

[35] A Rival Plan

Ken was at the restaurant when Carla arrived. While they waited for Jordan and Viktor, she filled Ken in on what had happened—who Kay Morris was and the close call she and Viktor had had that afternoon and how they’d been rescued in the nick of time by an FBI agent named Anne White.

“I know her very well,” said Ken. “We’ve dated a few times.”

“Really? She’s quite attractive,” said Carla.

“A very nice person. You’d like her,” said Ken. “Her real name is Anne Bartkowski, but she goes by ‘White’ on special assignments like that.”

“How do you know her and Don Jordan?”

“They both attend the same Thursday night prayer meeting that my mother and I go to... the one that’s held in Dr. Harold Elliott’s house. I’m sure you remember him.”

“How could I forget?” said Carla with a frown. “Well, I must say, you certainly have an interesting group of ‘Christian friends’— and you sure seem to look out for one another.”

Viktor and Jordan arrived at that point, and they were seated immediately at their table. As they were looking over the menu, Carla remembered something she’d forgotten to tell Jordan. “Don, you know Anne White got my gun,” she said. “I suppose it’s part of the evidence, but I wanted to be sure you knew what happened to it. And I’d rather not have another one. Thanks just the same!”

“You did your job, so we’ll let you go into early retirement,” said Jordan. “Anne told me all about it. She said that you and Viktor handled yourselves well.”

“That was kind of her to say, and it’s true of Viktor—but I was completely outclassed. I needed not just a gun but a tank against Kay. I’ve never seen anything like it. And Anne—she was fabulous. She sure knew what she was doing. She saved our lives—just in time.”

“She’s one of the best,” said Jordan. “She’s our ‘Annie Oakley.’ Well, what’s everybody having?”

“I’m going to take the combo,” said Carla, “and that’s what you’ve got to have, too, Viktor.” She leaned over and pointed to that selection on the menu. “You’ve never had anything like this in Moscow, being so far from the ocean. That’s why I wanted us to come here. It’s a combination plate: chinook salmon from Alaska, the world’s best lobster from the Caribbean, and giant prawns from the Gulf of Mexico—everything flown in fresh, and the prawns are in the most delicious batter you’ve ever tasted. It’s fabulous! How about it?”

Viktor, who had never even imagined such a scene, had spent as much time looking around the restaurant as he had going over the menu. “It sounds amazing,” he said. “If you recommend it—”

“You won’t regret it,” said Jordan enthusiastically. “I’m going to have the same thing.”

“And so will I,” added Ken.

“Well, that makes it unanimous,” laughed Carla. After they had ordered, she wasted no time. “Before we get down to business, I just want to ask Don whether the FBI can’t persuade the CIA to let Viktor see what it’s like in the outside world at least once in a while. I know the experience this evening is going to do him a lot of good, and I don’t see how he can be in such big danger anymore. Right?”

“It’s still unpredictable at the Kremlin,” replied Don. “I think they really want peace—for their own reasons, of course. And the Russian president seems to be getting along well with our president. If the Russian president can survive another year or so without a military coup.”

“Do you think Kay Morris was telling the truth when she said she’d been called back to Moscow and refused to go in order to get revenge on me and Carla?” asked Viktor.

“From all the information we have, I think that’s true. But there could be other renegade agents out there. If I were you, Viktor, I’d undergo a complete change in identity. This is a big country. You could drop out of sight very easily—at least until you’re no longer of any importance to the Russians.”

Viktor looked somber. “That’s not possible before the Congress. My identity is what makes me valuable to Leighton, and he says it’s essential that I give the keynote address.”

“Then I’d ask the CIA to take care of it immediately after the Congress, when your present identity has served its purpose. And in the meantime, I wouldn’t leave that fortress. I’ve got four men in here guarding you right now. This is a pretty expensive meal for Uncle Sam.”

“You’re kidding!” said Carla, looking around the room. “I didn’t realize that would be necessary, but I think it’s going to be worth it. Viktor desperately wanted to discuss some ideas he has with Ken—and, as you know, Ken is *persona non grata* out there. So this was the only way.” She turned to Viktor. “Why don’t you explain what you told me this afternoon.”

