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**The Seventh Bush: 2101 A.D.
A Satirical Thriller**

by
A. C. Meyer
&
Douglas M. Baumwoll

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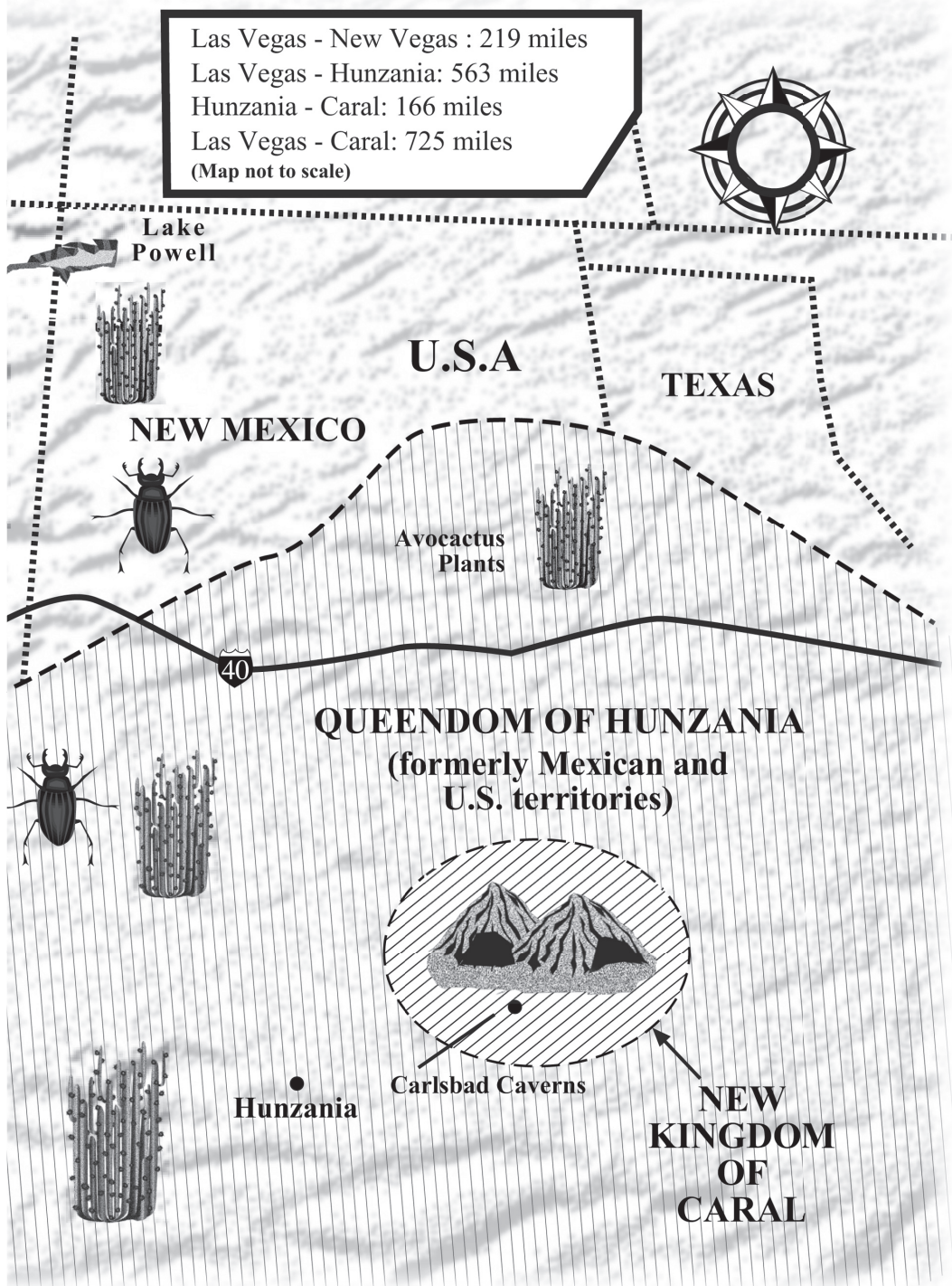
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Prologue

The United States of America. 2050 A.D.
(Somewhere near Carlsbad, New Mexico)

“Yes, sir, Mr. President, sir. You heard me correctly!” General Norman North screamed into the microphone of his headset, wind whipping across his face, the sand it carried stinging his cheeks and eyes. “There is absolutely no way we can take these peaceniks down! They have some kind of gizmo that is taking out our guys by the thousands. I can’t tell how many of them they have, but I’ve lost twenty thousand soldiers in less than five minutes. I’m pulling back right now! You better get your spin doctors to work, sir.”

“Okay, Norm. I trust your judgment. Get on out of there. I’ll get my press secretary right on it. See you once you’ve returned to the city.” Prescott Sheldon Bush III, the 57th president of the United States, ended the communication. He stared at the painting of Jesus Christ on the wall of his office for a moment, and then picked up the telephone receiver, punching in a number. “Joe?”

*

In a living room somewhere in the underground city of Las Vegas, a six-year old boy named Richard Gore watched TV at home with his parents.

“In breaking news, it is feared that all twenty thousand citizens of the fledgling community known as the New Kingdom of Caral, residing in the Carlsbad Caverns, were killed today. Details are unclear right now, but the president’s press secretary, Joseph Gorbolds, will hold a press conference in fifteen minutes. He is expected to announce that all of the

caves collapsed in on themselves as the result of a massive earthquake, measuring seven-point-three on the Richter scale. Although these individuals have officially seceded from the United States of America to set up an independent country, the president has sent military personnel down there to search for any survivors.” The pretty, Caucasian, blond-and-blue newscaster shuffled some papers and resumed in a cheerful voice, “In other news, a mega-tornado is expected to pass very close to the city limits tonight. Residents on city level one are advised to keep an eye out for a five-mile-wide funnel cloud reaching down as much as five thousand feet from its origin wall clouds. The twister will be spinning at wind speeds of up to four hundred miles an hour and is expected to...”

