to get the young lieutenant in the crosshairs of a high-powered rifle.

In response to Fred’s passionately expressed desire to be told why the reports on UFO activity were being destroyed, rather than processed, the commanding officer grunted a harsh: “Orders from Washington.”

“Who in their right mind would issue such nonsense? Fred tossed discretion out the window and spoke his mind.

His eyes were attracted to the desk photographs of Bunting with his family. It somehow seemed impossible to Fred that the cold, implacable man seated before him might love a woman, father children, or mow a lawn.

Bunting removed the cigar from his mouth, ran a thick forefinger lovingly down its full length. It was readily apparent to Fred that the Base Commander was more interested in his cigar than he was in the angry junior officer. “It’s not our job to question orders, Lt. Bell.”

“But, sir,” Fred countered. “Neither is it our job to turn our backs on a higher technology and just pretend that it doesn’t exist. Please,

sir, may I respectfully ask how long this has been going on?"

Bunting surprised him with his sudden candor. "A long time...too long. Whoever...whatever these beings are, they are untouchable by our standards. So we just look the other way."

Fred slumped back in his chair. He was becoming increasingly numb to the whole business. "Doesn't anyone ever attempt to communicate with...them?"

For some odd reason, the question annoyed Bunting. His face and neck reddened, and he raised his voice for the first time since Fred had entered his office. "That, Lieutenant, is none of your concern!"

Fred felt the numbness leaving him. He was now becoming suffused with righteous indignation. He glanced at the American flag positioned on the wall behind the Lt. Colonel's desk.

"I really disagree, Colonel Bunting, sir," he began. "We are servants of the taxpayers, and the people deserve to know the truth. If this were the invasion of a foreign power, you can surely bet that the press and the people would be informed. Sir, this is the twentieth century, and we do live in a democracy. This is of great importance to our nation, to our people, to our planet."

"You're out of line, Lt. Bell!" Bunting growled around the thick cigar clenched in his teeth.

"No, sir," Fred protested, "you and the entire defense system are out of line. I hereby resign my commission. I cannot be a party to such foolishness."

Bunting's mouth dropped open, and he removed the cigar to set it safely in a large metal ashtray. His eyes bulged then narrowed. He frowned, scowled, then his thick body began to shake in spasmodic waves of laughter.

Fred shifted uneasily in the leather chair that suddenly began to feel as though it might convert itself into an electric chair.

The Base Commander reached a crisp, white handkerchief up to dab at a tear that had escaped his left eye during his short burst of laughter.

"Lt. Bell," he said, his mouth groping for words, struggling not to submit once again to laughter. "You cannot resign until you finish

your term here.”

Fred got to his feet, pulled himself erect to his full six feet, filled his chest with a full, determined breath. “Neither you nor any agency shall ever have power over me. I shall never respect dictators, especially ignorant ones.”

His commanding officer was no longer amused. “You insolent puppy! You can be court-martialed for this!”

Fred saluted the Base Commander. “I won’t be here long enough to give you the pleasure,” he said as he turned and walked out of the room.

Fred was sickened to the very core. He knew that he could no longer tolerate the government’s cover-up of UFOs. He had joined the Air Force to become part of a defense program to protect a nation that had been established on truthful and moral foundations. There was no way that he would remain a part of a 100 million-dollar cover-up scheme that was supported by ignorant and unsuspecting taxpayers.

But now he had to get out of a seemingly impossible situation. He had to find a way. And he felt certain that he could do it without violating any of their rules. He would just have to invent a few of his own.

He suddenly felt very apprehensive. He felt a great threat. A danger.

The purple mist of time began to swirl thickly around him, once again pulling him back to the future in a present moment of the Eternal Now.

## Chapter Seventeen

Fred Bell opened his eyes and jerked upward with both hands, knocking the tall redheaded nurse off balance. She emitted a shocked yelp of surprise and stumbled against a chair.

“I’m terribly sorry,” he apologized.

The shades had been drawn against the afternoon sun, and his room was very dimly lighted. He could see that the nurse had been about to give him an injection.

“Ach, you startled me,” the nurse admitted in a hushed German accent. “I was about to give you an injection that would help you to rest.”

Fred shook his head. There was something different about the nurse. “Please. I’ve been sleeping enough. Just give me something for the pain.”

“No, no,” she insisted. “You must sleep!”

Fred began to sit up to protest – and then it hit him. German accent! The regular nurse did not have a German accent. “Who are you?”

“Your nurse who has come to help you rest.”

Then he knew. “You’re Freya Von Raeder!”

“Swine!” She shouted in chorus with his cry of recognition. “I will have the receptor! Your father stole it from the Third Reich, and I will reclaim it for the Knights of Atlantis!”

Fred struggled against the sheets and the blanket that bound him to the hospital bed as surely as if they were restraints.

Freya Von Raeder was coming at him with the syringe, and he could guess that it contained a poison meant to put him to sleep forever.

It was in that terrible moment of helplessness that the miracle occurred. A green ray of light emitted from the emerald receptor on his chest and struck his attacker in her mid-section.

Freya Von Raeder screamed in pain as the beam of light lifted her off her feet and propelled her back against a wall with enough force



to knock the red-haired wig from her head and to stun her into a swoon to the floor.

Within another few seconds, the policeman at the door had pushed into the hospital room to investigate.

“Watch out!” Fred warned him. “She’s got a syringe full of poison or some kind of drug.”

The officer approached the dazed woman warily, then knelt beside her with handcuffs when he saw the shattered glass of the syringe at her feet.

“Come on, lady. We’re going to see that you don’t get to play again for a long, long time.”

Moments after the policeman had left with the screaming, cursing Freya Von Raeder in tow, the real redheaded nurse and a doctor were in the room to check him out.

“I’m all right,” Fred assured him. “Really. I woke up...just in time.”

Patiently, he let them examine him. He knew there was no doctor anywhere on the planet who would accept a patient’s word that he was all right.

When he was alone, the shock of it all finally pushed through the reserve of his conscious mind. Another few seconds, and he would have been killed.

The same sick, power-hungry mentality that had taken his father’s life would have squelched his own.

And what of the greenish-colored ray that had emanated from the receptor on his chest?

He stroked the receptor gently, almost reverently. Had he triggered such an action? Or had someone else done it?

He set the receptor back on his chest. Was it his imagination... or did he perceive a warmth emanating from the object?

Fred lay aback on his pillows, looking up at the ceiling. “Can you hear me, Semjase? Are you somewhere around?”

He felt silly, as if he were Lois Lane asking Superman if he could read her mind.

Eric Powell knocked on the door as he entered the room with Kim Kingswold one step behind him, trying to get past his obstinate bulk. “Hey, Chief, I hear we missed the action.”

“Are you all right?” Kim asked, pulling up a chair next to Fred’s bedside with the corner of her heel while she reached for his bandaged hand with her own trembling fingers.

Fred assured both of his friends that he was fine. He decided not to tell them about the beam that had issued from the receptor.

“I knew that we never should have left you here alone,” Kim scowled menacingly at Eric”.

“Hey, babe,” Powell held up his hands to protest the nasty glare. “Don’t finger me for this one, okay? There was a cop just outside of his door.”

“Exactly my point, Eric,” Kim gritted her teeth in a forced smile. “He was outside the door. Fred needed help inside.”

“It’s okay,” Fred squeezed her fingers in a gesture of gratitude for twenty years of her worrying about him. “I’m all right. That’s all that matters.”

“Right, Chief,” Powell agreed. “And here’s something else that matters. Lt. Percy and his men nailed Von Raeder and his goons for planting the bomb in Doc Grunewald’s car.”

“Oh, God! That is really great news.”

“And now with Freya nabbed for trying to...hurt you,” Kim added, finding it difficult to even utter words to the effect that Fred might have been killed, “the Neo-Nazi nuts should all be put away.”

Fred’s smile of triumph vanished with a moment’s reflection. “But how many others of their satanic brigade are left to spread their evil?”

Brad Bronson had entered the room just as Fred was posing his fearful question. “As the Bible says, dear boy, ‘their name is legion.’”

“Legion?” Powell frowned. “I don’t get it.”

“They are without number,” Bronson explained. “The forces of the dark side always seem to outnumber those who seek to serve the light.”

Powell shook his head in confusion. “You know, Brad, you are getting to sound more and more like a character in one of your own novels: ‘The evil minions of dark princes stalking the innocent and the pure’.

Brad settled himself into the chair on the other side of the bed. “I am the characters in my novels, Eric. I try to keep the dark side with all its nasty thought and sickening suppressions under control, and I try most often to act like one of my crusading heroes, full of dignity, honor, and virtue.”

“Right,” Powell agreed, wishing that he had never opened his mouth.

Bronson directed his attention to Fred. “I’m certain that Lt. Percy will stop by soon with a full and detailed report – and probably with some papers for you to sign – in regard to the arrests. But as you so rightly observe, we don’t know how many of these Knights of Atlantis are still prowling about.”

Kim was unhappy about the direction the conversation had taken. “C’mon, Brad. Please.”

“No, Kim, he’s right,” Fred told her. “I’ve got to get up out of this bed and go at once to Egypt.”

“Egypt!” Powell snorted. “You won’t be going to San Diego, let alone Egypt, for quite a while, buddy.”

Fred felt the warmth of the receptor sending marvelous energy throughout his body. “Be here early tomorrow,” he said to Eric. “I’ll be leaving the hospital tomorrow morning.”

“Fred,” Kim leaned back in her chair, “please don’t do that to yourself. You must accept the reality of the situation. You really got banged up, burned, smacked on the head.”

“Chief,” Powell advised him. “You ain’t that macho!”

Bronson was getting the sense of things. “Fred knows something that we don’t, my friends. What really happened in this room between you and Freya Von Raeder, Dr. Bell?”

Fred caught the knowing twinkle in his friend’s eye. “Later, Brad. Later, I promise.”

“What’s going on?” Powell was jealous of being excluded from anything in his friend’s life.

“Later,” Fred repeated. “I’ll swear I’ll tell you when the time is right.”

Bronson shrugged, accepted the decree of temporary silence. “These are powerful people with friends in very high places. It is

possible that they have the means and the connections to be detained for only a brief period of time.”

“I’ll be pressing charges to do my best to see that they’ll be held without bond...and then put away for a very long time,” Fred emphasized his words with resolute determination.

“Of course,” Bronson persisted. “But remember they no doubt have members everywhere.”

“But hasn’t it always been so?” Fred reminded them. “Remember what Grunewald told us. The struggle to pervert the gifts of the Star Gods goes back to the days of Atlantis.”

“So,” Bronson sat back with a satisfied smile. “You did not discount the words of our late Dr. Grunewald. You have a more complete picture of your destiny. Your destiny...and your father’s.”

Eric took his customary position in such discussions. He leaned against a wall and studied the issues at hand. “Fred,” his voice was truly serious. “I guess you must have been thinking things through while you’ve been laid up, huh?”

Fred chose his words carefully. “I’ve seen...relived...so much of my past. Only I’ve seen certain scenes in a much more expanded way. I seem to have a new awareness.”

Powell listened thoughtfully. “Maybe that nasty bump on your head has caused you to rearrange your mental filing system.”

Fred laughed softly. “That probably had something to do with it. But believe me, there is so much more. And I can see now that Semjase has always been subtly interacting in my life...just as she did with my father’s”.

Kim’s pretty features were distorted in another of her famous pouts. “So you’ve been lying here dreaming about that beautiful goddess from outer space,”?

Powell could not restrain a hearty burst of laughter. “Hey kid! Better you should be jealous of a chick from space than a bimbo from down on the block.”

“Oh, Eric,” she grimaced, “you have such a sophisticated manner of putting things.”

“Semjase appears to have been somehow connected with me, us, in previous lifetimes,” Fred continued.

“Reincarnation?” Things were becoming very difficult for Eric Powell.

“Oh, hush,” Bronson scolded. “Maybe at last you will learn something!”

“It all comes together – or at least a big part of the puzzle does – in Egypt,” Fred said, feeling the energy from the receptor pulsating within him. “That’s why I must go there. I must complete a few of the steps that my father was prevented from taking.”

“But they won’t let you out of the hospital!” Kim was at the point of shrieking her impatience.

Powell sighed, leaning back heavily against the wall. “Hell, Kim, you know very well if our boy makes up his mind to do something, he just jolly well will do it. Remember how he got out of his assignment in the Air Force after only six or seven weeks at Point Arena?”

“No!” Kim did shriek this time. “You aren’t going to commit suicide again. You’re already too badly hurt.”!

“What’s this?” Bronson frowned. Now it was his turn to feel left out. “I haven’t heard this story.”

“Well,” Powell grinned. “It’s a doozy. Ol’ Fred’s stubbornness and determination are without peel.”

“That’s ‘peer’.” Fred corrected, resigning himself to the fact that he was now going to have to listen to a story on himself.

“Anyway,” Powell continued, “Fred had just read out the Base Commander, Colonel Bateman...”

“Bunting,” Fred corrected again.

“Anyway,” Powell picked it up once more, “he had read out Colonel Bunting and told him that he was resigning from the Air Force because they were withholding information about UFO’s from the American public. Well, of course, the Colonel tells Fred that he is out of his flipping mind.”

“So, what Fred actually did,” Kim shuddered at the memory, “was to go into a tool shed, pick up a rag and a two-gallon can of carbon tetrachloride and walk back into the Base Commander’s office, giving him a nice respectful salute as he entered.”