“I was enthusiastic when I first came here,” began Viktor. “Seeing Del Sasso’s powers changed my whole thinking. And the Plan held out such hope for rescuing planet Earth. But I became uncomfortable at the way the Archons dictate everything. Their word is law and has to be obeyed or else—just like the oppressive Marxist society I grew up in. I noticed that everything the Archons did increased Del Sasso’s importance and power. He’s the key to the whole thing. Each day a ‘transmission’ comes from the Archons through Del Sasso telling us what to do. But there’s no way to prove whether the Archons are really speaking through Del Sasso, or whether he’s just putting on an act. That began to trouble me.”

Viktor was trying to eat as he talked. He had obviously never seen a lobster and didn’t know which end to go after. “Who’s winning the battle over there,” Carla kidded him, “you or the sea monster?”

Not willing to admit defeat to a crustacean, he said, “I think I’m going to come out on top,” and went back to attacking a claw.

“Here, let me show you,” said Ken with a laugh.

“Mmm! Really delicious!” said Viktor. When he’d gotten some good chunks of the succulent white meat he continued earnestly. “The Plan promises that Del Sasso is only the first. There will be billions just like him who can use this psychic power for the good of mankind. Yet, so far, we haven’t been able to produce even one. We’ve had six psychics in succession training on the Psitron and every one of them has met disaster. Five began acting strangely, lost touch with reality, and two of them are still in a psychiatric hospital. The last one—that’s Inger—apparently hung herself.”

“We haven’t resolved that,” interjected Don. “It’s a very strange case.”

“Anyway, the point is,” continued Carla, “anyone who seems to be developing powers that could pose any kind of challenge to Del Sasso gets eliminated one way or another.”

“Even communism sounds good on paper, but the paradise it promises never quite materializes,” said Viktor. “It’s like that with the Archons. They promise peace, love, and brotherhood, but all we’ve gotten so far has been violence and death. To put it bluntly, I think the whole Archon thing could be a hoax, and the

Plan is simply Del Sasso's clever means of taking over the world. I suspect Frank's an accomplice, but maybe he's been fooled like the rest of us."

Carla turned to Ken. "Well, what do you think?"

"You know where I'm coming from. Viktor doesn't, so let me explain a bit. The Bible says that an evil man called the Antichrist is going to take over the world."

"You mean 'Mr. 666,'" said Viktor. "So you believe that?"

"Yeah, I do. There've been a few good candidates in the past. Hitler came awfully close. It can only happen when God allows it and the Antichrist will probably be an incarnation of Satan, who's also known as the serpent. Whether the Archons' Plan is the way it will happen, I don't know. Powerful as Del Sasso is—at least at this point—I doubt that he's the Antichrist. But he certainly has some of the qualifications."

"Such as?" asked Carla.

"Second Thessalonians 2:9,10 and Revelation 13:4 explain that he manifests all the power of Satan in 'signs and lying wonders and with all deceivableness.' That certainly fits Del Sasso—and being born in Rome doesn't hurt. But I think the Antichrist will also have a powerful political base to start from, so it's a toss-up at this point."

"Is this Del Sasso really that great?" asked Jordan.

"Incredible!" said Carla. "His psychic powers are comparable to anything the New Testament says about Jesus. I haven't seen him raise the dead, but I wouldn't doubt that he could. Not only that, but he's got irresistible powers of persuasion—charisma like you couldn't believe. He's certainly qualified to head up the Plan—which, by the way, I think is ingenious and really does offer genuine hope for the world. It makes good sense. Frankly, I still hope it works."

Ken gave her a disappointed look, then turned back to Viktor. "Whatever else comes through the transmissions, or whether Del Sasso fakes it at times, I don't know because I've never been present. But from what little I've heard, I don't think it's Del Sasso's Plan. It's the Archons'—and they're demons!"

Ken noticed Viktor's cynical smile. "I was as much a skeptic as you are, Viktor—probably more so. You're asking my opinion, and I have to give you at least some of the reasons why I hold it or it would make even less sense."