“I speak to you today as the seventh Bush president. Elected presidents of my family dynasty have led this country to greatness for seventy-three of the last one hundred and thirteen years. To this day, in McMeatball’s restaurants, we still call ‘french’ fries ‘freedom’ fries in honor of George W. Bush and the just war he initiated in the name of the Lord and Freedom early last century. He and many Bushes since then have heroically smote *terrorists*, who shared no common ethos, that lived, well, anywhere and everywhere we needed them to. God bless America and in God we trust. Amen.”

Negon R. Bush, August 30, 2101
Delivering a speech to the Men of Light
In the House of Light, Las Vegas, Nevada

Friday
September 2, 2101 A.D.

The Seventh Bush

“Where the heck is she?” yelled the president of the United States, as he studied the desert horizon in the distance through high-powered field glasses. His anger growing, he repeated, screaming down into the tank, “Beem, where the hell is she?” Immediately, looking skyward, Bush muttered under his breath, “Forgive me, Jesus, for using a swear-word.”

The glistening, beady, dark brown eyes of President Negon R. Bush, the 60th president of the American nation, continued to scan the sand dunes through the binoculars. He was searching for signs of Nitra Khan, queen of the six-million-strong, woman-warrior race known as *She-Huns*.

Bush stood on the hull of an Abrams M10-A10 battle tank. Inside the tank sat Beem Cheney, Bush’s vice president and the general of the army. The two Americans had travelled 230 miles from the underground city of Las Vegas, the capital city of the nation, to attend this top-secret meeting with the twenty-five year old She-Hun leader.

“Calm down, Negon. I’m sure she’ll come soon,” the forty-four year old Cheney climbed halfway out of the tank and stood in the hatch. The meeting with Khan was going to be the most important one of both of their political lives – and she was already one hour late. “Here,” he said, extending his arm and offering Bush his solid platinum, oversized hip flask filled with Kentucky bourbon, “Have a drink, Negon.”

“No, thanks.”

Amid small, swirling dust devils, the tank waited at the base of Mount Ryan in southeastern California. Bush, forty-two years old and athletic, shared the uncanny facial family

resemblance of all of his notorious ancestors. The only difference was that Negon Bush's nose was elongated and more pointed; liberal tongues joked that this was due to his overdeveloped tendency to lie. The president leaned toward the open hatch and ordered, "Get that radar fixed. Now!"

Huge, black, nimbostratus storm clouds loomed 80,000 feet high in the sky as far as the eye could see; a torrential rain was imminent. Bush felt a hefty gust of wind run through his short, well kempt, very-blond hair, whose color was the result of Scandinavian blood having entered his gene pool a few generations earlier. He wore the insignia of commander in chief on the shoulder of his combat fatigues, as six other Bush presidents had before him. Crouching down to weather the ninety mile per hour winds, now a common phenomenon across the United States and all across the world, he leaned against the turret and raised the binoculars up to his eyes once again. Squinting, he looked through the eye pieces but was unable to see anything. The wind physically swayed his body, and he sat down in the wind shadow of the turret to avoid losing his balance.

The president surveyed the line of the foothills of Ryan Mountain and the wide plains of the southern Mojave Semi-Desert beyond. Millions of pink-colored, five-foot high *avocactus* plants carpeted the desert floor; in some places, no sand showed through them at all. This plant, which bore cantaloupe-sized, pink fruits covered in black spines, was a genetic crossbreed of the Euphorbia cactus and the Mexican avocado tree. The *avocactus* plant, engineered and harvested by the She-Huns, grew prolifically in this part of the country; it had overrun completely the local natural flora, such as the Joshua tree, the Yucca plant and the Creosote bush, during the previous fifty years.

Bush continued to scan the desert horizon but saw nothing of Khan. "Nitra," he yelled into the midday wind storm, just

as large raindrops began to pound against his face, “where the heck are you! You better show up for this meeting!” The seventh president of the Bush familial political dynasty had never been so anxious in all of his ten years in office.

Nitra Khan, Queen of the She-Huns

Queen Nitra Khan stood on the bridge of her colossal, royal battle Hun-Vee. Like all She-Huns, she was over six feet tall and had dark-brown skin that contrasted sharply against her shoulder-length, platinum-blond hair and her clear, bright blue eyes. She was a stunningly beautiful woman of Asian facial features.

“Your masochistic admirer must be getting very nervous,” said Boota Bleeda to her queen. The ancient Hunzanian rune signifying “ministress of war” adorned the breast plate of Bleeda’s black battle armor. All She-Hun armor was made of a thick, processed, ultra-strong material derived from the chitin exoskeleton of the large desert beetles harvested by the She-Huns in this part of the country: Rekol beetles. “Nitra, it was very clever to keep him waiting like this. Now that black-ice-sniffing excuse of a president will really be edgy,” she laughed, her chubby yet sexy body shaking visibly. At thirty-one years old, Bleeda was a “big” woman – very busty, with a pretty, round face.

“I’d like to kill that bastard Negon every time I see him,” said Khan. She unconsciously traced the golden runes on her own armor, which represented female physical and political power, the subjugation of all men, and the overall She-Hun goal of a global matriarchy. “We could run over their puny battle tank, crushing him like the desert cockroach that he is. Then I could hear the death screams of the man who raped me when I was fifteen.”