Bronson shook his head in disbelief. “Fred, I cannot believe this is you.”

“It gets better,” Eric promised. “Fred asks the Colonel if he has got his dismissal orders ready yet. Of course the Colonel says, no way, Jose. Fred hasn’t been there long enough to ‘resign’ from the Air Force.”

“So Fred says, okay, there’s a faster way to get out. He sits down, pours the carbon tet on the rag, then covers his face with it.”

“How melodramatic, Fred,” Bronson scolded.

Fred smiled sheepishly. “It worked for me.”

“Fred was grabbed by a couple of guards and a van took him to Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco,” Powell moved the story along.

“My dear boy,” Bronson had to find out. “Did you really intend to kill yourself?”

Fred was sitting up now, enjoying the story. “I had no intention of killing myself. The Base Commander had become unreasonable, so I decided to reach him on his own level.”

“And you certainly did that, Chief,” Powell underscored his friend’s rationale.

“But when I was interrogated at the hospital,” Fred stirred their memories of the experience, “you recall that I met some very understanding officers, men who actually could respect what I had done. They saw that it was impossible for me to harbor lies – and that to serve an entire organization of lies would be to bury myself far from the realm of reality”.

“I explained that I had only given the illusion of suicide. I knew that anyone who was afraid to accept the fact that we are being infiltrated by extraterrestrial spaceships – obviously manned by intelligent beings – had to possess a paranoia with a corresponding fear of death.”

“So you were out of the Air Force,” Bronson reflected, “and free to go to NASA.”

“Yes,” Fred commented. “Seal Beach, California. Home of the Saturn Moon Rocket...where I would do everyone a lot more good.”

“At least for a while,” Kim said wistfully. “Fred, when will you ever settle down?”

“There it is!” Powell exclaimed, making a big job of counting on his fingers. “Is that marriage proposal Number Twenty-six?”

“If that unappreciative boy does not respond soon, Kim,” Brad Bronson assured her, “you will only have to ask me once.”

Fred had distanced himself from their bantering comments. He sat up in bed and began to remove the bandage from his burned hand.

“What are you doing?” Kim leaned forward to stop him.

“Please sit back,” Fred said in a gentle, yet forceful, tone that told her to heed his request at once.

“Hey, Chief?” Powell questioned.

Fred tossed the bandages aside and held his hand aloft for all of them to see.

It was completely healed. It bore absolutely no signs of the terrible burns that had seared his flesh.

“Please be here early tomorrow morning,” Fred requested. “I’ll be leaving for Denderah, Egypt, tomorrow evening.”

## Chapter Eighteen

Dr. Fred Bell was on a Trans World Airline's "redeye" flight to New York City the next evening at 11:45 P.M. After a few hours' layover at Kennedy Airport, he would fly to Paris, then on to Cairo.

A flight attendant asked him if he were comfortable.

"I've never felt better in my life," Fred assured her.

He did trouble her for a light beer from her cart, then leaned back in his seat to relax. One of the best things about a late night flight was that the chances of being seated next to a talkative salesman from Cincinnati were diminished considerably.

Fred found himself subconsciously rubbing the emerald nuclear receptor that he now wore under his shirt. He reflected upon the miraculous healing that had been accomplished by the unknown energy that somehow emanated from the object.

He could hardly refrain from laughing out loud when he recalled the expressions on the two examining physicians that morning.

All one of them could say was, "Incredible. Remarkable."

The other doctor seemed almost to be babbling an incredulous litany: "This is impossible. You have no trace of the severe burns that had damaged your left hand, upper left shoulder, and your neck. There is no longer evidence of a skull fracture. And you were covered with bruises. Where did they disappear to?"

The doctor seemed to be accusing Fred of removing all traces of his injuries and having hidden them in a secret place where none of the doctors or nurses could find them.

Since Fred insisted upon being discharged – and because the two examining physicians could find absolutely no trace of any injury of any kind – he was waiting somewhat impatiently when Eric Powell arrived around 10:15 to take him home.

Kim Kingswold had put up a brief, futile protest against his leaving for Egypt so soon after his hospital stay. "I mean, I know you're healing now and everything, but Fred, you were banged up, knocked out, and flat on your back for three days!"



Powell had argued that Fred shouldn't undertake the journey alone. "Hey, Chief, we're a team, right, man? We've been a team since we were kids. You need your good ol' right arm beside you."

Brad Bronson agreed with both Kim and Eric. He felt that Fred should rest at least another day or so, and he definitely urged him to take Powell with him.

"You haven't seen the last of the Knights of Atlantis, my boy. They won't give up so easy. The Von Raeders and their thugs may be awaiting long-term incarceration, but there may be thousands of modern day Disciples of Belial who would consider it their mission to steal the receptor and deem it their pleasure to slit your stubborn throat."

Fred had told his friends that while he appreciated their concern, the mission to Egypt was a task that he must undertake on his own. He begged their understanding and their continued love.

"I know that you feel confident with that receptor around your neck," Bronson had given him sage counsel. "It healed you miraculously and saved you from death at the hands of Freya Von Raeder. Just don't go around believing yourself to be a superman. Don't abuse the power of the receptor."

Abuse of power. That would be the last thing on Earth of which Fred could ever want to be guilty. He had been in conflict with the power hungry and the abusers of power for many years.

Wispy images of faces began to move from the corners of his mind, and a few coalesced into solid visages of lust and power. Fred took a comfortably deep breath, and he saw the purple mist of time beginning to curl around him.

He saw himself seated at a computer console. He knew that he was viewing a scene from his years at NASA. He was at Seal Beach, California, home of the Saturn Moon Rocket. Flood lights illuminated the giant rockets, 'the bird,' that stood poised inside huge ten-story buildings.

He looked up as another engineer entered the room. It was Sal Mancusio.

"Hey, Bell," Mancusio was saying as Fred focused on the scene, then became one with its energy flow. "Be careful when you're on the

bird, okay? We've been having just too damn many electrical problems since Rockwell went on its big cost saving binge and started hiring too many unskilled laborers."

Mancusio poured himself a cup of coffee. Then added, almost as if it were a matter too trivial with which to bother Fred, "Oh, by the way. Von Lossburg wants to see you."

Fred groaned and leaned back on his chair. "What now? He and his cronies are like home room teachers in high school."

Fred put on his gold safety hard hat and set out for the headquarters of his superior.

Within a few moments, he stepped into a small, tidy office. Seated behind a highly polished desk was Dr. Eric Von Lossburg.

The man was a tall, thin, German scientist who had been brought to the United States after the war. He was dressed in a black after-ski outfit.

"Bell," he began, at last breaking his studied silence. "I am dismayed to learn from some of my men that your troops were getting wet on maneuvers in the rain. "I am referring specifically to the helmets of your men."

Helmets? Fred frowned in momentary confusion. "Oh," he finally understood. "You mean the hardhats. The safety hats."

Von Lossburg glared at Fred as if he were a retarded schoolboy trying to recite the alphabet. "Yes, Dr. Bell. I mean precisely the helmets. Your troops do not polish theirs. The men on my shift look 'gung ho.' They are perfect examples of Rockwell's finest scientists and engineers."

Fred fought back an impulse to run screaming from the man's office. "Sir, we are engineers and scientists, as you just stated. We are not 'troops.' I believe that we must be measured on our spit-shined hardhats."

Von Lossburg startled Fred by slamming his fist down on the desk. "You and your men will be assessed both by your work and by your appearance. Now get back to work. See to it that Dr. Werner Von Braun is happy when he arrives!"

Fred walked back to the rocket site, wondering to himself why he always got thrown in with the power-mad crazies. Von Lossburg and

Colonel Bunting had to be related.

Fred's dream machinery moved on fast forward, then sharpened its focus on the computer room later that same day.

A red light flashed on the computer console, and Fred's scrutiny was directed to a workman extinguishing a smoldering fire on one of the rockets.

"Look Sal!" He exclaimed to Mancusio, "another electrical fire on the bird! Doesn't anyone care about what goes on here? Someone is really going to get hurt on this project if this happens when we begin tests with fuels aboard."

Mancusio shrugged away his momentary concern. "Hell, Bell. You know the system. It's too big to penetrate."

Fred crumpled the Styrofoam cup in his hand, tossing it into a nearby wastebasket. "Sal, systems are made to be challenged – especially political ones. Without the personal touch, this program doesn't have a chance. I am going to see Von Braun at NASA. Damn it, I know he will listen to me."

Mancusio reached for a cigarette from the badly crumpled pack to the side of the computer. "You're asking for a load of trouble, pal."

Fred shook his head vigorously. "No, Sal, I'm asking for the truth. What we have here is a situation in which all the people involved should really care. We should not be a bureaucracy that merely pushes a rocket out the door so that some astronaut can get killed in it. We should care about people – not only our paychecks and out spit-shined hardhats!"

There was a barely perceptible blur of movement in the swirling purple mist of Time, and Fred found himself in his dream-vision recreating the area in the NASA complex in which the highly-respected German rocket scientist Dr. Werner Von Braun had his office.

"He just got in, Dr. Bell," one of the engineering inspectors was telling him. "Personally, I think he is still feeling a little jet a lag. He and a few others worked late on the Cape last night getting the Apollo ready – and then he flew here without much sleep. I hope it's very important."

"I won't waste his time," Fred assured the man.

Von Braun stood up to greet him as he entered the office. The scientist was probably two inches over six feet tall, of very athletic build. A handsome man, he was just beginning to show signs of aging.

“Well, Dr. Fred Bell,” he said in the midst of a firm handshake. “I’ve heard a lot about you. And I must admit that the descriptions seem almost to fit me when I first joined the rocket project at Peenemunde in the late 1930s.”

Although Von Braun had set to work to construct rockets for the Nazis, he had protested when he learned that Hitler intended to turn such creations upon innocent civilians. The young rocket scientist had understood that he was to design a vehicle capable of going into space, that he was to push Goddard’s earlier work on rocketry to the edge of the universe. Von Braun’s dreams were of space...not of manufacturing weapons of terror.

“I am honored to speak with you like this,” Fred admitted in an honest declaration. “In a way, I must confess, I would like to defect from this operation – just as you did from Hitler’s Germany. But America is supposed to be different.”

Van Braun was puzzled. He gestured that Fred should take a seat. “What do you mean? What is the meaning of such talk of defecting?”

“Well, sir,” Fred explained as he sat down in the chair directly in front of Von Braun’s desk. “You left the company of a madman. I feel that I want to run from a mad situation here at Rockwell.”

‘A mad situation?’ Von Braun was not pleased to be hearing such a report.

Fred nodded. “Yet, at the same time, I feel obligated to stay and to do my best to fight on – because someone is going to be seriously injured while serving on this program.”

Von Braun was caught by the younger man’s obvious sincerity. “Go on. Explain.”

“Sir, we have serious quality control problems. I’ve tried to bring them to the attention of the management, but they are only interested in quantities, not quality. Did you know that we have fires daily on the bird?”

The expression in Von Braun's ruggedly handsome features told Fred that the brilliant scientist was not hearing all of this for the first time.

"Word of the problem has already reached the Cape," he admitted in a lowered, but still controlled, voice. "As a matter of fact, it kept me up last night. Dr. Bell, would you submit your complaint to me in writing?"

Fred reached for an inside coat pocket. "Sir, I have already done so."

Von Braun smiled at his young colleague's zeal. "You realize, of course, that when your superiors learn of this, they will do their utmost to hang you politically and to destroy your career."

"Sir, there are three things to which I have become accustomed in the high-tech, highly competitive society in which we live."

"And what are those?" Von Braun wished to know.

"The gallows, the guillotine, and the executioner!"

Within days of the circulation of Fred's written report, Von Lossburg had him in a series of electrical malfunctions.

Although Hank Lacey of the Local 887 of the United Aerospace Workers backed Fred and declared their intention to contest his dismissal to the highest courts in the land, he knew that another chapter in his life had been closed. Another growth and learning experience had been accomplished.

## Chapter Nineteen

Cairo in its late afternoon rush hour made Los Angeles traffic seem like an orderly promenade. The streets were like massive, parking lots, impossibly clogged and congested. From time to time, a smaller car would dash free of the metallic herd by driving up on a sidewalk or by cutting through a marketplace.

Fred Bell found it beyond comprehension that so many human beings could squeeze themselves into the trolleys and buses. He fully expected to see conductors with large mallets flattening the passengers like tin cans so that they might fit into the mass transit vehicles.

And yet, in spite of a seemingly endless procession of automobiles, and trolleys, there were thousands of men and women on bicycles and on foot – all heading home for the evening meal, rest, and relaxation.

Although he was impatient to take the train to Denderah, Fred permitted reason to control his emotions. He knew that jet-lag and fatigue were bound to hit him, especially after he had enjoyed an evening meal. It would be better to be rested after the long flight.

He slept that night in a Holiday Inn with a view of the Great Pyramid. A McDonald's was just down the street. Fred could not help musing how very different things were from the time of his father's expedition in 1939.

The incredible *mélange* of activity at the Cairo train depot the next morning reminded Fred of an evacuation scene in a war movie. Peddlers, street vendors, beggars, traveling merchants, soldiers, pickpockets, tourists, and hordes of men and women with vacant, staring eyes – who must somehow have known where they were going – all seemed to arrive within four or five minutes of one another to congregate around the trains.

