

## [32] A Warning!

“Ken’s left for the office already,” his mother informed Carla when she entered the kitchen the next morning. Seeing the disappointment on Carla’s face, she added, “He works much too hard—always has, even when he was a boy. Forever some urgent project or other.”

“That’s one of the things that attracted me to him,” said Carla. “He was on a mission, going somewhere, not wasting his time but doing something worthwhile, goal-oriented.”

“He still is,” said Mrs. Inman, “but of course, the goals have changed drastically, and for the better—believe me, they have!” Carla started to frown, then smiled.

“Well, what would you like this morning?” Mrs. Inman asked her. “Some bacon and eggs for a change? I bought some, just in case.”

“You mean you want me to join you in a mini rebellion against the tyranny of health food? Okay, let’s go for it!”

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Ken had gotten up early to spend considerable time crying out to God once again for Carla. He prayed that the demonic evil would be so obvious that Carla would not be able to deny it; that God would put a shield of protection around her; that Viktor and Frank would have their eyes opened as well; that the Plan would be frustrated—and in general that God would do all He could without violating Carla’s power of choice to make the truth clear enough to her that she could make that choice without any deluding influence upon her.

It concerned Ken deeply that in spite of the frank discussions they had been able to have, instead of escaping the Archons, it seemed she was being drawn in deeper and was preparing to play a key role in persuading the world to embrace their seductive Plan. He keenly felt the urgency to pray specifically that she would see through the mask to the evil behind it and become thoroughly disillusioned. And that she would be protected from the demonic power that he knew would be unleashed against her in renewed fury if she tried to back out.

In the quiet of early morning, Ken had concluded that there was little point in trying to reason with Carla any further. He had said more than enough. All he could do now was to keep praying and believe that God would do everything possible to bring her to the point of decision, at which time she would have to exercise her power of choice. There was nothing that even God Himself could do to make her choose the right path.

The phone rang in the kitchen just as Carla and Mrs. Inman were finishing breakfast. "It's Ken—for you," said his mother as she handed the phone to Carla.

"Good morning!" said Ken. "I just wanted to make sure that you got the key and remote garage-door opener I left on the counter in the kitchen."

"Your mother pointed them out to me. Thanks a lot."

"Is everything okay?"

"Yeah, just fine."

"Anything I can do?"

"Well, I was thinking of asking you to meet me at the hotel. I really need to get the rest of my things, and there's no way I'm going back in that room without *you*."

"I understand. Did you want to do it this morning or tonight?"

"Well, if you can fit it in, do you mind, say in half an hour?"

"No problem. See you in the lobby."

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"It looks so mundane in here, so 'everyday-commonplace-business-as-usual,'" said Carla as they left the elevator and walked down the hall toward her room. "I feel kind of silly asking you to help me get some clothes." In spite of the brave words, Carla's voice betrayed her anxiety.

"I know exactly what you mean," responded Ken.

Carla opened the door. She took a step inside, turned on the light and screamed. "Ken! Look! I—I don't believe this! Why?"

He rushed in past her, then stood transfixed by the destruction that met his eye. The mattress and bedclothes had been ripped off the king-size bed and thrown into a corner, smashing a lamp. Three pictures now lay shattered on the floor along with two other lamps. The drawers had been dumped out and the drapes ripped from the windows.

Carla surveyed the scene in anguish. "The Archons weren't this vicious," she said. "This is incredible!"

"You don't think the Archons did it?" asked Ken in surprise.

"Okay, Ken, you see a demon behind everything. But what I see in here is

the work of the CIA, FSB—or even the FBI. They were looking for something. That’s obvious.”

“What do you have that they would want?”

“Nothing, that I know of, but they obviously thought I had something.”

“Carla, be reasonable! The CIA or FSB—and certainly the FBI—would have no reason for doing this. But the Archons would.”

“Why?” asked Carla. “I wasn’t even here.”

“Maybe they just wanted to let you know how vulnerable you are—that they can pull your strings and make you do what they want you to, like a puppet!”

Carla just stood and stared at him in shock.

“Come on,” he said. “Let’s pack your things and get out of here.”

Together they gathered her clothes and put them into her suitcase.

On the way down to the lobby in the elevator, Ken told her, “I was thinking, Carla, that this may work out for the best anyway. It gives you a reason to check out, presumably for another hotel. Here’s what I think you ought to say.”