“Yes, yes, my queen, you’re right. And I wouldn’t mind hearing the death screams of that sexist, homophobic, alcoholic Beem Cheney, either. But we can’t kill them yet. Their military is very strong. Let’s just see why Bush has called this summit and what he has to say. No doubt he’ll ask to buy more crude oil as the American wells are virtually dry. We’ll deliver it soon after that, just like always. Business as usual. We’ll keep pushing forward with our living weapons program and see what results Professor Wrijinn achieves in the near future. Then we can plan any military action accordingly. Okay?”

Khan looked hard at her ministress of war and said, “Of course, Boota, you’re right. I was only speaking out of hatred for that crooked-dicked masochist.”

Khan put her hand on Bleeda’s shoulder, looking into her eyes tenderly. She leaned in and gave her a passionate kiss, pulling Bleeda’s head back slightly by her long, blond hair. “Okay, they’ll be here in ten minutes. Let’s do this thing!” Khan’s eyes caught on fire. “Men, we keep them down!”

Bleeda responded enthusiastically, “Men, we keep them down!”

The Free Vegas Revolutionary Movement

Danton Gore checked the time; it was six o’clock in the evening. A thirty-five year old college graduate, Gore had been forced to take a job in the Las Vegas Tunnels Protection Division of the U.S. Military, now known as the Defenders of the Light, due to a very tough job market upon graduation ten years earlier. Now off duty, he was driving an illegal hybrid car, a Ford Mustang. But Danton Gore was not admiring any sunsets or rolling green hills, for he was driving 1,000 feet below the Earth’s surface.

In the year 2101, all 120 million Americans lived in one of only four remaining cities: Las Vegas, Atlanta, Chicago or Min-

neapolis, all of which were constructed entirely underground. Over the previous ninety years, all coastal cities worldwide – New York, Miami, Los Angeles, Brighton, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Stockholm, Nice, Sao Paulo, Chennai, Vladivostok – had been swallowed by rising ocean and sea waters – one result of global warming. Thousands of other beach and near-beach cities and towns had also disappeared, as salt waters encroached on coastlines as much as 100 miles, depending on elevation, submerging everything in their paths.

A second result of global warming had forced the abandonment of tens of thousands of additional inland cities – the formation of a massive global storm system, whose path crisscrossed the entire planet at regular intervals. This system commonly gave birth to category 8 hurricanes all over the world; these monsters blew at wind speeds up to 250 m.p.h. and pelted down inches of rainfall in a matter of just minutes. Hundreds of smaller, localized storm systems raged everywhere virtually twenty-four hours a day. By 2048, all the world's population, two billion people, lived in underground cities.

Danton Gore drove into a vehicle vertical link elevator on city level 30, which descended seventy city levels down to Level XXX of Las Vegas. This level of the city divided city level 99 and the wealthier levels above it from city levels 101 and the poorer levels below. It consisted of 400 square miles of red light district, wherein all sexual desires could be satisfied at all prices. Gore parked his car in the parking lot outside the elevator, got out and began walking to his appointment.

Twenty years earlier, Nekon Bush's father, President George H. W. Bush III, had thrown the Mafia bosses out of Level XXX and had then taken over business operations on virtually the entire level. The sinful dollars had ended up in Bush bank accounts ever since then. Like all true American capitalists, the Bushes had no qualms about reaping huge prof-

its from activities that they themselves considered to be highly immoral, if not outright illegal.

Gore walked onto Hugh Grant Boulevard, a street that featured small salons offering only blow jobs. He admired the technological wonder of a spring evening projected by lasers onto the ceiling of this city level, thirty feet above him. On Level XXX it was twilight twenty-four hours a day, a light blue-black, star-filled sky visible around the clock. Thousands of neon signs twinkled all around him. Gore smelled a faint, sweet scent in the air. *Pheromones*, he thought to himself and smiled. It was well known that researchers at the George W. Bush IV University had perfected their use and had doubled profits in the sex industry by pumping them into the air supply, waging war against deeply conditioned American prudery.

The six-foot-two-inch tall Gore stepped onto a pedestrian conveyor belt. This extensive system carried tens of thousands of pedestrians all over any given level of the city. It consumed massive amounts of electricity generated and sold by Clean Power Corporation, a Bush-owned energy company that operated dozens of pollution-belching factories all over the city. As the dark-haired, brown-eyed head-turner rode on the belt, several women whistled at him in admiration.

The athletic, 220-pound descendent of the Nobel-Peace-Prize-winning politician-environmentalist of the previous century stepped off the conveyor belt at Jenna Jameson Square, the center of Level XXX. He walked one hundred yards north and entered a theme brothel called “Rococo.”

“Hello, Danton,” Nana Pavlov greeted him. “How are you?” the busty, American-Russian beauty of twenty-eight years enquired. She wore a period-piece dress of dark red silk; it hugged her tight about the waist and chest, billowing below the hips.

“Fine, thanks. Can we talk here?”

“No, let’s go to my office.” Pavlov led him past authentic Louis XV furniture and original Jean-Antoine Watteau paintings and into her private office, from where she ran the business affairs of the ten brothels she owned on Level XXX.

Danton Gore had known Pavlov for two years. Since then, for a thirty-three percent fee, she found him clients. Although Gore was a captain in the Tunnels Protection Division of the Defenders of the Light, he moonlighted as a high-class, male escort when he was not busy patrolling the tunnel transportation system in the city. In this way, he made some extra money and sometimes had great sex with beautiful women. More importantly to Gore, he met women with insider information on the powerful, influential men at the highest levels of business and politics. Gore gladly performed sexual services for these women regardless of beauty in order to pump them for information that furthered the cause of Free Vegas.