As he was pushed and jarred about by the crowds, he was glad that he had left his luggage at the Holiday Inn. He was traveling light

with a shoulder bag into which he had placed his camera, his toothbrush, his passport, and his vitamins.

After a miracle only a trifle less dramatic than Moses parting the Red Sea, Fred managed to find the train for Thebes. When he was at last comfortably settled in his compartment, he ordered a Stella, a large bottle of Egyptian beer from the porter. He would not arrive at his destination until late that night, but if his luck held out, a rented car would be awaiting him.

He leaned back against cushions that surprised him by being relatively comfortable. The remarkable Egyptian landscape blurred by the window seized his interest. He was tempted to remove the Olympus camera from his shoulder bag and try to take some souvenir shots for Kim.

He saw things that appeared to be trapped in the past. Men rode donkeys and camels without any type of modern vehicle in sight. It was as if no one had yet heard of an internal combustion engine. Women carried jars atop their heads and veiled faces. Oxen walked tethered to an eternal circle, drawing clay pots of water from the Nile.

With such an endlessly fascinating panorama to hold attention, the hours went by quickly. Then, by mid-afternoon, after a substantial lunch and another Stella, he stretched out his legs and took a nap.

Interestingly, it was the receptor pulsing against his chest that awakened him just before the conductor announced arrival at Thebes.

If only he had some time to be a tourist, Fred thought wistfully. He was now in ancient Luxor, with the temples of Karnak and all of its wonders. There would be another time, he told himself. Now he felt a great sense of urgency, as if he were racing against the great hands of some unseen master clock.

The car, a Peugeot, was waiting for him at the terminal. He knew that he had over an hour's drive to Denderah and the temple of Hathor.

As he studied the road map, he suddenly felt very alone. He looked around him at the milling mass of humanity – most of it oblivious to his existence. But then, from time to time, he caught the eyes of those who seemed very much to be regarding him with

hostile intent. Were they members of the Knights of Atlantis? Was it possible that he had been followed here from Los Angeles?

Why hadn't he let Eric Powell accompany him? Why did he feel that he had to do this alone?

A tall, blond man with a well-trimmed beard seemed to be studying him with peculiar interest. Fred regarded him carefully over the edge of the road map. Hadn't he seen the same man aboard the flight from Los Angeles to New York? Wasn't he the man he saw smoking a pipe in the hotel lobby last night?

Fred felt a thin river of sweat moving down the crease of his back. An icy finger of fear slowly scraped a jagged nail across his stomach. The man certainly looked the part of a Neo-Nazi. Tall, blond, well-built. If Fred were casting a movie about an Aryan supremacist, this man would definitely get a part.

As he began to move toward Fred, a strange smile played with full lips between mustache and beard. A sadistic smile, Fred categorized it at once.

Fred rocked back on his heels, taking a deep breath to calm himself. He had no weapon other than the camera bag on his shoulder. But he would get in the first punch. Although the man was taller and heavier, Fred would strike before he knew what hit him. The best defense was always a good offense.

A woman began speaking loudly in French behind and to the left of Fred. The tall blond man answered her in the same tongue.

Fred felt very much the fool as the two French tourists walked off arm-in-arm. Thank heaven he had kept his fears and his aggressive strategies internalized.

The emerald receptor began to emanate heat, and Fred was aware of a high-pitched metallic whistling sound in his left ear.

Fred understood. The medallion was making itself known. He had nothing to fear as long as he remained true to his mission and relied upon the guidance and the protective energy of the receptor.

After all, Fred laughed aloud at his smiling reflection in a darkened window of the terminal, why should anyone be nervous if he were entering an ancient Egyptian temple alone in the dark after midnight with a bunch of bloodthirsty Neo-Nazis on his tail?



Although Fred felt fully protected by the energy of the receptor, the sight of the temple in the moonlight prompted certain atavistic apprehensions. He wished that he hadn't read all those damn spooky novels by Brad Bronson when he was a teenager. Long-dead mummies shuffling from their crypts. Were-jackals howling on the desert sands? Centuries-old curses as potent as magnum force.

The headlights of the Peugeot swept the steps of the temple with feeble brushstrokes of illumination that did little to push back the thick darkness. Fred could not help noticing that the temple seemed to have received little professional attention. It was quite obviously not a special tourist favorite.

As he walked up the stone steps, he could not restrain the images that Grunewald had planted of the death struggle of Dr. Paul Raymond Bell that had taken place on that very spot over thirty years before.

Fred surprised himself by suddenly kneeling and speaking aloud: "Father, I am here. I have returned to complete your...our mission. I don't really know why I am here, to tell the truth, Father. I have come in faith, knowing that I will be guided."

He was even more surprised when the tears began to flow. He could not remember weeping since the death of MacKee. And then, just a few days ago, as Dr. Grunewald related the details of his father's murder.

Fred rose after a few moments of silent prayer, steadied himself, and entered the Temple of Hathor.

He was just a few feet inside the entrance when he heard a peculiar sound to his left. His probing flashlight beam was unable to find anything to account for the odd, birdlike chirping sound.

"All I need is to spot some giant bats or vultures in here," Fred said to himself in a soft, teeth-clenched mumble.

Large-eyed, reddish-brown skulled men and women stared out at him from the wall paintings several thousand years old. It was amazing how bright the colors remained. What a remarkable tribute to the artistry of craftsmen long surrendered to dust.

In a few moments Fred was standing under the star map of the Pleiades. The hidden panel lay behind the Alcyone.

“Oh, boy, did I underestimate the height of the ceiling,” he winced aloud. He had forgotten that his father had had the broad shoulders of Dr. Wolf Grunewald upon which to stand. Chh... chhh... chbrrr.

Fred was startled once again by strange sounds from the edges of the darkness that surrounded him.

But this time his flashlight captured the source of the birdlike chirping, and there was no way that he could have prepared himself for the sight.

Two humanoid entities with impossibly large eyes recoiled at the brightness of the flashlight beam. One of the creatures shrieked and flailed at the light with its three-fingered hand, as if trying to beat back the illumination that had caused pain to its huge, black unblinking eyes.

Each of the beings stood a bit less than five feet tall. They had disproportionately large heads and preternaturally oversized eyes. Neither had any discernible nose, but Fred could see prominent nostrils. Their mouths were slits, and the one that was screaming appeared to have no visible teeth. They were dressed in tight-fitting, one-piece jumpsuits.

Dear God, Fred thought. They looked like giant insects...or reptilian humanoids.

One of the beings held an object in one of his three-fingered hands. Fred sensed that it was some kind of weapon.

A beam of yellowish light shot toward Fred's chest, but it was as if the emerald receptor somehow reached out and absorbed the alien ray.

Fred stumbled backward, then dropped to one knee. The absorption had not been without impact, and the receptor would soak up the bad rays one more time.

There was a soft, whooshing sound, and the two humanoid entities were suddenly enveloped in what appeared to be a blue, sparkling mist. In the next instant, they had disappeared.

“They broke the rules of non-interference first.”

Fred turned in the direction of the voice. It was the same soft, feminine voice that he had heard warning him of the attempt on his life at the Psychic Fair in Burbank.

And then she was standing there at his side. Semjase. Petite in size, powerful in authoritative impact on his senses. Her extraordinary large eyes were a bright emerald green. Her golden brown hair fell to her waist. She was dressed in a silver one-piece suit with a waistband that matched her eyes.

“Zeta Reitculans,” she explained, nodding at the spot where the two bug-eyed entities had stood only seconds ago.

“They intended to stun you, paralyze you, and take you away with them. It seems that you were on their abduction list for tonight. I sent them back to their ship a bit ahead of schedule – and empty-handed at that. Properly utilized, your receptor would have taken care of them, but all you were achieving was a singed chest.”

Fred felt as though he were caught somewhere between dimensions of reality. Could this really be happening? Was it truly possible that he was standing in the presence of a woman from another world?

Her laughter was a musical scale of merriment that seemed to rise and fall almost as if she were singing. “Yes, Fred, I am certain that you have many questions to ask, but this is neither the time nor the place. You must go about your task quickly.”

“You really are...Semjase,” he uttered the words, feeling at once simpleton and a sage. His hand reached out to hover inches above her shoulder.

There was the sound of laughter once again. “Go ahead, touch me. Prove to yourself that I am real.”

Fred hesitated. He remembered the sparkling blue mist and that had accomplished instant transportation for the large-headed, smallish aliens. What if he touched her and ended up in Peru?

Then the tips of his fingers were sensing a metallic kind of cloth with firm flesh beneath it. “You... you certainly seem to be real.”

“Thank you,” she smiled, bowing slightly at the waist. “And now, since you have not come prepared with a ladder, I will give you a boost through the panel – and then you must hurry.”

“Wait!” Fred protested. “What’s the hurry? Can’t we talk?”

“There will be a time for that, I promise,” she answered without hesitation. “But I am in violation of a host of intergalactic laws even

as I stand here with you. There will be a problem with the Zeta Reticulans – even though they never seem to keep their word. They have deceived us before, as they have deceived your government.”

“My government?” Fred’s senses were truly spinning crazily. “Explain some of the things that you are saying. Please.”

She shook her head for emphasis, setting her fine golden-brown hair to swaying. “You Bell men are cut from the same cloth, all right. I violated Council Decrees for your father as well.”

“But you cannot be the same Semjase,” Fred argued with his perception of reality. “You can’t be the same one who helped my father acquire the receptor. You can’t be the same Semjase who appeared to me when I was in high school. You don’t look any older than I am.”

“Later, dear one,” Semjase promised. “You must focus on your mission. There are those approaching who wish to reclaim the receptor.”

“More of the little bugmen?” Fred wanted to know.

Semjase shook her head, and he could not help focusing on her remarkable beauty. She was the most beautiful woman that he had ever seen. “Other-worldly,” truly described her breathtaking appearance as well as her actual point of origin.

“There are those of the swastika, the Disciples of Belial, the Knights of Atlantis, coming to this temple,” she warned him. “They have sought our receptors and other artifacts of our technology since the days of Atlantis.”

Without another word, Fred found himself elevated to the ceiling, just beneath Alcyone. The panel slid open, and he crawled into the room above the temple lobby. Effortlessly, Semjase followed him.

“My father was the last human to know what I’m doing,” Fred told her. He removed the receptor from around his neck and placed it into an indentation in the wall. “This looks like a spot where a receptor should be.”

In the flow of the Eternal Now, 1939 and 1971 were separated by only a pulse beat as the secret door once again opened to reveal the pyramidal chamber.

Fred's flashlight was no longer necessary as the entire area became illuminated. He was eager to step inside. He remembered Grunewald's graphic descriptions of the Atlantean artifacts and a host of other treasures – both terrestrial and extraterrestrial.

"Wait!" Semjase shouted as he was about to enter the chamber.

Fred stopped, perplexed, but obedient.

Semjase picked up a small bit of crumpled mortar and threw it past him into the newly revealed doorway before him. The gritty bit of stone vaporized with a tiny hissing sound.

Fred did not have to be told that it could have been he that had been transformed from solid to gas.

"So much for believing that you know what you are doing!" Semjase spoke in a manner of a firm, somewhat impatient mother. "Grunewald warned you about that door. You knew better than that!"

Fred felt as though he might be blushing as he placed the receptor in the second slot and neutralized the deadly protective energy that guarded the inner chamber.

"Now, I believe it is safe to leave you, dear one," Semjase said with a soft sigh of relief.

Before Fred could express a really fine reason that he hoped might convince her to stick around, Semjase had vanished.

He stood there, wavering slightly, like a tall tree in the wind from a mounting storm. He needed to get his equilibrium before he took another step. Within the past five minutes, he had nearly been abducted by actual bug-eyed midget monsters and he had been levitated by the most beautiful woman that he had ever seen – a woman who could come and go in the blink of an incredulous eye.

He now seemed to be on "automatic pilot." Whether it was the spirit of his father working through him or the spirit of Grunewald reminding him of the next steps in the procedures, Fred moved with assurance into the pyramidal chamber.

Without hesitation he directed his attention to the emerald-colored case protruding from the apex of the ceiling room. In the bottom of the case, within reach of his outstretched arm, was another recession into which he knew the receptor must be fitted. There was a soft metallic tickling sound, and the capstone fell into his grasp.

Fred felt like a starchild awaiting a great cosmic birthday party. As he set the capstone on a table, his heart seemed to be pounding in harmony with the beat of a faraway drummer. When the sides of the capstone fell away to reveal its treasures, he had to kneel to the floor of the chamber to catch his breath.

And then, as had his father three decades before, he was transfixed by the picture of the ethereally lovely woman with the long golden hair and the large, brilliant green eyes. It again dazzled his senses to consider that the beautiful woman from the Pleiades, whom he had encountered just minutes ago, might be hundreds of Earth years old.

As he focused on the marvels of the capstone, he saw an old book lying on the floor. "Father," he whispered, "I feel you so strongly. Everything else in this chamber is neatly in an appropriate place. An ancient book lying on the floor is definitely out of place. I know that you must have dropped this as you exited the chamber."

Fred was startled to find that the pages of the book seemed to be composed of some kind of thin, plastic-like material. "Hey, man, this ain't papyrus."

Although the text was written in a peculiar form of hieroglyphs, it was the illustrations that caught Fred's firm attention. "The receptor. Here's the diagram of the receptor," he spoke excitedly to the empty chamber, unaware of the hollow echoes that answered him. "It must tell how to make one."