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Back at the front desk, Carla turned in her key. “I’m going to have to check out,” she began in a low voice. She was visibly shaken and it was obvious that she had just been through a traumatic experience. “Someone got into my room—thank God I wasn’t there—and tore it completely to pieces.”

“I’m terribly sorry. I don’t see how anyone could get in,” said the young man waiting on her.

She leaned forward in a gesture of confidentiality. “You remember when the FBI was here a few days ago?”

“Yes.”

“Well, you wouldn’t have known, but they were protecting *me*.” She nodded in Ken’s direction and the clerk raised his eyebrows knowingly. “We thought the threat had ended, but apparently whoever is after me got into my room. Obviously I’m not saying where I’m going. I’ll come back tomorrow to pick up any messages. Do you have any now?”

“We certainly do. I almost forgot. You’ve got a stack of phone calls.”

In the parking lot Ken put the suitcase in Carla’s car and held the door open as she climbed in. Quickly she riffled through the phone messages. “ABC, CBS, NBC, *New York Times*—*everybody* wants me to be on their talk show or do an article for their newspaper or magazine. I’ve never been so much in demand.” She looked up at him. There were traces of tears in her eyes, but her voice carried the old determination once again. “Don’t think you haven’t made some

points, because you have. I've thought seriously about chucking this whole thing, but I don't see how I can."

"Carla!"

"Look, I'm not a puppet on a string, but I've made a commitment to Frank."

"You don't owe Frank a thing! He's on a power trip and he's using you!"

"Maybe, but I can't abandon Viktor."

"And there is a story you're after."

"Don't fault me for that, Ken. I am a journalist, and I've got to see this story through to the end!"

"I'll be praying for you!" There was nothing else to say.

"Please do, Ken." Carla bit her lip and looked away. She started the engine and leaned out the window, forcing a smile. "I've got an assignment from your friend Jordan, too, you know. I can't let him down either. When it's all over, maybe I'll write a book: *I Was a Spy for the FBI*."

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Carla had just turned onto the access road leading into the installation when she saw ahead of her the flashing red light of a police car approaching rapidly. It passed at great speed on its way out to the main highway. She drove on slowly, warily. *What is it now?* As she came around a bend within a few hundred yards of the front gate, the overwrought sense of danger and *déjà vu* peaked as another nightmare lay before her gaze. Police cars, uniformed and plainclothes officers, the prone body of a woman on the ground.... Carla's reactions moved into slow motion and a protective unreality descended over the scene.

Unaware, she slowed her car to a crawl. A uniformed officer waved her on. *I've got to know who it is... what's going on! I thought the violence was over.* In numbed defiance of the order, she pulled over to the side of the road and got out.

"Here, let me help you," said a kind and familiar voice. She became aware that Don Jordan was beside her with his hand under her elbow.

"What happened?" Carla asked, averting her gaze from the figure now being covered with a sheet nearby, and fearful that whoever was lying there had some connection to the installation.

"She was found hanging in a tree just back from the road early this morning by one of the guards on his way in to work," came the terse reply.

"Who was it?"

"A young woman about 25 named Inger Krieg."

"Oh no! Suicide?"

"That hasn't been determined, but we think so."

“Did she leave a note?”

“Yes, apparently in her handwriting. It’s being analyzed. I understand she worked at the base.”

“She was the other psychic,” said Carla, fighting the feeling of light-headedness. “Well, we’ve had several, but none of them worked out. Inger came all the way from West Germany about three months ago. None of the others seemed able to adapt to the Psitron. They all ended up basket cases mentally. Two of them are still in the psychiatric hospital in town. But Inger, she was doing very well. I saw some of her work. She was being trained by Del Sasso. She was such a likable person. This is terrible!”

“I’d better get back over there,” said Jordan. “I’m supposed to be in charge of the investigation since it happened on government property. I haven’t heard a peep out of you. Nothing happening?”

“Nothing—no—nothing that I’ve noticed. Nothing incriminating on Kay Morris. She’s working very hard and seems to be 110 percent committed to the project.”

“I checked her out again, and she seems to be clean. We’ve got three of our people in there now. Night-shift guard Stan Kirby, dayshift guard Art Denham, and lab assistant Anne White. You can send messages to me by any of them, and if you need help at any time, rely on them.”

“Have they come up with anything?”

“Not yet. I’ll see you later.”

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As Carla pulled into her usual parking place, she saw Viktor walking across the lawn from the transmission lab back to the main building. She jumped out of the car and called, “Viktor!” His face brightened when he saw her coming toward him. They met in the middle of the lawn and hugged each other briefly, then began walking slowly toward the front door together.

