

[36] To Save the World

It was late that night when Carla returned to Ken's house. She had gone back to the base to try to reason with Viktor—without success. Ken had waited up for her, and together they sat at the kitchen table to talk—the first time he'd been available to do that in nearly a week.

"I really like Viktor," said Ken, "but I've never seen anyone so stubborn. Did he tell you what he intends to do?"

"No. He just repeated what he said at dinner—that he has his own plan and knows exactly what he's going to do. But he wouldn't spell it out. I'm worried about him."

"And I'm concerned for both of you and praying for you. You were going to hang in there for Jordan, and that assignment was completed. I know you haven't wanted to abandon Viktor, but Carla, he's had it all laid out for him and made his choice—and he won't even tell you what it is! I don't think you're obligated to him anymore."

"I made a commitment to Frank, and I can't go back on that now. And there's a story here, Ken—the story of the century, if not of all history! And I still keep hoping that the Archons really are benevolent higher beings who put us on earth and have been watching over our evolution."

"What are we," asked Ken sarcastically, "some kind of experiment they created in a laboratory and moved to this planet? Or if we're just an evolutionary form of life that sprang up spontaneously on earth, how did they get to be the zookeepers of the universe with the right to control our destiny? Furthermore, if the Archons 'put us here,' then who put them there? And who put them there—there, *ad infinitum, ad absurdum*?"

"Zookeepers of the universe?" Carla leaned back and laughed. "You don't leave a person much room to waffle around in, do you, Ken? Okay, so it is absurd that they put us here, some yet 'higher' creatures put them there—*reductio ad absurdum*."

"So what do you do when something's absurd?" he demanded quickly.

“Hey, back off a bit.” She held up both hands in protest. “Everything’s so black-and-white with you, so simple, but I don’t see it that way. I guess I’m torn at this point. There are times when I want to scream for help and run out of there as fast as I can. But at other times I sense such a genuine warmth and love surrounding Antonio. God knows we desperately need drastic solutions if planet Earth is to survive. At least the Archons, whoever or whatever they may be, offer something positive for a change—the first plan that I’ve heard of that makes sense.”

“It doesn’t make sense. It has no moral foundation, no basis for individual freedom of conscience, and thus no genuine love—and it reeks of *evil*. Viktor senses that.”

“So do I at times, but not always. I guess I just *want* it to work because there seems to be no alternative.”

“There’s an alternative, Carla, that does make sense. And you know what I mean.”

Carla traced the pattern on the tablecloth for a while with a spoon handle. Finally she said, “I see myself to a remarkable degree in Viktor. Perhaps that’s why I feel so close to him. His hatred of Marxist totalitarianism, and now his fear that the Archons intend to control the entire world, is much like the way I felt about Christianity as a teenager. It seemed so restrictive, and I wanted total freedom.”

“If that kind of ‘freedom’ existed,” said Ken, “we’d all be hostage to the uninhibited actions of others, which would inevitably clash with our own. Real freedom can only exist within laws that define it. Obedience to universal laws gives us the freedom to fly airplanes or hang gliders, travel to the moon, use the energy in the atom. Listen! The incredible scientific advancement mankind has made has always been through obedience to the laws that govern the physical universe—working within them, not trying to overthrow them. There are also moral and spiritual laws that must be obeyed, and the great delusion that we can do our own thing in violation of these laws is the cause of all our ills.”

No response was forthcoming so, after waiting a few moments, Ken continued. “The only real freedom is found in Jesus Christ. And the only reasons you can offer for rejecting Him all involve people who misrepresented Him, not Christ Himself. It’s unfair to blame Him for what others have done in His Name. Just remember: He loves you, and He’s willing to forgive all your animosity.”

Carla’s expression alternated between anger and amusement. “I find it amazing that I’m sitting here so calmly while you try to convert me,” she

responded at last with an uncomfortable laugh. “I would have stormed out of here if you’d dared to say such a thing only two weeks ago. You haven’t convinced me, of course, but I’m glad we can at least talk now.”

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Upon his return with Del Sasso from Washington, D.C, Leighton called the entire staff into the theater to give them his report. Before doing so, he had a few words to say about Kay, but he did not mention her name, nor did he give any details of what had actually happened in Viktor’s apartment. Kay’s body had been hurriedly removed that night, and the CIA and FBI had put a lid of secrecy on the whole affair. Anne White had simply not come back to work the next day, and the complex had been buzzing with rumors. The two guards who were working for the FBI remained as a precaution, but even Mike, as head of security, was not aware of their true identity.