The Bush dynasty and its nepotistic business and political cronies possessed immense wealth derived from the sale of She-Hun crude oil and American-made weapons of mass destruction. They earned additional billions of dollars through obscenely high-percentage returns on private equity investments and hedge funds. One of Free Vegas’s primary goals was to disempower these plutocratic families and see to a fair redistribution of their financial and material wealth among the world’s people.

Pavlov sat down behind her desk and Gore took a seat across from her. He mouthed the words “is it safe to talk here?”

“Yes,” she answered him out loud. “Cloud Base’s technical lab has just modified my multifunctional device,” she held up her wrist, showing Gore the mechanism that she wore there, “to also scan for listening spy bugs.”

“Are you sure it works? Those little bastards are smaller

than mosquitoes and can fly anywhere. Just last week, they used them to expose a Free Vegas revolutionary cell in the Tunnels Protection Division, Northeast.”

“Yes, Danton, I’m sure. The head engineer worked on my MFD himself. I think he knows what he’s talking about.”

“Ok. It’s just that I’m a bit anxious about everything lately. The She-Huns have been more aggressive recently in their attacks against the city’s tunnel system. And I feel like something big will happen with our revolution soon as well.”

“Well, you just might be right!”

“What do you mean, Nana? What are you talking about?”

“Well, you’ll need to clear it with Cloud Base first, but it looks like next Wednesday Free Vegas could make some truly historical international headlines, with the word ‘assassinate’ appearing on newspaper front pages all around the globe!”

The Royal Hun-Vee Arrives

Inside the presidential battle tank, driver Han Yong Yee shouted, “Sirs, there they are! Ten miles out. Check the main monitor.”

Bush, Cheney and the two tank crew members looked at the main monitor with awe; the storm had abated temporarily and the exterior zoom camera was showing them the biggest Hun-Vee any of them had ever seen. The gigantic battle fortress rolled along on two rows of twenty-foot diameter tires.

“My Lord, Beem, have you ever seen such a huge Hun-Vee?”

“Never. I guess it must be the royal Hun-Vee. It stands to reason that it would be the biggest, best one in their military fleet.”

“That thing must be three hundred feet long and a good hundred feet wide,” guessed Bush.

“A hundred feet tall, as well,” added Cheney. “That bastard must hold a thousand warriors, at least.” He pointed at the front of the Hun-Vee displayed on the screen and counted, “One, two, three, four, five, six cannons. It looks like three eight-inchers and three twelve-inchers.”

“Excuse me, sir,” said the gunner, Takeshi Ling, “but I believe those bigger guns are at least sixty feet long, making them sixteen-inch barrels firing three-thousand-pound shells up to a distance of twenty miles.”

“Good eye, soldier. I think you’re right. Not bad for a bunch of lesbian wenches with archaic, late 20th-century military hardware and capabilities.”

The four men continued to study the mammoth vehicle, its black and silver colors half-covered in kicked-up sand. Its general outline resembled an ellipsoid shape cut in half length-wise.

“Corporal Yee,” Bush addressed the driver, “take us to meet the She-Huns half way.”

“Yes, sir.” replied Yee, “I estimate rendezvous in five minutes. Maintaining radio silence as per top-secret mission protocol.”

Bush turned to Cheney. “Beem, will you join me in a quick prayer? It has already been a rough day, and I want His help in the meeting with Khan.” The president was a devout, fundamentalist Christian, like all of his ancestors. In 2040, the fourth Bush president of the dynasty banned the teachings of Charles Darwin and evolutionary theory in all schools nationwide, both public and private. Since that time, all mainstream Americans believed that the world and all of its inhabitants, from dogs to dinosaurs, had been created in only six days a mere 6,000 years earlier, on the morning of October 23rd, 4004 B.C.

Cheney took a healthy swig of Kentucky bourbon from his hip flask, belched, and replied, "Okay."

The two men held hands and Bush chanted out loud, "Jesus, I belong to the chosen dynasty. You have blessed us and our friends since you first made us millionaires almost two hundred years ago. I'm part of your divine plan for world rule by the righteous. Please help us to prevail today. Amen."

"Amen," Cheney chimed in.

Although Bush prayed to the New Testament Christian god, in reality, he answered to other gods: those of power, money, oil, black ice, and S&M. These were the gods that he truly coveted, those that enslaved him and ruled his entire life.

Bush calmly pulled a custom-made, hand-crafted, solid-platinum pillbox from his uniform and pulled out a crystal of black ice. He held the pea-sized, black, crystalline drug under his nose and inhaled deeply; the crystal vaporized as it shot up his nostril, leaving a faint, dark stain on his upper lip. This illegal synthetic substance produced the narcotic effects of cocaine and ecstasy, toned down by opium.

All four men returned their attention to the main monitor, which showed open desert covered in avocactus plants bending slightly in the increasing wind. They could just discern the silhouette of the Chocolate Mountain ridge to the south through the sandstorm. The plants thumped against the undercarriage of the hull as the tank sped towards the meeting point. Metal pings sounded all around them, the winds showering the tank with small stones and desert debris.

"Corporal Yee," commanded Bush, "stop the tank! We'll wait here for those pagan bitches." The president studied the monitor. "Beem, do you see that?"

"Wow!" Cheney looked at the herd of She-Hun battle boars displayed on the monitor. "What do you think, Negon?"

Should we blow off a little steam? Besides, we haven't killed anything in a few days."

"And how!" affirmed Bush.

"Those boars make far better targets than agritube-raised pheasants."

Bush looked at the monitor and studied the image of the six-legged, one thousand-pound genetic inventions of the women warriors as the animals stood chewing lazily on avocactus fruits. Measuring five feet to the shoulder and nine feet long, these boars could cover open ground at a speed of forty miles per hour.

"Beem, just make sure you don't shoot anyone by accident again. How much bourbon have you had today?" Bush joked with his friend, who had suffered a media grilling after having shot a fellow hunter while pheasant hunting a few weeks earlier.