"I'm not objecting," replied Viktor. "I want to know exactly what you really believe."

"Okay," said Ken. "Del Sasso may very well hope to become the world ruler. And with his perverted theology, he may even feel that being the

Antichrist would be a great honor. That could explain why he has probably eliminated anyone who seemed to be developing powers comparable to his. But the Archons really exist. You must know that the history of the occult is filled with references to them—though they're most often called 'the Nine,' as they first identified themselves to me."

Viktor nodded. "So Del Sasso didn't pull something out of the air. He pretended to be in touch with traditional entities that occultists and psychics at least are familiar with. That gives the Plan a certain legitimacy. Maybe there are such entities. I don't dispute that. In fact, it was the conviction that nonphysical entities were behind psychic phenomena—and the desire to pursue that possibility in my research—that caused me to defect to the West."

"Then what are you saying?" demanded Carla. "I thought you suggested they didn't exist."

"I mean they don't exist *as Del Sasso represents them*. I don't know who or what they really are, but I think he's made them into something else for his own ends."

Ken reached into an inside pocket of his jacket and pulled out a small black book. He held it up for Viktor to see. These were rare in the Soviet Union. With the new so-called-freedom they're readily available, but you may never have seen one."

"What is it?" asked Viktor.

"A New Testament—part of the Bible."

"You're right. It's unfamiliar to me."

"Let me just read a few verses from it." Ken glanced over at Carla. Her look of anticipation pleased him. "Believe it or not the Archons were mentioned in here 1900 years ago," he added. Carla looked surprised.

"A Jewish religious leader named Saul, who hated Christians and had them put in prison and killed, claimed that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead, came to him, and converted him. That seems to be the only logical explanation for Saul suddenly becoming a Christian. He became known as the Apostle Paul, and faced prison and death himself. I'm reading from a letter he wrote to the church at that time in Ephesus—a town that's in modern Turkey today: 'Finally then, find your strength in the Lord, in his mighty power. Put on all the armour which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm against the devices of the devil. For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic powers, against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens. Therefore, take up God's armour; then you will be

able to stand your ground when things are at their worst to complete every task and still to stand.’”

Viktor seemed unimpressed. “So what does it mean?”

“The word ‘authorities’ in this English translation comes from the word ‘Archons’ in the original Greek in which Paul wrote it. When I saw that one evening while I was reading this Scripture, it nearly knocked me out of my chair.”

“I knew it was a Greek word,” declared Viktor. “But I never knew the Bible was originally written in Greek—like those messages we got in my lab back in the Russia!” He was giving Ken his undivided attention now.

“The Archons, as you probably know,” continued Ken, “were the nine magistrates who ruled Athens in Paul’s day. However, Paul—who claimed to be inspired by God to write this—makes it clear that he is referring to Athen’s rulers only as a way of explaining that there is a similar hierarchy of demonic beings directing the forces of evil in this world. He specifically says that the battle is not against human foes, but against spiritual beings of great power and wickedness who are apparently under the command of what Paul himself calls the Archons, or the Nine.”

Carla had been listening to Ken’s explanation with obvious astonishment “Why didn’t you ever tell me that the Bible identified the Archons?” she demanded. “This is amazing!”

“You weren’t exactly eager to hear anything from this book, remember?”

“But Del Sasso knows the Bible,” persisted Viktor. “He must know that it talks about the Archons, and that only gives one more reason for him to pretend they’re directing him.”

“Not pretend—they *are* directing him,” said Ken firmly. “You came to the conclusion that some *nonphysical entities*—not the psychic’s *mind* as is popularly thought—were the source of psychic power. I’m convinced of the same thing. The Archons, or the Nine, have to be the source of his power!”

“But who says they have the Plan that comes through Del Sasso in these ‘transmissions’?” insisted Viktor. “What if they don’t care how this power is used, so he’s pretending they’re directing him so that he can monopolize it and dominate the world?”