He flipped through the pages with his thumb and saw that the book contained a number of diagrams of various technological artifacts. "Father dropped this in his excitement," Fred decided as he shoved the book into his camera bag. "His son is not going to let go of it for a second!"

Three of them were waiting for him by the Peugeot when he left the Temple of Hathor. There was a red sky that morning, making dawn on the Nile a splendid creation of the Master Painter. How regretful, Fred observed, that three such disgusting flaws had to spoil the overall effect of tranquil beauty.

One of the men appeared to be quite elderly, his white hair closely cropped to his skull. The other two were younger, perhaps in their

late thirties or early forties. They were tall, well-built men. One had shaved his head; the other had close-cropped hair. All three were dressed in dark suits with black leather raincoats.

“We will have the receptor, Dr. Bell,” the bald one said in a thickly accented voice. As he spoke the words, he leveled a Luger automatic at Fred’s chest.

“Don’t you creeps ever give up?” Fred scowled, spitting the words at them, making no attempt to disguise his utter contempt for them and their kind. “Crawl back under your rocks. It’s over for you slime.”

Neither of the younger men gave evidence of any emotional reaction to Fred’s response. The older man, however, began to walk toward him, his leather boot heels tapping sharply on the stone steps.

As the man drew nearer, Fred sensed vibrations of decadence and evil. There was something about the elderly man that seemed to emanate the stuff of which nightmares are made. His eyes appeared to be nothing more than black marbles set in hollowed sockets. His wrinkled flesh was mottled and blotched with age.

“You miserable swine,” the man snarled at him in a voice warped by hatred. “You are the son of the dog that stole from us our prize from the Star Gods. I wish that we had time to make you beg for death to take you.”

Fred was aware that the younger men were also coming closer to him. He must be careful that they did not encircle him.

“Give us the receptor at once, and I will order a quick death for you,” the old Nazi declared, as if he were offering Fred a wonderful opportunity to be carefully considered. “Give us the receptor without trouble, like a man, and compensate for the sins of your swinish father.”

“You scum are a menace to society,” Fred narrowed his eyes in anger. “What my father discovered is to be shared with all of humanity, not an obscene ‘reich’. You and your kind bring only torment to Earth.”

“I will personally tear out your heart with my bare hands,” the old man promised, lifting his gloved hands menacingly.

“Aren’t you a little old to be talking like that, Grandpa?” Fred laughed his dismissal of the elderly Nazi’s threat.

The man reached out and slapped Fred twice across the face. Then before he could defend himself, the aging Nazi punched Fred viciously in the stomach.

Fred sank to his knees. The old man could really hit. He had been foolish to laugh at the elderly Nazi and allow himself to be sucker-punched.

The two younger men were almost on him. He had to act fast. Thank God the old man hadn’t knocked the wind out of him.

Fred scooped one hand under the elderly Nazi’s crotch and grabbed his necktie with the other. In a swift movement, as if he were pressing a barbell, Fred lifted the old man over his head and threw him into the younger Nazis. He watched in grim satisfaction as the three attackers fell down the stone steps in a cursing tangle of bodies, arms and legs.

Fred’s left foot kicked the Luger out of the enemy hand that still clutched it. Then he brought his knee into the face of the man with the shaven skull before he could sit up.

“I will kill you!” The old man shouted, a black-gloved hand dipping inside his coat for his own Luger.

Fred’s right foot struck him in the throat, and he fell backward, striking his head against one of the stone steps.

The third assassin, the blond, staggered to his feet, dazed. Blood streamed from his forehead into his eyes. “Don’t hit me again,” he pleaded. “I want no more.”

Fred turned to regard the bald man he had dispatched with a knee uppercut. He appeared to be unconscious.

When he again faced the blond who had begged for mercy, he saw that he had once again been suckered. The assassin was wearing a nasty grin and holding a Luger in his fist.

“Glory comes to me this day,” he exalted in his triumph over Fred. “I will now become a full Knight of Atlantis.”

“Your kind never tells the truth, do you?” Fred shouted the question. “You beg for mercy, then pull a gun.”



“And your kind will always be trusting and naïve,” the blond sneered. “You are fit for nothing but to be slaughtered. You have stupidly believed that it is the meek who will inherit the Earth. I am not going to ask you again for the receptor, Dr. Bell. Oh, no, I am simply going to kill you and take it from your corpse before I throw it to the crocodiles!”

Fred remembered Semjase saying that the receptor could have handled the bug-eyed aliens if he had known how to control its energy. He had a quick flash of Freya van Raeder in the hospital. She had reached for the receptor, but he had mentally screamed, “No!” The receptor had seemingly responded automatically when the alien directed its paralyzing ray at him. Again, he had internally screamed out for something to stop the ray from touching him. There had to be a mind-body linkup between his thoughts and the functioning of the receptor. He had better test the theory at once.

“No! Stop him! Destroy the weapon!”

A brilliant red beam shot from the receptor under Fred’s shirt and struck the Luger in the Nazi’s hand. For a mini-second, the weapon was as bright red as the receptor beam – then the pistol was no more.

Fred’s attacker was screaming in pain and rage as he lifted a scalded right hand before his unbelieving eyes. When the man beheld bits of blackened flesh, he mercifully fainted.

The husky man with the shaven skull was whimpering and mumbling some German phrases over and over. Blood from a broken nose had splattered his clothing.

Fred spoke in such a tone that the underlying threat could not be overlooked. “A ring was taken from my father the night he was murdered on this very spot. You must know where the ring is. You must know who has it. I will count to three. If you have not told me what I want to know by then, you, too will see what the receptor can do.”

The bloodied assassin did not need even to hear the first number. “It is on the Isle of Fehmarn. It is in our museum of the Knights of Atlantis. It is guarded by elite members of the cause. You will not get it from them, you swine.”

Fred made a movement as if to kick the man, but was satisfied to watch him cower backward. "I think that I will get the ring. I think with this receptor, it will be a piece of cake."

## Chapter Twenty

Two nights later, on Friday the 19th, 1971, on the flight from Cairo to Paris, Fred Bell was alerted to the presence of Semjase.

First he felt an emotional calm, then a euphoric “high.” There was a prickling sensation on the back of his neck, and the hairs on his arm rose. A peculiar metallic whistling sound began in his left ear.

He looked around him in the 747. Nearly everyone was sleeping or nodding off, but some passengers were wide awake watching the in-flight movie and reading.

Would Semjase dare to materialize on board the airplane in full view of passengers and flight crew?

“Go to the lavatory. Now, please. Move quickly while our coordinates are precise.”

That answered that question. Fred got eagerly to his feet, a smug smile revealing his innermost fantasy. What if these semi-comatose folks knew that he was about to rendezvous in a lavatory compartment with a gorgeous cosmonaut from another world? The sound of their collective minds being blown would register 8.8 on the Richter scale!

At 3:00 A.M. Fred did not have any difficulty finding a vacant lavatory. He stepped inside, sliding the bolt in place.

“All right,” he said softly, announcing his arrival. “I’m here. Where are you?”

A sparkling blue light began to swirl around him. It only took a fraction of a second for him to remember where he had seen that light before. It had manifested around the two bug-eyed Zeta-Reticulan bodies before they had disappeared.

Fred was aware of a not unpleasant “tickling warmth” moving over his body. A prism-like rainbow succession of colors wavered before his eyes.

And then he was standing beside Semjase in what was obviously a Pleiadian space vehicle. He was aware of humming and whirring sounds around them, and he could sense, rather than actually see,

other cosmonauts. It was as if he were being allowed only restricted vision and perception.

Semjase held out her right hand in what Fred interpreted to be a friendly gesture.

He extended his own right hand and touched hers. He was amazed by the warmth that he felt emanating from her body. She...the spacecraft...the experience was not an illusion. It was real. And it was actually happening to him.

“Fred, we must speak seriously.” Her voice, while still melodic and benign, now seemed firmer and carried a bit of an edge to it.

“Of course,” Fred indicated his agreement to her prescribed definition of the meeting.

It was difficult to prevent mental images of his taking the ethereally beautiful woman in his arms, but he kept such thoughts at bay, realizing how inappropriate they were to the reality of the situation.

“You will not alter your flight plans to fly to Hamburg when you arrive in Paris,” she told him, again assuming the impatient mother tone of voice. “You will not pursue the ring. It is unimportant. You may have the book – that is what is important to you.”

“But they took the ring from my father,” he argued.

Semjase’s emerald green eyes seemed to probe his very inner core. “You are motivated by revenge. You have had enough of that low-level emotional response. You must now center yourself and go on with your true mission on Earth. Your soul essence was born into flesh again so that you might share the positive aspects of certain of our Pleiadean technology with humankind.”

“And the ring...I mean, well, then, it isn’t like the receptor?” Fred struggled with meaning.

“If you mean, can it emanate rays that can convert an assailant’s hand into cinders, the answer is ‘no.’ It is simply a ring.”

He knew that he had displeased Semjase, and he very much wished to argue his case. “Those Nazi’s would have killed me and taken the receptor to use in terrible ways against the people of Earth. They...”

Semjase lifted her hand in a gesture of silence. “Self-defense in order to protect the receptor from falling into the hands of the Disciples of Belial was one thing, dear one. It is quite another for you to go charging into their lair, challenging them for the possession of various meaningless artifacts, and scorching them with the energy of the receptor.

She paused to allow the impact of her words to resonate within Fred’s consciousness. “I stated that your mission was to share certain aspects of our technology with our brothers and sisters on Terra, Earth, but this sharing process is conducted according to a strictly regulated program.

“I thought I made it quite clear to you that we cannot interfere directly with the evolution of this – or any – planet,” Semjase emphasized.

“If you were to charge into the lair of Belial with your receptor blazing, you would certainly call unnecessary attention to its power in the eyes of your scientific community. As it is, we will permit you to replicate the receptor – but with limited aspects of its full potential.”

“And the ring,” Fred seemed reluctant to let loose of it. “It really has no...powers?”

Semjase smiled, at last displaying an attitude other than annoyance. “Meaning my grandfather. We have much longer life-spans on our world. We live ten times or more than the average lifespan of a Terran.”

“How can that be possible?” Fred shook his head in disbelief.

“By eliminating stress, both environmental and racial. We live in harmony with natural laws. As a matter of fact, our space vehicles actually heal your atmosphere by releasing negative ionization as they move through it.”

Fred twisted his lips in a wry expression of distaste. “That’s just the opposite of our jet technology, which destroys the ozone level and releases toxic exhaust fumes everywhere.”

Semjase indicated that he should be seated on a comfortable divan that faced what appeared to be some kind of viewing screen.

“You must exert all possible energy toward the cleansing of your environment,” she told him. “The pollution in the biosphere is causing

pollution in the human mind.”

Semjase’s brilliant green eyes clouded with concern and sadness. “Because of such terrible pollution and the destruction of the ozone layer, Terrans are allowing the Sun’s ultraviolet rays to reach the surface with such power that life-spans are being drastically shortened.”

Fred said he was aware that atmospheric ozone reduction also harmed the immune system.

Semjase verified this with great emphasis. “That’s why Terrans are contracting such terrible diseases as cancer..”

The beautiful cosmonaut seemed to be conducting an inner debate about disclosing a particularly unpleasant preview of Earth’s future.

“In the 1980s,” she began slowly, carefully choosing her words, “a terrible plague attacking the human immune system will sweep the world. It will ravage communities.”

Semjase reached out to place her hand on his shoulder. “It has always saddened us that Terran technology produces a stress that erodes your society’s moral and social values. My dear one, it is your special mission to find a way to make a change.”

“Will you help me, Semjase?” He wondered, feeling very small and insignificant.”

I will instruct you in the construction of certain artifacts which you can, in turn, share with the people of Terra,” she answered. “I have a technology that can in no way harm others; I will show you how to construct a receptor that will assist you and your kind in life extension.”

Semjase explained that the authorized receptor would modify the DNA frequencies to the point where they would begin to create new hormones in the body, thus manifesting higher and higher expressions of energy.

All energy expressions, as known in the physical body, derive from the secretions of hormones. The hormones arrive at the receptor sight of the brain for a given period of time. While the receptor sites are being energized or de-energized on the brain pattern, the consciousness moves up the astral, etheric, and mental

planes. Such an amount of increased energy will regulate Time and will place the wearer of the receptor slightly out of dimension with Earth time, thus separating the wearer from the masses and permitting increased individual creativity.

Semjase reiterated that the technology which would be expressed in the receptor that Fred would fashion had been authorized by a scientific committee working under the aegis of the Federation of the Andromeda Council. The council itself was made up of elders from many different planetary and galactic networks. These elders made pacts and agreements so that a multitude of planetary civilizations might work together in peace and harmony.

“Before I return you to your flight,” the beautiful cosmonaut said, “I will share with you a little more.”

Fred relaxed a bit upon hearing these words. Perhaps he would be acknowledged for his attitude adjustment regarding the ring.

He could not truly “feel” any acceleration, but he was aware that the ship was gaining tremendous speed as the solar system seemed suddenly to disappear into a shining montage of psychedelic patterns. Semjase’s emerald eyes appeared to intensify, and somehow to enhance, the green light that was emanating from the portholes.

All he could manage to utter was, “Where are we going?”

“To Provimi Centuri, 45 light years from your planet,” Semjase smiled.

Fred once again turned his attention to the portholes – the beauty outside...the ship...Semjase inside with him...her beauty. It was all too much. From his perspective, such a moment should never end.