Cheney immediately looked at Bush, rage building on his face. "Negon," he began, trying to control his temper in front of his soldiers, "you're hardly one to criticize." The veins were now popping out of his neck. "If you had finished off the She-Huns when you had the chance ten years ago when we occupied their capital city of Hunzania, we wouldn't even be here today negotiating. After that, we would never have lost the southern half of New Mexico and Arizona to these gun-toting lesbians. All you had to do was control your desire to be the sex-slave of a fifteen-year old princess. How many times have you met with her in the last ten years, anyway? It's a real addiction for you."

"Careful, Beem, we're great friends and colleagues but I won't tolerate any criticism from anyone, no matter how valid. I'm still the president here." Bush paused and considered a moment. "But you're right, I shouldn't have joked about that incident. Sorry." Bush put his hand on Cheney's shoulder;

they had been friends since attending the South Point Christian Military Academy for Young Men together thirty-five years earlier. “Let’s shoot us some battle boar bacon!”

Cheney looked hard at Bush, and then softened his gaze. “I’m sorry too, Nekon. I guess I’m a bit more nervous than I realized. After all, you’ve never brought me along to one of these covert meetings with these women before, and that royal Hun-Vee has some serious firepower going for it.”

“Have a drink,” encouraged Bush.

Cheney took a swig of bourbon, opened the hatch and climbed out onto the hull of the tank, squatting in the wind shadow of the turret. Bush climbed the ladder, the upper half of his torso sticking out of the vehicle; he also wanted to release some stress.

Cheney kneeled and raised his pulse pistol, taking aim at the large animals. Squinting to stop the sand from blowing into his eyes, he opened fire. Inside the gun’s barrel, an ultra-powerful battery generated an electromagnetic pulse that silently hurled light-weight, high-density bullets at a rate of 3,000 rounds per minute towards the battle boars. Cheney emptied his entire clip of sixty rounds in less than two seconds, as did Bush beside him.

“Yeeeeeee-haaaaaww!” both men yelled in unison.

Instantly, twenty animals fell to the ground, hit by bullets travelling at 10,000 feet per second. The other boars ran away, snorting in terror, their feet slamming loudly into the ground. Cheney quickly put in a new magazine and squeezed off another sixty shots, smiling as he watched another eight animals fall to the ground.

“Oooooow-eeeeee. Nice shootin’ Tex!” commended the president.

Both men entered the tank, without a second thought for the corpses they left behind. Cheney closed the hatch behind him.

"I feel much better," said Cheney.

"Me too, Beem. Now, let's focus."

"Excuse me, sirs," interrupted Yee. "The She-Hun vehicle is only two miles away."

Bush and Cheney took their seats. "Hold your position, corporal. We'll wait for them here," ordered Bush.

The Americans watched the gigantic Hun-Vee approaching on the main monitor. A curtain of dust rose fifty feet above it, kicked up by its independently operating twenty-four tires. White clouds of water vapor, the only byproduct of its hydrogen cell propulsion system, billowed from the exhaust pipes at the back of the vehicle, pooling in large puddles on the ground in its wake.

Bush looked at Cheney and said, "You have to admit, it's an impressive ride. Look at the chitin armor plating; I've never seen such large pieces. They must be at least twenty-four inches thick."

"Very impressive," Cheney agreed. "They must have harvested millions of their Rekol beetles to get enough insect skin to armor that thing. Maybe we shouldn't have sold them the biotechnology for those bugs, Nekon."

"Come on Beem, HalliBush & Cheney received two billion barrels of She-Hun oil for sale on the open market in exchange for that technology. Besides, arm an enemy and you get massive defense budgets for years to come."

"Yeah," Cheney snickered, "who am I kidding?"

The storm suddenly increased in intensity, picking up sand and throwing it everywhere despite the downpour of large raindrops. The monitor now showed the outline of the Hun-Vee to be at a distance of only two hundred yards. Its bulk filled the viewing screen completely.

The gunner, Ling, said "Mr. President, they don't seem to be slowing down at all. In fact, they seem to be accelerat-

ing. Maybe they don't see us," he said, fear creeping into his voice.

"Don't be a coward! Arm your Bushfire missiles and stay alert," he commanded sternly. *Damn!* he thought to himself, *if that bitch is in a bad mood, she might kill us all here and now.* He unconsciously withdrew the pillbox from his breast pocket and removed the lid. *Stop Nekon!* Bush chastised himself. He had a chronic black ice habit which he had not wanted to indulge before the meeting with Nitra Khan; he needed his wits about him.

"They don't see us!" yelled Takeshi Ling. "Should I fire?"

Cheney berated Ling, "Shut your mouth, soldier. Of course they see us. We can't fire on them. It would jeopardize the sensitive political mission of today. Now, stand your ground, Ling!" Cheney looked at the president, who nodded in agreement as he lightly bit on his lower lip.

A Revolutionary Idea

Danton Gore repeated the word in his head: *assassinate*. He looked, speechless, across the desk at Nana Pavlov, the other member of his two-member Free Vegas revolutionary cell. In all his five years with the organization, Gore had never considered assassination as the way to effect change in America; he had always assumed the revolution would achieve its ends through the peaceful promotion of public opinion and application of pressure on the members of the corrupt, special-interest driven government and corporations that ruled his country. Despite the fact that most of the elected officials that comprised the federal governing body, called the Men of Light, were multi-billionaire republicans, Danton Gore had always

maintained hope that they would do the right thing soon. Hesitantly, he said out loud, “‘Assassinate’?”