“Then many other psychics should have gotten the same power. But you admit that Del Sasso seems to be unique. That tells me he’s their chosen man for *their* purpose, not his. This thing is bigger than Del Sasso—or even the human race. There’s a cosmic struggle going on between God and Satan, and mankind

joined Satan's side by believing the lie that we could become gods—the very lie that is now being presented through the Plan.”

“If God is so all-powerful,” objected Carla, “why doesn't He just slam Satan across the mouth with the back of His hand and lock him away and be done with it?”

“May I get a word in here?” asked Don, who had been following the conversation with great interest.

“Pease do!” said Ken.

“It's not a matter of raw *power*,” suggested Don. “The issue is a *moral* one. *Good* and *evil* have nothing to do with *force*. Might does not make right. There's a *moral* choice that each person must make willingly. The only way that God would want to win this battle for the human heart—and indeed the only way He can win—is through love. He loved us so much that He became a man and died for our sins so that He could justly forgive us. Those who love God in response to His love and believe in Christ as their Savior and Lord are delivered from Satan's clutches and in the Name of Jesus Christ have complete power over Satan and his demons.”

Ken leaned across the table and spoke to Carla and Viktor earnestly. “You both saw me shut down Del Sasso's power in the laboratory that day. I understand he offered another explanation, but that's a lie. You saw that I was not afraid of him. And Carla could tell you that what seemed to be Del Sasso—although it was really an Archon using his form—came right into her bedroom and was about to destroy her. But when, in the name of Jesus Christ I commanded it and what seemed to be a huge cobra that was attacking me to get out, they immediately disappeared. Satan is consistently called ‘the serpent’ in the Bible.”

Viktor looked at Carla questioningly, and she nodded vigorously. “That's what I mentioned to you, but I wanted you to hear Ken's explanation, since he's the one who made them vanish. I was really being choked and would have been killed if he hadn't rescued me.”

“I, too, was rescued, Viktor,” said Ken. “As you know, I invented the Psitron and was the first one to make contact with the Archons through using it. As a result I was possessed by the Nine. They tried to kill me—and would have succeeded if the surgeon who worked on me hadn't been a Christian and cast out those demons. That's who they are. So it may not be Del Sasso at all who killed Inger and drove the others insane, but rather the Archons themselves. They almost succeeded in doing me in.”

“So you really did shut down Del Sasso in the lab that day,” mused Viktor, only half-convinced. “That means you have a greater power. So you could take over the world. Is that what you’re saying?”

“The power that I was the vehicle for that day was no more mine to use as I please than the Archons’ power can be used by Del Sasso to his own ends. And neither kind is *psychic* power, Viktor. It’s something altogether different. The authority I have and to which the Archons and Satan himself must yield—which is why I have no fear at all of Del Sasso—is *in the Name of Jesus Christ*. Jesus Christ conquered Satan by dying for our sins and resurrecting from the dead as proof that the penalty had been paid and that all who would receive Him as their Lord and Savior would be forgiven and would come under God’s protection. That’s exactly what Don just told you, but I wanted to say it again because there’s no other way for you to be protected from Del Sasso and the Archons behind him.”

“I don’t intend to surrender my integrity to the Archons,” declared Viktor angrily, “no matter who or what they represent. And I will not be Del Sasso’s or Frank’s—how do you say it?—*lackey*.”

“That’s bravely spoken, Viktor,” said Don, “and I admire your courage. But remember, you’re now up against the power that wiped out Chernov and his men without working up a sweat! How do you propose to defy the Archons without suffering the same fate?”

“I don’t know,” responded Viktor gloomily, “but I’m not going along with this new totalitarianism that’s even worse than the Marxism I left behind!”

“Viktor, please!” pleaded Carla.

“You’re both in grave danger,” warned Ken. “You’ve been of value to the Plan. But if you try to oppose the Archons, and they realize that they’ll never be able to get you to believe in them, they’ll try to destroy you. God has a better plan. It’s for all those who repent of their rebellion and believe in Jesus Christ.”

Viktor thought about it for some time in silence. At last he said, “I’ve got my own plan. I know what I’m going to do.” The discussion was obviously over.