Semjase rose to her feet, extended her hands to be held by Fred. “I hope that I have made it clear that you will fly back at once to the United States. You have work to do – not revenge to extract.”

He felt an almost overwhelming sense of loss when it became apparent that violence and negativity seems very primitive to a higher being such as yourself.”

Semjase narrowed her emerald green eyes, and he sensed another proof. “I am not a ‘higher being,’ Fred. I am not an angel, not a god. You Terrans so often make the false assumption that

technologically advanced entities are also spiritually evolved beings. We Pleiadeans feel loving toward you because we are related to you. That will not be true of all the entities which you encounter. Understand clearly that there are negative space beings, disruptive energies, throughout the universe.

“We have not had war on our planet, but our race evolved from Earth, Terra, millennia ago, and there were many wars fought on this world in a time that your science considers prehistory.”

“Those big insect creatures, the Zeta Re-zezies or whatever. Are they negative space beings?” Fred asked.

Semjase shook her head. “That depends on your point of view. They have made certain diplomatic advancements for the right to examine and to monitor this planet and its inhabitants without interference.”

“I would definitely like to hear more about that!” he insisted.

“Later, dear one. It is now time for you to get back on board that 747 to Paris.”

“When will I see you again?” he asked, embarrassed when his voice rose to a whine.

Semjase once again assumed the role of the firm parent who would not be distracted from the immediate concern. “Will you abandon all plans to invade the museum of the Disciples of Belial and return home to Laguna Beach?”

Fred gave his word that “vengeance would remain the Lord’s”.

Suddenly the sparkling blue light faded with Semjase’s words of the 747, “Soon, my love, you shall see again.”

“Please return to your seat,” a flight attendant was tapping at the metal door. “Prepare for landing in Paris.”



## Chapter Twenty-one

Dr. Fred Bell landed in Los Angeles filled with explosive enthusiasm and a new zest for life and all that it could offer to Earth that were truly unique and beautiful.

He confided in his friends all that had transpired in Egypt and on the flight to Paris.

Eric Powell was sorry that he missed the flight, and figured Fred had gotten drunk on the flight to Paris and imagined the transfer to Semjase's spacecraft. Brad Bronson was horrified that his friend had endured such dangers, and assessed the interaction with Semjase to be a visionary experience. Kim Kingswold gave thanks that Fred had escaped death, and decided that he had had a romantic encounter with a flight attendant on the 747.

It did not really matter how his friends evaluated the encounter with Semjase. Fred knew more clearly than ever exactly what he must do with the rest of his life.

On March 1, he enrolled in a special program at U.C.L.A. medical school and began a National Health Federation. In the evenings, he labored over the mysterious alien book with the indecipherable hieroglyphics, the illustrations of the receptor and the descriptions of other unidentifiable artifacts of Pleiadian technology.

As busy as he was, Fred could not allow the evening to lapse into dawn without his bemoaning the absence of Semjase. She had promised that if he would call off his one-man commando raid on the Knights of Atlantis, she would visit him again soon. He had begun to worry that since Semjase and her kind were so long-lived, "soon" could mean eighty years!

It was just before midnight on April 24, that Fred once again felt the prickling at the back of his neck and the strange metallic whistling in his ear. Semjase was near.

He waited for nearly half an hour for her to materialize in his laboratory, his heart thudding so hard that he feared it might bruise

his ribs. He paced the floor, looking out of the window at least fifty times. He couldn't decide if he should offer her coffee, tea, or wine.

When he had at last written off the internal phenomena of prickling skin and whistling ear to the effects of prolonged expectations, and returned to his desk, he found that he was now able to read the book's alien writing as easily as a primary school text.

Semjase had visited him that night. She had just been invisible to the naked eye.

Somehow, she had transferred an amazing amount of knowledge to his brain in a matter of seconds.

Fred worked day and night, accepting only an occasional sandwich from Kim, lying down to nap only when his eyes began to burn from lack of sleep.

He understood that the receptor he was fashioning would not be able to accomplish all the miracles that could be wrought by the Pleiadian model, but he did know that he would be able to offer people a device that would possess the unique ability to synthesize toxic or disharmonious forms of energy into components known as electrical precursors, which are able to aid the body's metabolism.

"When I perfect the receptor," he told Brad Bronson, "I will have tuned it to the impulse vibratory level of the universe, whereby emotional energy becomes physical."

"That is a remarkable claim for such a small device," Bronson mused.

Fred laughed in agreement. "It is so compact because I am utilizing NASA's cassegrin technique of shortening focal lengths. If I weren't using these concepts, we would require a parabolic dish 50 feet across to accomplish what the receptor will do in the space of one and one-half inches!"

On June 15, Fred Bell was given a most astounding sign from "on high", to show him that he had at last managed to perfect the model receptor that had been authorized by the Pleiadeans.

Just before midnight, the emerald nuclear receptor that had been given to his father by Semjase began to buzz in a very bizarre

manner. Fred slipped it from his neck and held it at arm's length to examine it.

He wanted to shout his protestations when he saw the sparkling blue light swirl around the medallion, but he fully comprehended that he had absolutely no say in the matter whatsoever.

In less than a second, the prized nuclear receptor had vanished.

"Because you have done such a fine job, you get a reward," the lilting, musical voice of Semjase echoed in Fred's laboratory as if it issued from deep within a cave. "You get to see my beamship!"

He wanted to laugh out loud for joy when the sparkling blue light formed around his body.

Semjase was waiting for him, seated on the couch in front of the large viewing screen. "Congratulations," she greeted him.

As before, he was nearly rendered mute and immobile by her beauty.

"I thought you had forgotten about your promise," he said, at once feeling foolish for chiding an entity with as much presence and majesty as she possessed.

"Everything in its season," she answered, indicating that he should sit beside her. "I wonder what it is in your soul essence that always causes you to be so impatient."

"You have made other references such as that which imply that you have known me before in other lives," Fred commented. "Surely you are not so...so old that you have known my 'soul essence,' as you termed it, in previous life experiences?"

Semjase's emerald eyes seemed almost to be glowing. "I am many hundreds of your Terran years old, not many thousands."

"No offense intended," Fred hastened to apologize.

"None taken," Semjase smiled. "I have access to the Soul Records of those of our seed who remain trapped in the physical envelopes of the human body. I know, for instance, that your soul essence was a scientist of Atlantis. You were deceived by the Disciples of Belial, and you permitted them access to a great deal of your technology. Regretfully, their misuse of your discoveries helped to bring about the final destruction of that once great empire in about 10,000 B.C."

“Those evil Disciples of Belial again!” Fred growled his distaste. “And my father? Why did both my father and I have to confront the Disciples of Belial karmically in this lifetime?”

“Your father, Paul Raymond Bell, and Wolf Grunewald were both with you in Atlantis. Once again, interestingly, Paul was your father. Grunewald was his brother, your uncle. They were brilliant scientists who had been your mentors. They attempted to warn you of the deceitful Disciples of Belial, but they reached you too late.”

“Amazingly parallel to this lifetime,” Fred observed.

“Because you all have the Pleiadean seed within you, your eternal enemies on Earth will always be those who seek to corrupt the gifts of wisdom and knowledge that are to be used only for good,” Semjase stated firmly.

Fred became aware of the high-pitched whirring sound, and he inquired about his origin.

“Located in the outer ring of this craft in an area near the center are two fluid chambers that encircle the entire ship,” Semjase replied. “One of the chambers contains a metal very much like copper. Both are in oil-like suspension and are pumped in counter-rotating directions. The pumps work on hysteresis.”

Fred said that he was familiar with such a method. In high school he had made hysteresis magnets that had repelled aluminum disks. He called it a “repulsion coil.”

Semjase seemed pleased that Fred was not on the level of Neanderthal man. She had promised a demonstration of her craft. It would appear that he was about to receive a glimpse into an extraterrestrial technology. His former colleagues at NASA could eat their hearts out!

Semjase pushed a lever forward, explaining that it was an “oscillating transverse pinching field magnet control.”

“I knew that,” he laughed.

When Semjase looked at him most curiously, he realized that Pleiadeans might not understand Terran humor – especially Fred Bell’s brand of Terran humor. “I was joking,” he said softly. “Please continue.”

The lovely cosmonaut remained frozen for a few more moments, then, somehow comprehending the strange Earth man, she went on: "Once the fluids are in motion, we 'pinch' them into smaller diameters with fields that have been generated very much like the Klystron field in your linear accelerators. This, in turn, produces gravity waves both inside and outside the vehicle. Listen, as they begin to engage."

Fred was able to distinguish a high-pitched rising and falling sound over the constant hum that had previously dominated the audio spectrum.

"Now look out through the transparent walls!" Semjase shouted.

Through some incredible transformation, certain of the vehicle walls had become transparent, presenting the illusion of being suspended in outer space. The terrain beneath them was becoming smaller and smaller at a fantastic rate.

"It is as if we are being thrown like a stone away from Terra," Semjase said, seemingly still exhilarated by the process after countless years of similar maneuvers. "We are moving at near-escape velocity."

Fred understood. "Because we created our own gravity."

"Exactly," Semjase agreed. "And when ours cancelled that of the Earth's we were pitched away due to the centrifugal force that was created by the planet's rotational speed."

"It's all so natural," he expressed his excitement with the process. "I'm going to build one of these and buzz Rockwell!"

In due time, my dear one," Semjase smiled. "You must learn patience in that soul essence of yours!"

When they reached orbital speed, Semjase closed down the power plant, and they began to drift around the Earth at an altitude of 250 miles. The planet was a beautiful bright blue and white against a starlit sky.

Semjase reached over and switched on a sound system that filled the compartment with hauntingly lovely ethereal music.

"I am afraid that I am about to have sensory overload," Fred laughed softly, leaning back against the couch. "I mean, I am floating in space with the most incredibly beautiful woman I could ever

imagine. How could anyone ever believe me? Honest to God, I don't believe my own senses!"

"You express yourself so curiously," Semjase said. It was difficult to determine whether she was amused or baffled, but her comment seemed an observation, not a rebuke.

"You gave me the 'We Are Not Gods or Angels' lecture the last time," Fred admitted. "But, honestly, this is all really a bit too much. I do not intend in any way to be blasphemous, but if you suddenly stepped out of a glowing ship and presented yourself to a strict Roman Catholic, he would think that he was with the Virgin Mary. A Hindu would have to believe that he had just spent time with the Divine Mother. And Me? I don't know what to think."

"Don't feel ill at ease, Fred, please," Semjase told him. "We have been together many times."

"I truly feel that way," he declared. "I feel that I don't have to tell you how much love I feel toward you. Somehow I know that you already know."

"And I truly love you with unconditional love, Fred," she smiled.

He leaned forward, hoping to kiss her.

Semjase squeezed his hand and stood up. "Fred, this time, in our present incarnations, perhaps it is best if you do think of me as a kind of guardian angel."

He felt awkward, foolish, as if he had violated a rigid protocol in the worst possible manner.

"There is no need for you to feel bad," she said, squeezing his hand again. "This guardian angel has saved your skin more than once. Let me show you one time that you may remember."

Semjase nodded toward the large viewing screen as images began to form on its surface.

"I can't believe it," Fred exclaimed. "Bonneville Flats, 1957. When I set the land speed record!"

"With a little help from your friends," Semjase replied.

It was early morning, 5:30 A.M. two days before the record runs. Fred (who was then still known as Bill) had wanted to make a high-speed run before the sun heated up the salt and stressed the car and the tires. He had christened the car "Thor's Thunderbolt" and he

had worked very hard on establishing it as a state-of-the-art machine.

Kim Kingswold rushed up to the sleek racing car to wish him luck. Eric Powell gave him the thumbs up sign as he taxied the car out to the track area.

“Here I go now,” Fred said excitedly, filled with the rush of the memory as the images sped across the large viewing screen. “I’m really punching it now, hitting the after-burner.”

The car catapulted forward...100 miles per hour, then 150...175...250...275...

“It was somewhere around 395 that the tires blew,” Fred recalled. “I was lucky that I wasn’t killed!”

“Luck had nothing to do with it,” Semjase told him. “Watch.”

There was an explosive sound, and the car, which had been centered on the marker line, began to swerve.

“Oh, wow,” he shuddered. “Look at that baby shake! I thought that any second I would be tumbling end over end.”

The back of the fast-moving car became airborne.

“Brother! Here it comes!” Fred winced. “I felt that backend lifting, I figured I had had it!”

Then Fred saw for the first time why he and Thor’s Thunderbolt had not been destroyed that day on the salt flats.

A huge, luminous disk moved in at tremendous speed and elevated the car completely off the ground. Then the disk came to a sudden stop, and the vehicle was lowered to the salt flats undamaged, except for the splintered tires and the suspension system.

In total astonishment Fred watched his seventeen-year-old self get out of Thor’s Thunderbolt and began to examine the extent of the damage.

The disk was now very high in the sky and went completely unnoticed by “Bill,” who was engrossed in assessing two blown front tires and a frayed suspension system.

“But I heard something then,” Fred managed to push the words past his awestruck consciousness. “And it all started to come back to me in bits and pieces that day when the crazy Brodmer woman tried

to kill me. I heard your voice inside my head saying, 'Soon, my love, very, very soon.'"

Semjase seemed pleased with herself for devising such an effective memory jogger. "Yes, and two days later you attached your experimental crystal resonator devices to the car and set a new land speed record of over 500 miles per hour."