“Yes, Danton, ‘assassinate.’ Why do you look so surprised?” asked Pavlov, running her fingers through her short, black hair. She added calmly, “It’s clear that the current administration isn’t going to do anything to change our federal policies on government funding for urban green spaces, air and water pollution inside and surrounding cities or fair wages for the working class.”

“Uh, yeah,” Gore responded slowly, still slightly rattled. “I guess you’re right.” He paused, collected himself, and declared, “You’re right, Nana. The future is green!”

“The future is green!” responded the Russian-blooded revolutionary, slamming her open hand against the desktop.

Chanting this motto, Gore and Pavlov acknowledged the second main goal of Free Vegas’s revolution – a world free of oil and heavy industry lobbies that completely controlled federal government policies at the expense of the environment. They wanted to clean up the massive corporate pollution of air, soil, and ocean and fresh water, and create thousands of green spaces within American cities.

Gore continued to look at Pavlov, overcome by admiration for this beautiful, courageous woman, whose parents had been murdered by Bush’s Secret Service. He had known her for the previous two years and, very gradually, had recruited her into the movement. He was proud that now, after only five months in the Free Vegas organization, his own protégé wanted to lead the charge against the corporate-government machine with a vengeance.

Danton Gore leaned across the desk and lightly touched the back of Pavlov’s hand, “So, tell me, what’s your plan?”

A Meeting of Military Minds

Inside the American M10-A10 presidential battle tank, Bush, Cheney and the two soldiers stared, wide-eyed, at the main monitor and held their collective breath. The low-frequency drone of the approaching Hun-Vee's electric motors was growing in volume. Bush closed his eyes and awaited impact; he anticipated the sound of metal being twisted and mangled, the jolt of the tank as it was being crushed.

But nothing happened. Bush slowly opened his eyes as it dawned on him that the sound of the electric motors was now coming from *directly above* them.

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On the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee, a bluish light shone from the control panels and mixed with the weak, fading daylight that managed to enter through the portholes, dimly illuminating the entire room. It was surprisingly quiet, the electric engines operating relatively silently for powering such a huge vehicle. Nine hundred warriors wo-manned the rolling fortress, which was divided into fourteen decks. Other than the male servants, all of whom were castrated, there were no men on board.

Nitra Khan and her ministress of war, Boota Bleeda, belly-laughed and shrieked in delight. "Nice driving, Zenturia Gota!" Khan complimented the helms-Hun.

"Now the president will be in the right mood for negotiating," commented Bleeda. "Shall we head down to the conference room, my queen?" These women spoke Hunzanian to one another, a mixture of ancient Scythian and modern Spanish.

Khan and Bleeda took the elevator down to the sixth deck of the Hun-Vee, where they entered a conference room.

Khan sat down on her ancient, stone throne and began to mentally prepare herself for the very important negotiation

that was about to take place. She closed her eyes and reflected on the fact that her own female ancestors had removed this very throne from the court of Attila the Hun more than sixteen hundred years earlier. She drew strength from the fact that those She-Hun women, her direct genetic ancestors, had killed that great barbarian when he was at the height of his reign of terror. She drew additional strength from the hatred that she felt toward Negon Bush, the man who had forced her to have nonconsensual sex ten years earlier as part of a cease-fire agreement reached between her mother and the American president after the underground city of Hunzania had been surrounded by American troops. She breathed deeply several times, finally arriving at a sharpened state of mind.

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The Hun-Vee had ground to a halt.

“God damn, that was close! What the hell happened?” yelled Bush inside the tank, to no one in particular. Under his breath, Bush immediately pleaded, “Sorry, my Lord, God, for using your sacred name in vain and for mentioning the lair of Lucifer.” He shot a glance upward.

“I don’t know, sir, but it seems that the Hun-Vee is somehow now directly over us,” answered Yee, looking all around him. There was an eerie, expectant silence.

Cheney stood up and opened the hatch, peering outside the tank; he was looking up at the underside of the Hun-Vee. “A very well-executed maneuver, Nitra,” he muttered.

There was a clearance of nearly ten feet between the belly of the She-Hun battle colossus and the top of the American tank.

Just then, a large door slid open in the chitin plates of the

Hun-Vee, and four She-Hun warriors stared down at the vice president.

“Beem,” Bush called to Cheney, who was still standing in the hatch of the Abrams tank, “come back down here.” Cheney descended the short ladder and stood to the side, so that Nekon Bush could climb up and have a look at their situation for himself. The president looked up and out from the access hatch, squinting. The storm blowing sand and rain into his face and eyes, he made out the square opening above him, filled with the faces of the four helmeted warriors in black fighting gear staring down at him. They lowered a ladder down to the roof of the Abrams and motioned for him to climb up and into their vehicle.

Bush looked down into the tank, saying, “Ling and Yee stay here. Maximum alert. Beem, you come with me.”

The president and his general climbed up the ladder. As Bush arrived at the opening into the Hun-Vee, the She-Huns grabbed him under the arms and pulled him up into the giant vehicle.

“Don’t touch me; I’m the President of the United States of America!”

The female warriors continued to womanhandle Bush, pulling him aside and grabbing Cheney as well. They removed the small pulse pistols from both men, as well as the devices they wore on their wrists.

“Damn you! Give me back my MFD!” Bush shouted, indignant.

“Later. When you leave,” said the tallest of the warriors in a thick Hunzanian accent, a cross between a Mexican and a deep southern. “Our queen, Nitra Khan, awaits you both.”

Cheney noted that these She-Hun soldiers were young, twenty years old at the most. All four were taller than he and Bush. Their features were noticeably Asian, apart from the

bright blue eyes and the long blond hair, which, braided into a shoulder-length ponytail, stuck out of a hole in the back of the helmet. Each of the woman warriors carried a replica of the late 20th-century Samopal PP-93 submachine gun slung over her shoulder. Although Cheney was himself a battle seasoned soldier, he felt uneasy in the presence of these incredibly attractive, powerfully-built women.