“Did you hear about Inger?” she asked immediately.

Viktor’s face darkened and he nodded. “Leighton announced it to the staff early this morning.”

“What did he say?”

“He called it a great tragedy. It apparently happened sometime last night. He suggested that it was despondency due to home-sickness. I don’t believe it.”

“Nor do I,” agreed Carla. “This is number what—six? Why can’t anyone but Del Sasso make it on the Psitron?”

“There’s something fundamentally wrong,” said Viktor grimly, lowering his

voice as they neared the front door.

*No, seven!* thought Carla. *Ken was the first, and that makes seven. Then why did Del Sasso take to the Psitron like a duck to water? Frank has used those exact words at least a dozen times. Why is that priest so special? Could Ken be right?* She glanced over at Viktor. He appeared to be dealing with his own inner conflicts.

“The Plan is supposed to bring peace, love, and brotherhood to the world,” he murmured, more to himself than to her. “Irony, isn’t it?”

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Later that morning at the 11:00 staff meeting, Carla sensed that Leighton was tired and discouraged as he addressed the inner circle. He paced nervously back and forth in front of his desk as he talked about the loss of Inger.

“This is a terrible blow to the program. We need millions of Antonios, and so far we’ve lost every one we’ve tried to develop. I just don’t understand it!” He turned to Viktor. “You’ve been analyzing the program. I know you worked closely with Inger. Do you have any ideas?”

“There’s something fundamentally wrong!” said Viktor with conviction, echoing the very words he had spoken to Carla earlier. “We’ve had problems with the mental stability of the psychics in the past, so we modified the approach, slowed it down. We were rushing them along too fast. Inger was the first under the new approach, and she was doing well. She was almost another Antonio. In fact I called her that just yesterday—and now this! Why don’t the Archons explain?”

“They have,” Del Sasso cut in. “We’ve been premature. It’s our fault for rushing the program. You recall that we were not specifically instructed by the Archons to start the training program yet. Even so, I don’t think we should be discouraged, Frank. For one thing, it was the karma of each one of these people. They will come back the better for it so we don’t mourn for them, dead or alive. And we’ve all learned something in the process that will be invaluable when the Plan is being implemented worldwide.”

“Antonio’s right,” agreed Kay. “If you went back over the transcripts of all of the transmissions, as I did recently, you wouldn’t find any instructions to train other psychics yet. In our zeal I think we’ve rushed ahead—a costly lesson, but one we can benefit from.”

“One thing none of us can afford to forget I guess,” added Frank. “We’re pioneers in a new field, explorers of inner space—and there are dangers. Think of the lives lost in the past for each new advance mankind has made. There’s

always a price to pay. It could yet cost some of us in this room our lives. But when you think of the benefits to the entire human race—well, I think we have a tremendous privilege!”

“There’s something else,” cut in Del Sasso. “I shouldn’t be the one to say it because it may sound a bit egotistical and self-serving, but it’s been a great mistake to attempt to train others on the Psitron at this stage. If we had a number of psychics with powers equal to mine, there would be no clear leadership, maybe even rivalry. That wouldn’t be good at this point—right?”

“I think you’re right,” said Frank a bit reluctantly. “I’d wanted to have at least one other Psitron-trained psychic to show off at the Congress, but I let my own ambitions instead of the Archons’ wisdom rule. Now I can see why the Archons have held back the development of the psychics, who will be necessary to implement the Plan, until it’s been adopted by the world.”

“All of this wisdom now isn’t helping Inger and the rest,” said Viktor solemnly. “I’ve got to take my share of the blame.”

“Well, let’s not blame one another,” said Frank. “That isn’t going to help. We need to go forward again. Antonio and I leave for D.C. in the morning, and I expect to have some exciting news when we return.”

Leighton stood up, signaling the end of the meeting. “You know what to do,” he said, turning to Kay. “There’s a lot of work in the labs that needs to be finalized while Antonio is gone. Viktor will help you. But remember that preparing for his speech takes top priority. Right, Viktor?” Leighton slapped him on the back. “You’re the keynoter, you know.”

Viktor looked solemn. “That’s a big responsibility, but I’m looking forward to it.”

“And Carla,” added Leighton, “as soon as you finish the rough draft of the next article, you should go on to the third one. I’ll go over them both when I get back.”