“We had for some time suspected that a traitor was in our midst,” began Leighton, and Carla noted that his voice was firm. He had apparently been able to put Kay and his relationship with her completely behind him. “A murderer,” continued Leighton, “who killed two guards and let the Russian attack team inside these premises. Well, that person has now been eliminated. We must now put this in the past and move on into the future, which, I am delighted to tell you, has never looked brighter. Let me give you a few details of what has just happened in Washington, D.C.

“The president is wholeheartedly with us. He gathered at Camp David a select group of ambassadors from 40 or 50 countries as well as sympathetic members of the House and the Senate. Almost his entire Cabinet was there, along with a number of high-ranking Pentagon officers. I wish you could all have been there to witness what occurred, but the media wasn’t even invited. You would have been proud of Antonio Del Sasso. Before this august group he put on an incredible performance—and I do mean *incredible*.

“Of course there were skeptics,” continued Leighton with a laugh, “and Antonio put them in their place with finesse. There was this senior senator from the South—the consummate skeptic. Antonio had just levitated an Army tank brought in for that purpose. He left it suspended 50 feet in the air for a full five minutes, while he lectured the audience on the peaceful uses of psychic power. Can’t you just imagine the total bewilderment and consternation *that* created! Everybody was absolutely staggered!—except this individual, who shall remain unnamed. He was convinced it was a trick. Some trick that would be! Then there was the Congressman who thought the whole thing was a waste of valuable time

and insisted in a very pompous tone, ‘I can’t see that this mind power that’s being demonstrated to us today has any practical and peaceful purposes.’

“Antonio was the soul of patience. The president is a trap shooter, you know. So Antonio asked for a trap to be set up. ‘Imagine those clay pigeons are missiles fired by the Russians, Americans, or any other country,’ he told everyone. ‘Now watch this.’ As the targets came out of that trap, Antonio shattered them almost instantly one after the other.” Frank was interrupted by loud applause and motioned to Del Sasso to stand up and acknowledge the acclaim of his colleagues.

“Let me tell you,” Leighton concluded, “by the time we left, Antonio had them eating out of his hand. The only problem we have now is the size of this auditorium, because, believe me, everyone wants to come and participate in the Congress. I’ve left it to the president to invite those individuals who would be most influential in their countries. Through his support we’re now assured of success!”

There was a standing ovation. After shaking hands and receiving congratulations from each person there, Leighton hurried to his office. There he gathered with his inner circle, now diminished by Kay Morris’ death, to present them with further details. First of all, he turned to Viktor.

“I couldn’t help noticing the expression on your face, Viktor, when I was speaking to the staff in the theater. I know it must have been a terrible experience—what you and Carla went through while we were gone. Is that it?”

“It’s nothing new,” said Viktor. “I’ve mentioned it before, and I thought I’d resolved it, but I haven’t.” *Watch it, Viktor!* Carla gave him a quick warning look, but he paid no attention. The words seemed to gush out as though propelled by passion. “I’m still bothered by the authoritarianism of the Archons and the similarity between the New Order they propose and the old Soviet system that I grew up with.” He seemed to get control of himself and shrugged helplessly, looking apologetically from Leighton to Del Sasso. “I don’t want to be the one to hold things back.”

“It is *their* program,” said Carla softly, but with conviction. “And they’re so far beyond us that we ought to take their advice. I don’t see how it could be otherwise, or what’s wrong with that”

“It’s not taking *advice* that concerns me,” reiterated Viktor, “it’s surrendering ourselves to their control.”

Leighton looked uneasy. He turned to Del Sasso. “Viktor has honestly expressed his concerns about the integrity of the Archons. Is there some ‘sign’

we could give him that would restore his confidence?”

Antonio nodded solemnly. “I’m confident that the Archons are willing to attest to their goodwill in a manner that Viktor cannot doubt.”

Quickly he assumed the yoga position and was almost immediately in deep trance. From his throat issued the voice of an elderly man. Loudly, deliberately, solemnly the voice intoned a message in a language that Carla could not identify and which apparently was unknown to everyone else in the room also—everyone, that is, except Viktor. He sat transfixed.

The voice ceased as abruptly as it had begun, and Del Sasso came slowly out of his trance. “Well?” he asked immediately.

Viktor was trembling uncontrollably. When at last he could speak, it was to stammer, “He—it—was speaking to *me* in an obscure dialect spoken only in the small Siberian village of Karkaralinsk where I used to visit my grandparents in the summer when I was a small boy.” Overcome once again with emotion, he had to pause while he wiped tears from his eyes.

“It sounded exactly like my grandfather,” Viktor continued at last. The same mannerisms and phrases—like he used when he’d scold me for being afraid of the milk cow that used to bully me when I was very small. The voice said that I must not be afraid, but I must trust the Archons, for like that cow their purpose was to nourish me and all mankind.”