The royal guard detail led the American dignitaries down a brightly illuminated hallway, whose floor, ceiling and walls were constructed of processed avocactus plant fiber. After walking for thirty seconds in silence, they all stepped into an elevator and went up.

Most battle Hun-Vees had between four and seven decks; Nitra Khan's royal Hun-Vee consisted of fourteen. The hydrogen tanks, fuel-cells and electric motors were located on the lower decks. Daily operations, everyday life activities and official government business were carried out on the upper decks.

In the elevator, Bush and Cheney were crushed between the four young Hunzanians. They smelled of avocactus powder mixed with sweat.

Ah, the aromas of cinnamon and lemon, thought Bush. *She-Hun perfume. How exotic!* He inhaled the smell deeply, smiling. He was very high on black ice and was finally feeling relaxed, looking forward to seeing Nitra Khan. She was unique: a worthy military opponent and the best dominatrix he had ever submitted to.

Since Khan had become queen five years earlier, the frequent secret meetings in the desert – a mixture of high-level politics, big business and submissive sex – always proved to be exhilarating for the president.

Essentially, Negon Bush and Beem Cheney did not concern themselves with the state of the American nation. All

was well for these two men as long as the She-Hun oil wells kept bubbling black gold for export to them and the profits kept rolling in after the sale of it and other commodities to the American public through their many private corporations. Their contentment was also dependent on extremely active sex lives.

“Here we are,” said one of the warriors. The elevator had stopped and the door opened into a small antechamber decorated in gold. The four She-Huns showed the Americans to the door of the adjacent conference room and posted guard there. Bush and Cheney entered the room and saw Nitra Khan sitting on her stone throne, Boota Bleeda standing beside her.

Bush grinned, shamelessly, at Khan.

She glared at him, her eyes full of hate.

“My queen, you’re more beautiful than ever!” complimented Bush, honestly. He was obsessed with this dark-skinned, blond-haired woman.

“You look like your normal, pathetic self,” answered Khan. She spoke excellent English with only a slight Hunzanian accent. “Your nose looks longer than the last time I saw you. Plenty of lying to your voters lately, no doubt?”

Ignoring Khan’s insult, Bush replied, “Only to the poor ones. You know, the ones that tip the scales and keep me in power.”

“Whatever.” Khan pointed to Bleeda, “This is Boota Bleeda, my new ministress of war.”

Bush acknowledged Bleeda with a nod and introduced Cheney to the two women, who had never met him before.

“Sit,” Khan commanded the Americans, who took a seat across from her. Bleeda sat down in a chair to the left of her queen, facing the two men. All sat in silence, waiting for Khan to start the meeting.

Khan went straight to the point. “So, Negon, why did you contact me last week to call this meeting?”

Bush had difficulty concentrating on Khan’s words, as he could not tear his eyes away from Bleeda’s full bust. *My God, those are incredible tits*, Bush thought. Then, out loud, “Beem, Ms. Minister of War should carry a weapon’s license for those torpedoes, don’t you think!”

Cheney laughed out loud.

Khan had already told her colleague that Negon Bush was a masochistic, sexually obsessed pervert. Bleeda did not take much offense to the comment, but nonetheless answered throwing daggers with her eyes, “Thank you. Too bad for you that you’ll never get to see them in the flesh.”

Khan interrupted, “Mr. President, do you think we could discuss the business at hand?”

Bush, too much black ice coursing through his veins, could not avoid bragging. “Okay. Nitra, my queen, I have five hundred thousand, well-trained soldiers, the American Defenders of the Light, stationed in Las Vegas. They are armed with the latest weapons and technology. They are supported by eighty thousand Abrams M10-A10 battle tanks armed with pulse cannons and Bushfire missiles.” He paused and looked at Bleeda to drive his point home to the leader of the She-Hun army. “Even without calling in other troops stationed around the country, Las Vegas is militarily superior to Hunzania. Although a war would inflict some casualties on us, we would surely win convincingly.”

Khan was offended. She said curtly, “What is your point?”

“Nitra, the recent attacks on our agritubes and our outer tunnel systems make me look bad and must stop immediately, at least until next Friday.”

“Must?” replied Khan, indignantly. “You dare to give me

an order? Let me tell you about *our* forces. We have tens of thousands of battle Hun-Vees. We have tens of thousands of armored personnel carriers. Both have formidable mounted cannons and are womanned by one million warriors. I don't need to remind you about the fervor with which my soldiers fight to the death. Remember Phoenix in 2096," she paused for effect. In that battle the Americans suffered 200,000 KIAs and lost an additional 200,000 soldiers as prisoners of war to the outgunned She-Huns. "Not to mention our kamikaze battle boars! Besides goring and maiming, they don't complain as they detonate their Hun-C explosive charges against your battle tanks. I'm not so sure that you would be the victors."

Bush looked over at his general of the army, took a deep breath and changed gears; he realized it had been the black ice talking so far in the meeting. "Listen, Nitra, I apologize for getting off on the wrong foot. There is no need to be so confrontational here. I've come for a very different reason."

Khan fell silent, looking him in the eye with a complete lack of trust.

The president of the United States continued, "Beem and I have considered this very seriously. So here it is: How would you like to add an American city to your Queendom of Hun-zania?"

Nitra Khan looked at Bush, stunned into speechlessness. Bleeda's mouth dropped open.

Bush continued, aware that he had a captive audience. "That's right, Nitra. I'll allow you to take the whole of Las Vegas, along with all agritubes west of Lake Mead in a week's time. You will encounter some resistance from my soldiers, but nothing you can't handle. In return, you will assure me that when I relocate to New Vegas with my elite soldiers and my six million, hand-picked citizens, you'll allow us to live peacefully, *never* attacking us there."