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“Knock, knock—may I come in?”

Carla looked up from her work to see that Del Sasso had opened her office door a crack and was peering in.

She leaned back and stretched with a weary sigh. “Please do. All packed and ready to go?”

He pushed the door open and stepped just inside. “Oh, I don’t take much with me. I just throw a few things together at the last minute. That’s the way I’ve always done.”

“Really? You’ve traveled a lot?”

“All over the world.”

“I didn’t know that. You haven’t told me much about yourself, Antonio.”

“When is there ever time around here to visit with beautiful women?” The glint in his eye startled her. “What do you want—the bare facts? I was born in Rome, grew up there, became a Jesuit— and have lectured all over the world as a special envoy for the black pope.”

“The black pope?”

That’s what they call the head of the Society of Jesus, because the successor to Ignatius Loyola—that’s our founder—wears a black robe like mine, while the pope wears a white one.”

“How interesting. I never knew that.”

Antonio looked at her closely as he had been doing ever since *that* night. He noticed her discomfort “Have no fear,” he said in a soothing voice. “I am not here to reprove you for your doubts. Every person must deal with them in his own way, and I have confidence that you will come through your present period of conflict with firm conviction.”

“Well, thank you.”

What he said next caught her completely off guard. “You know, Carla, Dr. Inman is right in a way about what he calls ‘demons.’”

“Really?” Apparently he could read her mind after all. That thought was devastating.

“Psychic development has its pitfalls,” continued Del Sasso. “And the psychic world is a dangerous one—as poor Inger just found out.”

“It was such a tragedy!” replied Carla, wondering what he was leading up to. “She was so young—and full of life.”

“I tried to warn her, but she wouldn’t listen. There’s a dark side, you know.”

No reply was expected. *Is he warning me?*

“Never rely on someone else to save you,” said Del Sasso. “That’s the major misunderstanding most Christians have about Christ. You must look to the divine within yourself, not within another. Realize your own oneness with the cosmos, and then these misguided creatures Dr. Inman calls ‘demons’ have no power over you.”

Carla found herself nodding assent propelled by the very force of his personality, yet unable to make an audible reply. Was he telling her that her doubts about the Archons had brought on the recent frightening experiences? Was he warning her not to doubt in the future?



“There’s a place for honest doubts... up to a point,” said DelSasso abruptly, apparently reading her mind again. “In the early stages of the Plan, discussion of the issues will be encouraged in order to clarify the thinking of those who sincerely seek the truth.” He came closer and stood there towering over her. “Regretfully, it will eventually be necessary to eliminate all opposition. The stakes are too high to do otherwise. I don’t need to tell you that Christians are, unfortunately, the chief opposition to the Plan. They’ll have to be persuaded... or else.”

“If I understand what you’re saying, Antonio,” said Carla, “then I think you may be overlooking something. There are millions of Christians—people like Ken Inman—who would rather die than deny their Lord. Do you really mean they’ll have to be *eliminated*?”

“There’s no other choice. It’s not because the Archons are opposed to religion, which they’re not. But narrow-minded dogmas have to go in order to make way for a much more appropriate religion broad enough for the entire world to embrace.”

Del Sasso spoke the words without animosity, much like a doctor dictating a prescription. “The new world religion will be ecumenical, embracing all creeds—except, of course, those that claim to be exclusively true. There are millions of Christians who pose no problem, who understand that Christ, regardless of what the Bible says, never claimed to be the only way, but representative of all ways. They will fit into the New Order without any problems. As for the narrow-minded fundamentalists, however—whether Christians or Moslems or Jews, or whatever religion—if they don’t voluntarily give up their obstructive, negative dogmas, then of course other measures will have to be taken. At stake is worldwide peace. Narrow sectarian beliefs can’t be allowed to stand in the way.”

He started to leave, but turned to pause a moment in the doorway. “I wanted to warn you before I leave for the East. Never trust any beings, no matter how highly evolved they may seem to be. Some of the most enlightened have chosen to use the dark side of the Force. They can be very destructive. And if you allow them to frighten you, then you’re in their power.”

So he did know! Carla fought to control a rising panic. She heard herself saying, “Thank you, Antonio. I appreciate this very much. It explains some things I’ve been wondering about.”

“I’m aware of your questions and doubts. It would be a tragedy not to resolve them in the right direction.” His eyes seemed to pierce into her very soul as he held her with his intense gaze. Then he turned and left, closing the door

noiselessly behind him.