"But it was you who made it possible," Fred exclaimed, shaking his head in wonder. "You saved my life. It was you who prevented me from becoming one with a pile of twisted metal."

"Because you have important work to do on this planet, my love," Semjase said pointedly. "We did not choose to interfere for purposes of your own ego aggrandizement. We readjusted Fate because you have a mission to perform!"



## Chapter Twenty-two

“She called it a Variation 3 Beam Ship,” Dr. Fred Bell explained to Eric Powell three nights later on June 18 when they were working late in the laboratory, individually crafting receptors for sale at the upcoming lecture for the American Health Federation. It would be the first time that Fred would be offering the receptors to a general audience.

“It uses three forms of propulsion, but simply stated, the Pleiadeans move through space as if they are projecting pictures of themselves to their destination.”

Eric set his coffee cup down on the workbench and reached for the pot to pour himself a refill. “Chief, you got me believing that you went for a ride in a UFO with this gorgeous chick from outer space, but you gotta run that propulsion system by me again. Okay?”

Fred was in sympathy with his friend’s confusion. “The way I understand it, the top and bottom of the ship are lenses that are all of the optical and magnetic fields above and below the craft. These parameters that the ship would view from its point of destination are brought forth. The lenses now become projectors and re-project a series of destination parameters to the surrounding area. When this process is complete, the vehicle is at the point of destination.”

“Where do they get the coordinates to dial in?” Powell wanted to know.

“Good question, Eric,” Fred smiled. “The Pleiadeans developed star drive by conventional means because their Suns are within a few light years of each other. By conventional, that is, rocket engines, they charted the energies around their Suns, which they call ‘curtains’.”

“I’m all ears,” Powell grinned. “Tell me more!”

Fred was more than pleased to oblige his friend. “These coordinates now charted are called ‘wave curtains’. When a destination has been chosen, energies are carefully blocked and released in unison. The blending process is accomplished by the

countdown computer. As this transition occurs, the ship builds tremendous speed and mass. The ship holds its own curtain until a precise moment when it departs dimension or moves from one dimension to another, from one 'photograph' to another."

He paused to give special emphasis to a note of caution: "There is a danger, however, that if the holding curtain energy of the ship is released too soon, the occupants of the ship will meet certain catastrophe.

"By the way," he added, "Semjase told me that there is a special group of Pleiadeans, usually the more experienced travelers, who dedicate their lives to exploring the outer edge of the traveled universe."

"Sort of a 'Christopher Columbus' group," Powell chuckled. "Anyone ever sail over the edge?"

Fred smiled, shook his head. "Pleiadeans say that there is no 'edge,' no other side, no end – just forever."

Powell had become a pretty astute mechanical engineer over his years of association with Fred. Recently, he had even begun to assimilate some of the philosophical and metaphysical points of view that his lifelong friend espoused. "Wow," he agreed, "that is like stepping out of one photograph and into another."

Fred was pleased that Eric was setting aside his usual skepticism and was entering into the exchange of concepts without prejudice.

"It is as if they have a 'picture' of where they want to be already stored in the spacecraft's computer," Fred said, squinting slightly as he placed an emerald in the center of the receptor on which he was working. "The mechanism in the craft that recorded the picture of the universe above and below the ship where it is at any given moment, now converts itself from a camera to a projector. Then once it has digested the information of where it is, it projects the picture of where it wants to be."

Powell grabbed another doughnut from the plate. "What if our government got a hold of one of these Beam Ships. Could they duplicate it?"

"I doubt it," Fred answered. "It think it likely that they could copy some of the systems, but each Pleiadean craft is tuned into the auric

frequency of a particular pilot or pilots. When she flies the Beam Ship, Semjase positions herself in what she terms a 'signature station' - a grid pattern that is tuned to her aura."

"So you are saying that the craft won't become functional unless personnel meeting specific signature modes are present," Powell repeated his understanding of the situation.

"Yes," Fred confirmed his analysis. "That makes it necessary for a Pleiadean to be present for one of their craft to fly. And beyond that, critical parts of the ship will self-destruct if they detect unpleasant vibrations from the pilot. If the pilot should be completely removed from the vehicle, the same thing will occur."

Powell placed a completed receptor unit into a small box, then stood up to stretch and yawn. It was nearly four o'clock in the morning.

"Tell me again about the trip to Proxima Centuri, man. You know, Chief, 4.5 light years is quite a jump!"

Fred could not dispute that point. He took a sip of the steaming coffee that had just perked, then he told his friend how it seemed as though all the stars visible through the craft's windows had suddenly turned from individual points of white light into rainbows.

As the Beam Ship progressed upward in speed, the rainbows merged into a series of paisley-like patterns.

Semjase told him that what he was first seeing was the combined starlight breaking into individual color separations as they approached the speed of the colors themselves. The paisley pattern was the energy behind the colors.

"She told me that we had become pure energy, Eric. The sounds that we heard were the ship's engines, resonating to the very pulsebeat of the universe itself."

Fred said that it was like a trip into his own mind.

"Your mind is a part of the physical universe," Semjase had replied. "Where we are now in space is a part of your mind and mine. When we arrive at our destination, we will be back in the physical universe."

He had asked her if even the Pleiadean Beam Ship was an extension of his mind.

“All physical inventions are creations of universal mind,” Semjase said. “It matters not if it is human or Pleiadean who molds creation to individual desires. The closer the inventor is to godlike inventions, the more perfect shall be his creation.

“Such a process evolves within the individual until he no longer requires the satisfaction of physical desires and physical worlds. It is at that moment he becomes Starborn, and many new destinies awaken within him.”

In what had seemed like a remarkably brief period of time, the sounds of Beam Ship engines resumed their former pulsation. The paisley patterns were gone, and the rainbows were present again, Fred explained to his friend.

Semjase had informed him that they had just accomplished a hyperleap re-entry and that they were “back in the picture” again. They had arrived at Proxima Centuri. Four or five light years was a relatively short distance for a Variation 3 Beam Ship.

Fred had looked out and seen a bright star nearby, much bluer than the Sun that he knew. Not too far away was another bright star. He could also discern a few planets not too far away.

“You’re blowing my mind, man,” Eric Powell protested. “With our present propulsion systems, a jump to Proxima Centuri would take fifteen years, minimum!”

Fred admitted to his friend that he had made a similar statement to Semjase.

“That is true,” she had responded. “However, if your science had listened to such voices as those of Nicola Tesla and Michael Faraday, you, too, would have high-speed space drives in your present century. Instead, your scientists and engineers chose the route of motors – a choice for which your kind will soon have to pay the ultimate price.”

Then, the Variation 3 space ship had descended on one of the planets that they had viewed from a window moments before. As the Pleiadean vehicle had moved over the terrain at a few thousand miles per hour, Fred had noticed that it was a very barren world.

Semjase had informed him that the planet had once been inhabited, but its people had been very violent. After an endless

series of wars, they had destroyed their atmosphere. What oxygen remained, evaporated into space. All life forms died due to lack of oxygen and over-exposure to their sun's ultra-violet rays.

Eric Powell looked up from the new receptor on which he was working. "Chief, we've been through a lot together, but I gotta tell you it's not easy believing that you hummed across the universe in one night with a space queen."

Fred told him that the journey could probably have taken even less time. "Due to their incredible technology, the Pleiadeans have somehow worked out 'corridors' in space.

"Our science continues to take the mechanical point of view when it considers traveling across vast distances in our solar system," he went on. "But within the mechanical outlay of the universe is an energy field that has its own auric field. Blending with these energies makes it a lot easier to get from one place to another. The speeds at which the auric fields move are pretty much instantaneous.

"The Pleiadeans have calculated and charted the lines of the auric field, and this information has been made available to different races on different worlds," Fred told his friend. "Maybe someday our own species will be mature enough to join the fellowship with these advanced beings."

Powell could no longer stifle a really serious yawn. "Chief?"

"You're right, old buddy," Fred chuckled. "Let's call it a night."

Powell set their dirty coffee cups in the sink. "We'd better hurry if we're going to call it a night, 'cause it's nearly morning."

Fred picked up several receptors and placed them in his attaché case. "I think we've done a really good job on the first of our models. I'll have to pick up some more emeralds."

"And how about putting a ruby or some other gems in some receptors?" Powell suggested.

Fred was complimenting his friend for having a good idea when he was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a black Lincoln Continental that roared into the parking lot and screeched to a stop at an angle that blocked their van's exit. In a matter of seconds, there were six men in dark coats standing a few feet in front of the Lincoln.

“Boy have those creeps been waiting a long time,” Powell remarked. “Well, at least I don’t miss out on the fight this time.”

Fred was not surprised that the Knights of Atlantis had once again sought him out. In fact, he had expected them much sooner.

A tall, blond man in his early forties stepped forward and presented himself with a very precise military bearing. “Dr. Fred Bell, I am Dr. Hans Diels. You know why we have come. Please surrender the receptor to us at once. There need not be trouble. We know what you can do with its fiery rays, but my men are well-armed and remain at a distance.

“Please understand that they will kill you if you do not hand the receptor to me at my count of three.”

Fred smiled. “No problem, Dr. Diels. I think you should most certainly have the receptor. You definitely seem a cut above the previous creeps that have been sent to reclaim the medallion.”

The Neo-Nazi was visibly stunned by such unexpected acquiescence.

Fred handed the receptor to Dr. Diels, who had lost all vestiges of his former sophistication and military precision. The man accepted the medallion with trembling hands.

“The emerald nuclear receptor has been returned to its rightful owners,” Fred agreed. “In fact, it was taken back by the Pleiadeans about six weeks ago.”

Dr. Diels could not at all comprehend Fred’s statement. His blue eyes blinked in confusion. His mouth opened and closed several times as if he were trying to chew and swallow something exceedingly unpalatable.

“I think it is unfair that only you should have a receptor, Dr. Diels,” Fred said. “After all, your men also suffer from the toxins in the environment. Eric, let’s give the working men a bonus.”

Powell shrugged, bent to pick up Fred’s attaché case. “Here, you wild and crazy guys, come and get a receptor of your very own, compliments of Powell and Bell.”

At first the stormtroopers kept their weapons trained on Powell, but when they saw that he brought them an unimagined treasure, they eagerly approached him and reached out to accept a medallion.

Easy, boys,” Powell growled at them. “Don’t push. We’re really taking a loss on this deal, you know. Do you have any idea how many hours we spent making these gizmos?”

“What have you done, Dr. Bell?” Diels demanded, at last recovering his self control. “Do you seek to make fools of us?”

Fred shook his head. “You will only make fools of yourselves if you do not accept our gifts and leave us alone. It is as I told you, Dr. Diels, the Star Gods, the Pleiadeans, reclaimed their nuclear receptor several weeks ago.”

“They took it from you?” The Knight of Atlantis found himself beginning to believe Fred. After all, if it were not so, why had he not used its scorching rays on them as he did on their men in Egypt?

“They took it from me,” Fred answered, “but before they did, they permitted me to replicate the receptor with a number of its properties that help to combat aging and assist us in dealing with the negative effects of our environment. I willingly share these receptors with you in the hope that you, too, may benefit from their powers.”

“But why would they take it back after so many centuries?” Diels asked, still testing Fred.

Fred shrugged. “Look around you. Perhaps for this very reason. You come here with guns and threaten to kill us. I lost my temper and sought revenge for the deaths of my father and Dr. Grunewald. We are still primitive, savage, hairless apes. Until we can demonstrate more maturity as a species, the Pleiadeans will not entrust us with their most volatile secrets. After all, what rational person could give a stick of dynamite and a book of matches to a bunch of infants?”

Diels considered Fred’s words very carefully. “Somehow I feel that you are telling the truth. But what if we should kill you – as a final, primitive, savage act? As an example to those who oppose the Knights of Atlantis and the rising of the New Reich.”

“Then, as I told you before, you would be fools,” Fred said sharply. “Because of the murder of Dr. Wolf Grunewald by your previous Knights of Atlantis hit-squad – the charming Von Raeders and their goons – there is an open file on all Neo-Nazi groups in California. Lt. Neil Percy, a close personal friend, has had you under surveillance

since you arrived in Los Angeles ten days ago. He sent me your photograph, Dr. Diels, so that I could be on the alert for you. I really expected you days ago.

“If anything happens to me or to any of my friends, you will be under arrest for suspicion of murder within the hour.”

Diels smiled at Fred, bowed at the waist, then ordered his men to put away their weapons and get into the Lincoln.

“You have won another hand, Dr. Bell,” he said over his shoulder as he walked to the limousine. “But I have a strong feeling that we will meet again one day.”

“I have no doubt, Dr. Diels,” Fred agreed. “We are the opposite sides of the cosmic coin. You serve the dark side; I serve the Light. It is inevitable that we shall meet again.”

As the Knights of Atlantis drove away into the quiet, pre-dawn streets, Eric Powell began to curse them under his breath.

“The creeps! They didn’t even thank us for the receptors. I put a lot of work into those medallions!”



## Chapter Twenty-three

“I think that it is very fine and good that you are cavorting about with your cosmic soul mate, Fred,” Brad pouted as he leaned back and laced his thick fingers over his stomach. “But when do I get to meet her?”

Bronson had visited Fred’s house for a late lunch two days after the dawn encounter with the Knights of Atlantis. He had learned the details of the episode from Eric Powell, and he arrived in a slight pique that so many things were occurring in Fred’s life without his participation.