Emotion overcame Viktor again. At last he recovered himself and continued. “I only now remembered that it was 20 years ago today that my grandfather went into the forest and never returned. No body was ever found. That is the sign the voice offered to me, but I don’t know what it means.”

“It is quite clear,” said Del Sasso quickly. “The world, like your grandfather, is walking ‘the path of no return’ and must be rescued. You could not help your grandfather then, but you are in a position to help the entire world now.”

Head bowed, Viktor’s shoulders shook convulsively. “I’m sorry. I feel ashamed of myself for doubting.”

Leighton tried to pick up the conversation again to take the embarrassing attention from Viktor. “We know that the Archons have incredible, I suppose infinite, power. If their intentions were evil, they could have finished us off long ago.”

“Of course!” agreed Carla. “And I can’t imagine what they would want from us anyway.”

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Carla was not surprised that the renewed assurance the incredible

demonstration gave her didn't last long. She had been on an emotional roller coaster ever since snatching Viktor from Chernov's grasp in Paris. And lately she had begun to fear that her fluctuating emotions were in danger of getting out of control. Old doubts that she had wrestled with repeatedly came back again, now stronger than ever. She hoped, however, that Viktor had at least given up his "plan." Whatever that might be, she was sure it would bring him into dangerous confrontation with the Archons. And she knew what that could mean!

The promise Carla and Viktor had made to spend more quality time together had fallen victim to the hectic pace they were both maintaining. Carla was now granting some telephone interviews and had been to San Francisco twice for network television appearances. Two days after Del Sasso's remarkable performance in Leighton's office, however, she made it a point to drop in on Viktor. He was hunched over his computer and concentrating so deeply that he didn't even notice her enter his office until she was standing over his desk.

"Are those your memoirs, or are you still polishing that keynote address?" she queried lightly.

He looked up and smiled, then leaned back and stretched his cramped arms and back. "No, I was asking this machine to tell me how in the world I got from my small village in the Urals to this—this—" He searched for words, then shrugged and threw his arms out wide.

"Wishing you were back there?"

He shrugged again. "Maybe. When you think about where this world is going, you either want to close your eyes and wish for the good old days or try to do whatever you can to make it better. And I'm not sure that one is any less fantasy than the other."

"It wouldn't be hard to become a complete cynic," responded Carla sympathetically. "I feel the same way at times. Hey! Why don't we go outside for a breath of fresh air. I need a good walk to clear my head."

Once outside and away from the buildings and walking along the path just inside the wall, she said quietly to Viktor, "Well, you got your 'sign' the other day. I thought it was pretty impressive."

"It was more than impressive," admitted Viktor. "It was incredible. That *was* my grandfather's voice and his peculiar idioms and inflections!"

"I could tell from the look on your face," said Carla, "that it was genuine, though I didn't know what was being said."

'It convinced me at the time, but I realized later, of course, that it was no more a 'sign' or the proof I needed than anything else Del Sasso does. I was like

putty in his hands, and that made me resolve that my decisions will be made alone, not when I'm with him and Frank or anyone else. I'm ashamed of myself—the way I broke down.”

“I don't think you should feel that way at all.”

“I know what I'm saying, Carla. When I thought about it afterward with a clear head, I realized that all I'd seen was another display of psychic power, and I had mistakenly accepted power as a sign of *truthfulness and sincerity*, which is stupid.”

“You're right!” said Carla. “I thought of the same thing, but didn't want to destroy the faith it had given you. Ken has been trying to point this out to me for a long time—that *might* isn't *right* and that *power* provides no *moral* foundation. But I don't really think it's fair—at least not yet—to label Del Sasso and the Archons with this error.”

Viktor stopped to gaze at that giant redwood just outside the complex that always gave him such a sense of awe. When he turned to face Carla again, his eyes had narrowed and the stern determination was back in his voice. “I risked my life to escape Marxist oppression. Yes, it still hangs on in the ‘new’ Russia—and it's coming back with a vengeance. Now I'm going to risk my life again to help the world escape an even worse totalitarianism. I realize that I may die in the attempt, but there is no other honorable course to take.”

“Don't be a fool, Viktor! I'm terrified for you.”

“I had a very good friend—my old lab assistant—who said much the same thing to me in Moscow when I told him I was going to defect,” reminisced Viktor. “He was a Christian, like your friend Ken. I wonder what happened to Dmitri after I left.”

“I wish I knew what you were planning to do. Is there any way I could help?”

Viktor shook his head. “You will see when the time comes.”