Fred pushed the plate of broiled salmon steaks toward the author. “Have another helping, Brad.”

“I’m asking about Semjase, not salmon,” Bronson grumbled, but he did accept another steak, along with an additional helping of boiled potatoes and parsley. “You are avoiding my question.”

Fred poured himself some white wine, then confronted his friend’s direct query. “I don’t know if you or anyone else will ever get to meet her,” he answered honestly.

“I see,” Bronson nodded, idly jabbing his fork into the salmon.

“You still believe that I’m just having visions, don’t you, Brad?” Fred asked.

Bronson set down his fork. “Fred, I am the last person that you need to convince about the manifestation of such entities as Semjase. My god, man, I am not a hypocrite! I was writing about such experiences before you were born!”

Fred was not satisfied with his friend’s protestations. “I know that you accepted the powers of the receptor and the manifestation of Semjase, but I continue to get a sense of your skepticism when I discuss my interstellar travels in her Beam Ship.”

“Dear, Fred, it is only that I wonder if Semjase might not be simulating such experiences,” Bronson explained. “You’ve mentioned this giant viewing screen. Perhaps you are only seeing a very graphic visual depiction of interstellar travel.”

Fred was not at all offended by Bronson's alternative theory concerning his cosmic adventures with Semjase. "You find it difficult to accept the fact that such travels could take place in such a brief time span."

"Well, my boy," the author shifted in his chair and dabbed at his chin with a napkin, "You are speaking of accomplishments that are far beyond our technology!"

"But that is precisely the point, Brad! The Pleiadeans are eons beyond our technology!"

Bronson sat for several moments in complete silence. He refilled his wine glass, slowly measuring the flow of the white wine.

"Perhaps I am just jealous," he spoke at last, expressing his honest feelings. "I mean, I have devoted my life to..."

Fred placed a hand over Bronson's forearm and gave him an understanding squeeze. "No one on Earth can truly understand the process of selection that is involved in such contact experiences. As we theorized before, Brad, it must have something to do with genetics, past lives, soul essence – who really knows?"

Bronson nodded, once again silent, tears forming at the corners of his eyes. He inhaled deeply, then smiled. "But is it as Grunewald told you before his death? The Pleiadeans really care about us?"

Fred was relieved that the uncomfortable issue between them had been resolved. "Yes, Semjase frequently speaks of the oneness of Earthlings and the Pleiadeans.

"She says that we are all cells in the body of a greater being. If some of the cells are sick, the overall wellness of the being is going to be affected. The frequency of vibration is going to be off for the entire entity."

"Beautifully expressed," Bronson acknowledged, "but if they care so much for us, and have apparently been with us for so long, why don't they intervene and help us straighten out our problems here on Earth?"

Fred replied that to assist Earth in a major way at the present time would be ridiculous.

"Our political leaders, our scientists, our business leaders, our masses of people truly need to realize that Earth is in serious

trouble. If they were given to us at this stage of global awareness, it would be an absolutely worthless gesture.”

“Worthless!” Bronson frowned.

“Oh, yes, worthless. Pleiadean assistance might temporarily alleviate certain of the dismal conditions on this planet, but it would do little – or nothing – to alleviate the conditions that brought the problems into existence.”

“I now see your point,” Bronson said.

“It’s not my point,” Fred admitted with a smile. “I asked for such assistance, too.”

“But Semjase told me that what was to happen is that Earth people have to become sicker. Conditions on the planet have to become worse and worse – until a lot of the people who helped create this mess are finally discarded from their physical bodies. Earth people must finally wake up and realize what’s been going on, and they must make some effort on their own to correct things.”

Bronson indicated his understanding of the Pleiadeans’ position. “Perhaps the current emphasis on the environment that seems to be forthcoming from the Woodstock generation will help to foster higher awareness toward such matters.”

Fred continued sharing the words of Semjase: “Assistance on a planetary level will not occur until all nations put a stop to war.”

“Look what is happening today in 1971: the war in Vietnam is spreading to Laos and Cambodia. Violence in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants is getting worse. India and Pakistan are at war. And the endless squabbles in the Mid-East show absolutely no signs of abating.”

“Before we could even hope to receive assistance on a planetary level from the Pleiadeans, all territorial and boundary disputes will have to end. Earth will have to unite and recognize its disease of Soul.”

Fred knew that Bronson was fascinated by the study of cycles, so he decided to tell him that the Pleiadeans were very much aware of the 25,827.5-year cycle that is known as the “Precession of the Equinox.”

During the 12,000 years of darkness, the human body's endocrine system cannot respond to consciousness that actually is available at all times. However, during the 12,000 years of light, the endocrine system begins to respond to super-physical beingness and awareness.

Bronson seemed hopeful of additional insights. "These major cycles, which are divided into 2,000-plus year cycles, constitute the various zodiacal ages. During the end of an age – which is the period of time which we have now entered – the mass consciousness is supposedly more receptive to the Christ-consciousness. I pray that this is so. I pray that this will open the door to increased Pleiadean contact."

Fred said that he shared his friend's prayer of hope. "But obviously all human beings in this present cycle of positive energy, this 12,000-year cycle of light, are not going to become enlightened. But from this work, 144,000 souls will evolve to a higher dimension of reality."

"Then," Bronson seemed pleased, "the Pleiadeans do offer us the promise of an eventual fellowship with them."

"Yes," Fred confirmed his friend's understanding. "They so want us to unite with them, to come to their levels of awareness, but not as entities only partially together spiritually. They want us to be as finely tuned as possible when we incarnate in their vibratory frequency."

Bronson pushed himself away from the last portion of salmon steak.

"I hope you won't think ill of me inquiring, my boy," he said, as he rose to leave the table and head for a more comfortable position on the couch, "but you have insisted that your encounters with Semjase are...physical. I guess what I want to know... I mean, I was wondering if you...I mean the two of you..."

Fred chuckled at Bronson's obvious discomfort. "Have we ever made love? Is that what you are trying to ask?"

Bronson sighed, dropped his shoulders awkwardly. "Well, have you? I mean, you describe her as breathtakingly lovely. And she seems inordinately fond of you."

“I know that Semjase and I have been together for many, many past life experiences,” Fred said, feeling the soul memories of those emotions touch him in the depth of his heart chakra.

“I don’t think that sex as we normally understand it would be either right or possible between us in our present incarnations, but I share with you, my dear friend, what occurred to me after the encounter with the Knights of Atlantis two days ago.”

It had been after 7:00A.M. when Fred had finally been able to get to bed. He had only begun to get comfortable when a wonderful warm glow began to spread over his entire body.

“Semjase?” He had called out into the curtained darkness of his bedroom. “Are you nearby? I feel a warmth that is a new sensation for me. I somehow believe that you are here.”

It was then that Fred heard a quiet, but very distinct voice. Its point of origin seemed to be at once inside his head and outside of his body. But it was very near.

“Yes, Fred,” Semjase whispered to him. “I can hear you and see you. You did very well tonight, my love. I am very proud of the manner in which you conducted yourself.”

He said he was pleased that he had won her approval, but he expressed his frustration that while he could feel her presence and hear her voice, he could not see her. He wondered how this could be so.

“Our technology, through the use of crystals located everywhere on your planet, permits us to find contactees such as yourself once we have programmed our computers to locate them by their soul patterns,” the cosmonaut explained.

Semjase went on to explain that soul pattern was very much like a personality profile, but instead of outlining the traits of one lifetime, it was an amalgamation of many incarnations. A soul pattern, she stated, was as individual as one’s fingerprints – no two were exactly the same.

Fred inquired as to how crystals related to such a program.

“Your body is made of the earth,” she informed him. “As you use it in one lifetime, the elements within remember each and every

learning experience. Then, in old age, the body is returned to the earth and the earth records the experiences.

“The central place of recording is called Akasha, and it is always growing in consciousness. The crystal kingdom acts as a diode to rectify all the intelligence of humankind. We have Individual Access Receivers located in our ships that can tap into these crystal diode grids.”

Fred told Brad Bronson that he became increasingly aware of Semjase’s presence, even though she remained invisible to him. An intensely pleasurable warmth suffused the entire length and breadth of his physical body.

“Then it was as if I had been shot through with a bolt of lightning. I know that something powerful issued from the female essence of Semjase and exploded my soul.

“It was a total physical experience, yet it was fulfilling on the spiritual and emotional levels as well.”

The best way in which Fred could explain the energy exchange with Semjase was to compare it to tantric sex, a blending of male and female energies on the spiritual level. “Because of our past life experiences and the great bond that exists between us, our coming together on a higher plane was intensified.”

Fred admitted that he was at a loss for words adequate to render a more precise explanation for the process by which Semjase and he had “made love”.

“Perhaps it took place in our astral bodies with sexual feelings interchanged – a cosmic Tantric experience. It was divine, Brad, truly, completely, totally divine!”

## Chapter Twenty-four

October 9, 1971

Although Fred Bell had not received any communication from Semjase for over three months, his life had been filled with meaningful activities. Accompanied by Kim Kingswold and Eric Powell, he had obtained a Dodge motor home and had booked a series of lectures on wholistic health coast to coast.

Fred was in a new space now. He smiled to himself as he remembered the telephone call that had come from Hank Lacey of Local 887.

“Fred,” Hank was breathless. “Rockwell now wants you back, with an increase in pay and a higher position. Plus, they will give you full back pay for your absence.”

When a bemused Fred had wanted to know why, Hank had replied: “They lost their astronauts Grissom, White and Chaffee on the Cape yesterday. Apparently they died in an electrical fire, the very kind that you had predicted in that grievance that we filed for you in Superior Court against Rockwell.”

Four years ago, Fred thought to himself. And it cost the lives of three good men before they were willing to listen to him. It seemed like only yesterday.

He wondered how long it would take for people to listen to him now. He hoped not the extinction of half of the planet.

With ever-increasing passion, Dr. Fred Bell warned of a world on the brink of extinction due to environmental pollution and psychological degradation. To eager audiences, he, Eric and Kim demonstrated how anyone might cleanse himself and his personal environment through the use of the nuclear receptor, negative ion generators, pyramid power, and proper nutrition.

On this beautiful day in early October, they were traveling east across the desert on I-40. They had just left the valley wherein lay Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the sun was setting behind them.

“Oh, Fred,” Kim said from the back seat where she was awakening from a nap. “The sunset is so lovely. Can’t we pull over and admire it for just a minute or two?”

Fred gave his positive vote, and Eric Powell pulled the motor home over to the side of the interstate. “Cannot beat these desert sunsets,” Eric agreed.

The three friends stood for several minutes in silence, at peace with themselves and the world. Fred put his hand lightly around Kim’s waist, and she moved closer to him.

“Oh, Fred,” she said plaintively. “I wish you weren’t in love with a woman from outer space.”

Fred laughed and gave her an affectionate squeeze. “You will always be my soul sister, Kim. It is not what you think. I mean, with Semjase and myself.

“But right now, all I can concentrate on is the mission. I have no time for anything other than doing my work. It would be unfair of me to enter into any kind of relationship at this point in my life.”

“When can we – Eric and I – meet her?”

Fred bought his arm tighter around his friend’s shoulders. “I don’t know, Kim. Soon, I hope. There is nothing I want more than for you and Eric to meet Semjase.”

About four hours later when it was his turn to take the wheel, Fred was both startled and pleased when he received a prickling on the back of his neck, together with certain other physical sensations that he had come to recognize as “Semjase Signals.”

“Turn off at the next road, dear one. Continue to drive until I signal you again. Then get out of your vehicle.”

“Hey, man,” a grumpy Eric Powell was jostled into wakefulness when Fred pulled off onto a bumpy dirt road. “Did you fall into a tank trap?”

“Ouch!” Kim complained. “I bumped my head against the window!”

“What are you doing, Chief,” Powell demanded, blinking his eyes into full wakefulness. “This road is only for horses or mules, not motor homes.”



“Cool your jets, man,” Fred said by way of polite dismissal of Eric’s complaints. “We are about to have a rendezvous with Semjase.”

“You mean we get to meet your dreamboat from Venus?” Powell shouted. “Yahoo!”

“Are you serious, Fred?” Kim asked, ambivalent emotions playing across her features.

“I am serious about my meeting with Semjase,” he answered. “I hope that you too will be able to see her.”

When the familiar metallic whistling began in his left ear, Fred stopped the motor home and stepped out on the desert.

“Where is she?” Powell asked, craning his neck to scan the skies. “Can you see her ship?”

Suddenly, there appeared a bright, shimmering object directly above them. As it began to descend, they could observe the shape becoming more definitive, more circular. There appeared to be a large dome on its top.

“Wow! Oh, wow! Yay!” Powell was cheering the way he did the day that Fred set the land speed record. “Oh, man, this is the absolute coolest!”

Kim began to weep. “Oh, Fred, it’s real. And it’s so...so...”

Before Fred could respond to either of his friends, he was somewhat disappointed when the shimmering blue light manifested around his body. He was about to be beamed on board. That would probably mean that Kim and Eric would not be allowed to meet Semjase.

Semjase greeted him with a warm embrace and a kiss of greeting. “I am so proud of you, dear one, for the work that you are doing, spreading the word of planetary crisis.”

“I told you that I would not waste time getting at the mission,” Fred replied.

“I see that your companions are with you,” the cosmonaut remarked.

“Yes,” Fred said softly. “I...really hoped that you would meet them. I mean, at least permit them to see you.”

“I am sorry,” Semjase shook her head, her emerald green eyes filled with compassion. But that is simply not possible. You were selected. No one else.

“This is not my decision. This is Council ruling. If Kim and Eric were to meet me, then soon you would have other friends, such as Brad Bronson, who would insist on meeting me. A chain of premature events could be set into motion.

“As in all things,” she reminded him, “priorities must be established. Spread the message of our physical presence to a select few. Let them know that we will help when they are ready.”

“At this time, in your Earth year of 1971, the masses need to be educated as to their environmental predicament.”

“But would not revealing your actual physical presence serve as a catalyst that would accelerate the acceptance of your message of planetary crisis?” Fred argued. “Are you not a missionary on a quest?”

Semjase fixed him with an impatient glare. “Most certainly not. I explained to you before that we are not missionaries. We are not gods, angels, or superhuman. We are part of creation, just like yourselves. We learn new things with each breath of the moment.

“When your kind realizes this, we can become effective. Anything short of this will breed dependence upon us. Should this occur, your religious leaders and your governments would feel stripped of their authority – and the result would be chaotic.

“The real power lies in the masses, but they have always been suppressed by various authorities in control of them. Such suppression must cease from within, then we can be effective in dealing with the people of Terra.”

“I don’t know whether I am being scolded or being educated,” Fred sighed.

“Silly one,” Semjase laughed, brushing his cheek with a kiss. “But behold, I have brought someone along for you to meet.”

Semjase pressed a button on the wall nearest her, and in a few moments, a panel slid open to reveal a beautiful auburn-haired cosmonaut with large blue eyes.

“May I present my sister, Playa!”

The lovely, silver-suited Pleiadean took Fred's hands in hers and kissed his cheek. "It is a pleasure to meet one of our contactees," she said in a musical voice similar to Semjase's. "My sister has told me so much about you."

"The two of you are sisters?" Fred could not explain why he found that so difficult to believe.

"Come on, now, Fred," Fred," Semjase was scolding him this time. "We have families, too, just like you Terrans."

He was overcome by their beauty. Although Playa did not really resemble Semjase in any other than a familiar sense, she was every bit as beautiful. "Playa," he persisted. "Tell me. Is all this beauty only in your family, or is it a Pleiadean trait?"

Playa replied on a ripple of laughter. "Oh, I feel it is a trait of our world. We are just average girls for our people."

Fred was still astonished. "You could both be movie stars – to say the least!"

Playa crinkled her forehead in puzzlement. "Movie stars?" she said quizzically.

Semjase seemed to be enjoying her sister's bafflement, but she soon took pity upon her with an explanation of an Earth establishment. "Fred refers to a celluloid illusion technique that terrestrials use for entertainment. In these 'movies' actors play difficult roles. Eventually, some of them become popular with the masses as individual personalities, and they are then called, 'movie stars'."

Playa shrugged. "Sounds all right," she said, making the concession sound generous. "But I am certain that I would prefer our true event dimensional scanners."

Reading Fred's curiosity, Playa led him to an area of the ship that appeared to be set apart for relaxation. There were no controls or instructional panels visible. Instead, there was a viewing area that suggested to Fred a mini-stage that was about three feet wide and two feet deep. The top of the stage extended to the ceiling of the spacecraft.

As Playa pushed a small control button, the stage area instantly portrayed a three dimensional hologram of an old Earth-type

seventeenth century sailing vessel being dashed against some rocks near a shoreline. The sailors who were surviving were swimming to the beach. Fred observed that the sounds of thunder and lightening seemed to come from everywhere.

“Wow, what a movie this is,” Fred admitted.

Playa readily informed him that they were not viewing a motion picture. “Fred, we are witnessing a real time event that occurred 400 years ago on your planet. The projection is coming from what you call the ‘Akashic Records’. Fantasy is a creation that reality will eventually follow – if enough minds agree.”

At this point, Semjase entered the room and said to him: “We wish you to understand more about Erra, our home world.”

“But my friends?” Fred was concerned. “What about Kim and Eric?”

“We have made them comfortable,” Playa explained. “They are in a kind of suspended animation. They will experience a little missing time and remember only looking at a bright star in the night sky. Don’t worry. We are watching over them. No harm will come to them.”

Reassured, Fred sat in the comfortably cushioned couch before the viewing screen.

Within a moment or two, the screen was filled with the image of a greenish-colored planet.

“Erra, our home,” Semjase said.

“It is slightly smaller than Earth,” Playa explained, “but it has larger rotational speed, thus making our days a bit longer.”

“Our land mass versus our water is about 50/50,” Semjase told him. “Our people are very much into horticulture. It is a hobby for almost everyone.”

Next, Fred was viewing Pleiadean architecture in what was presented as a typical city on Erra. Most of the buildings were circular, but a number were pyramidal, and some...he could only compare to the shape of sea shells.

Semjase explained that the buildings were structured in such a way as to help to eliminate sound stresses. Their engineers had discovered long ago that every living thing would have a longer

lifespan if the sound environment were balanced. She commented that even the winds of Erra played a kind of music as they blew through the buildings and bridges.

Suddenly, in the upper left hand corner of the screen, there appeared the figure of a lovely woman who seemed greatly to resemble Semjase and to be only slightly more matronly in appearance.

“It is Rayah,” Playa said, happily identifying the intruding image. “She is calling on the communicator and interfering with our projection on the viewing screen.”

“Hello, Mother,” Semjase called to the image.

Rayah had the same brilliant emerald green eyes as her daughter. “Greetings, my little ones. Who is that with you?”

“Fred Bell,” Semjase said by way of introduction. “He is one of our very special contactees on Terra.”

Rayah greeted Fred warmly, then inquired about her husband, Semjase’s and Playa’s father.

“He’s still working on the great mother ship,” Playa answered. “They’re in orbit around Pluto, which is a planet in the solar system where Fred lives.”

“I am familiar with Pluto,” Rayah said, raising her voice somewhat indignantly. “Tell me, what they are doing there?”

“Orders from the Council remain firm, Mother,” Playa responded to her question. “They await the proper time to assist the Terrans. Much of their time is spent monitoring such contactees as Fred, preparing their consciousness for the New Age and educating their civilization in general for the acceptance of life forms from other worlds.”

“Well, very well,” Rayah pursed her lips with only a small degree of satisfaction. “I do hope that you girls will be coming home soon. I miss my little ones around here.”

After securing their promises of a prompt return visit, Rayah’s image blinked off the viewing screen.

“It would seem that mothers are very much the same throughout the universe,” Fred observed with a broad smile.

Amidst giggles of agreement, Semjase and Playa redirected his attention to the scenes of city streets on the viewing screen.

“You will notice that there are no police sirens piercing our harmony,” Playa commented. “You see no frantic crowds, busy intersections – no automobiles, buses, or trucks emitting noxious fumes. There is only serenity and purposeful movement.”

The next images revealed a lush countryside, profuse with rivers and streams. One bright sun was very prominent, and a second sun, fainter, slightly redder, was visible in the background.

“I cannot help noticing that there are many rivers and streams that appear to run directly into certain buildings,” Fred said.

Semjase explained that even though they were much more technologically advanced than his kind, they lived as close to nature as possible. Running water, such as a brook, produces a soothing sound that calms the nerves.

“Part of our longevity is due to a calm that exists within our race,” Semjase continued. “Our homes, businesses and factories have crystal roofs with natural running water present. We are able to drink directly from our streams. There is no polluted water on Erra. We explode no bombs in our skies, burn no fossil fuels, and our waste is treated directly in each home, business, or factory.”

Playa spoke up to point out that children on Erra went to school for about 60 years before choosing a profession. Careers and marriage began after the age of 125 or so.

Fred wondered if he had any chance of achieving longevity in his present situation.

Both Semjase and Playa informed him that his opportunities were excellent if he strictly adhered to holistic practices. With strict discipline, they told him, he might be able to triple his present lifespan and greatly reduce the effects of aging.

Remarkably lovely images of beautiful flowers with multi-colored hues: “Our technology encompasses cloning and aspects of species in-breeding. The DNA complex in this particular flower is sensitive to ultraviolet in a way that it changes colors throughout the day as the sun changes its position in the sky.”

“Semjase once told me that your spaceships are partially organic,” Fred said, wishing to hear Playa’s response.

“This is also true,” Playa acknowledged. “We grow the roots of plants in music sound chambers. The plants develop resonant cavities within their structures, which confirm mathematically to what are termed by us, ‘divine proportions.’

“Next, we treat that part of the plant with resins that increases their tensile strength thousands of times. Finally, we harvest these structures and use them in our technologies. Most of our science, as you well know, is based on harmonious and family vibrations.”

“But how does that apply to your Beam Ship computers?” He questioned them.

“Surely you have picked up a seashell and listened to it?” Playa asked. “Well, Fred, our Beam Ship computers work the same way. Before they ‘jump’ from one picture to another, they ‘listen’ for the sound of the new picture. Their listening mechanisms are keyed from the resonant pods that were grown there on Erra.”

Fred was uncertain of Playa’s explanation. “Are you saying that sound precedes light? That’s exactly backward from our Earth sciences!”

“Dear one,” Semjase was laughing at his confusion, “that’s why your Terran science is backward!”

He joined their laughter, and then wondered how long it would take the people of Earth to reach Pleiadean standards of science and society.

Semjase remarked that a civilization is best measured by the extent to which it is sympathetic to the needs of the least fortunate member in its ranks. A civilization, she said, can best be judged by the ways in which the sick, the invalid, the old, and the poor are helped.

“Your race still has a long way to go before it reaches maturity,” Playa said, “but we will continue to work with you.”

“Is that a promise?” Fred asked.

“A promise that we have maintained for thousands of years,” Semjase said firmly, her emerald eyes shining with an inner resource that Fred envied.

“An important part of our promise involves our warding off unfriendly intruders from other galaxies,” Playa added.

“That’s right,” Fred sighed, remembering an earlier dialogue with Semjase. “Not all of you Star People are positive entities.”

“In order for creation to exist in form, opposite polarities are ever present,” Semjase said by way of further explanation. She continued, “Between these polarities is an area of virgin intermingling often called ‘confusion’.”

“Growth and pain are the gradients that eventually bring creation an awareness of consciousness. Until consciousness becomes truly aware of perfection, unharmonious or hostile forms move throughout creation. This condition has always existed.

“Our explorations to other civilizations have resulted in the formation of a federation called Andromeda Council. Any warlike race that enters federation territory is brought immediately under close scrutiny. We call these places of intensified security ‘Encounter Zones’.”

“And what of Earth?” Fred asked anxiously.

“Terra is positioned on the fringe of one of these zones,” Playa spoke straightforwardly. “Earth is in great danger from hostile civilizations, some of which have already mutilated cattle and sheep and have abducted humans for examinations and experiments.”

Fred felt a wave of nausea move over him. “Plus we have the Knights of Atlantis and other demonic groups that seek to pervert the higher awareness that you wish to share with us. Please, will you help us?”

“We have so promised,” Semjase said, adding a stern reminder, but as we have repeatedly informed you, we can help you best when your kind learns to help itself. That is why we have brought you into contact with us. So that you may learn what must be done and relay it to your people.”

“There is so much work to be done, Fred,” Playa said wistfully. “And so little time to accomplish all that must be made manifest.”

Fred shrugged. “Then I’ll just have to roll up my sleeves and get to work!”



Semjase moved close and kissed him lovingly on the cheek, then embraced him warmly. "It is time for you to return to your companions."

Playa touched his shoulder gently. "You have our promise, Fred."

As the swirling blue light gathered around him, he heard Semjase's voice: "Soon, my love, we will be together again."

Eric Powell was scratching the stubble on his chin in puzzlement as he scanned the night sky. "I thought I saw something for a minute there. Guess not, though."

"I know I saw something," Kim Kingswold argued. "Fred, did you see that object in the sky?"

"I certainly did," he said. "And it was awesome."

"Time to push on, Chief?" Powell asked.

"Yes, my friends," he told them. "We have a lot of work to do."

As Fred opened the door to the cab of the motor home and prepared to get back behind the wheel, he paused to roll up his sleeves. Then he looked up at the stars and smiled.

## **James Nichols: Cover Artist**

James Nichols is truly a self-taught artist. Growing up in the flatlands of Northwestern Ohio, Jim developed a serious working interest in art and illustration during his high school years.

His art skills were polished with a commercial art correspondence course which he completed during a two year stint in the U.S. Army. Upon completing his brief military escapade, Jim resettled in Arizona in 1972. There, he further developed his skills painting southwestern landscapes, rendering scenes of cactus; mountains; and weathered missions with realistic precision.

Late in the 1970's, inspired by films like Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Jim began to turn out scenes of space and science fiction. Fed by a lively imagination and an abiding fascination of science fiction, soaring space ships and alien landscapes began appearing on his canvases.

Jim began serious UFO illustration through an association with investigator Wendell Stevens, providing numerous renderings of Stevens' case studies. His UFO art has also appeared in Astronomy, The Cosmic Journey by William Hartmann and The Mier Chronicles video. Jim's art portrays UFO's with the precision of photographic reality; his visual imagery is crisp and powerful.

Addressing his personal views on this subject, Jim feel, "This is probably the most challenging and personally satisfying work I have done. The UFO phenomena is perhaps the most important sociological event of the millennia. It pleases me to have a part in it."

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