“You’re only taking six million with you?” asked Khan, hesitantly, still unable to believe what she had just heard. “Only six million Americans from the sixty million that live in Las Vegas? You’re sacrificing a lot of your fellow citizens, Nekon. Why?”

“Because they’re worthless to me!” laughed Bush. He was now feeling so confident that he took out his platinum pillbox and snorted a crystal of black ice in front of the two women. He extended his hand towards the She-Huns, but they declined with a shake of the head.

Cheney followed his president’s lead, taking out his platinum hip flask, engraved with the image of the now-extinct bald eagle, and tipping his head backwards.

The two women looked at each other in disgust.

Bush continued, the faint line of black residue visible along his upper lip, “They’re worthless to me because they’re unproductive. They’re poor and ignorant! Besides, there are no longer sufficient natural resources for everyone in Las Vegas, only for the wealthy. These poor buggers will die soon enough anyway and must be sacrificed so that we, the chosen,” he looked at Cheney, and then back at Khan, “can survive in New Vegas. You can do what you want with them. That’s what our free market economy dictates.”

“Quite, Adolf.” Khan looked distastefully at Nekon Bush and his black ice moustache, the image of the famous 20th-century führer clear in her mind. “And what do you want in exchange, besides a peace accord?”

“You flatter me, Nitra. Now, I won’t lie to you. The infrastructure of the city is in very bad shape. It will cost you plenty of time, I’m talking years here, and money to fix it up. But I think in the long run, it’ll be worth it for you. Now,” Bush continued nonchalantly, “besides a *permanent* peace treaty, over the next five years you’ll send five billion barrels of crude di-

rectly to our HalliBush & Cheney oil refineries, as usual. The refining facilities are, of course, now located in New Vegas. And,” he reached in front of him and quickly cupped a breast, “we’ll meet secretly once a month for the next five years.”

Khan pushed Bush’s arm away and slapped him hard across the face, not saying anything. Bush winced in pain, excited in a masochistic way.

Cheney said “ouch” under his breath, turning his head away from Bush as he chuckled at Khan’s indifference to Bush’s authority.

Bleeda now spoke. “So, my queen, what do you think of this rodent’s offer?”

Khan considered Bush’s proposal for several seconds. “Well, Boota, that’s a Hunza of a lot of oil and a Hunza of a lot of time to spend with this desert maggot. But if we can have Las Vegas as a new, functioning, major She-Hun city on American soil within ten years, it might just be worth it.”

Bleeda looked at Bush, then at Cheney, then at Khan. It seemed to her that the Americans were genuine and the gains to the She-Huns would be significant. She recalled that five years ago, in exchange for She-Hun crude oil, Bush had handed over the biotechnology to develop the Rekol beetle, now fundamental to She-Hun society as a source of food, biomass, and raw material for clothing and processed construction materials. He had also granted them access to large tracts of land on which to grow avocactus plants and raise the beetles by the hundreds of millions.

Bleeda also considered that, as partial payment for that business transaction, Khan had been covertly meeting with Bush up to ten times a year since then to satisfy his masochistic thirst for her; it seemed to the mistress of war that the American president truly was uncontrollably obsessed with

the She-Hun leader and would do anything to preserve their treasonous sexual relationship.

Bleeda advised her queen, “As much as I dislike these men, they have always honored their business deals with us. If you are willing to do what is necessary, Nitra, I think we should accept their offer.”

Khan trusted Bleeda implicitly. Without hesitation, she extended her hand to Bush. “We accept your offer, Negon.” Even though Khan had been raped by this man, she was willing to sacrifice herself sexually for the good of her people.

Bush shook her hand and smiled broadly. “Thank you. This marks the beginning of a beautiful new relationship between our two nations.” He winked at her, “*And* between you and me.”

“Just shut up and sit down,” Khan commanded Bush, who enjoyed obeying her order. She spoke into her Hun-com, “Rush, bring in the wine.”

A moment later, a middle-aged, blubbery, pasty-white man entered the room; he pushed a serving cart set with a decanter, containing a greenish, opaque liquid, and four glasses. He parked the cart between the two women and the two men.

“Try not to break anything today, Rush,” ordered Khan sternly.

Cheney studied the man as he poured out the Rekol beetle wine. He asked, “Rush? Rush Limbaugh, the Clear Channel clone?” The media megacorporation, Clear Channel Global, Inc., commonly known simply as “Clear Channel,” had perfected the astronomically expensive science of exact-duplicate human cloning in 2038.

The servant stopped pouring and looked at Khan for permission to speak. She nodded approval. “Yes, Mr. Cheney, it’s me,” he answered, as he finished pouring the wine.

Bush said, “We thought you were killed in Phoenix back

in '96. It must be hell for you here, working so closely with lesbians. We miss your poignant, objective, well-researched comments about socialists, pot-smokers, gays, lesbians and democrats.”

“Well, thank you very much, Mr. President.”

Khan said, “Okay, boys, the reunion is over. Rush has gotten exactly what he deserved. That will be all, Rush.” As he turned and began to leave, she lifted up the dark brown loin cloth around his hips and squarely slapped his exposed left butt cheek, leaving a red impression of her hand on his naturally eggshell-white skin. His flesh wobbling like jello, the sound of the slap filled the room.

Khan toasted, as they all raised their glasses, “We agree to the terms you stated earlier, as witnessed by my ministress of war and your general of the army. Cheers!”

“Cheers,” said the others in unison.

“Ugh!” said Bush, sipping the green wine. “This stuff is foul.”

“Nonsense,” said Bleeda, “this is our finest vintage.”

Cheney asked, “But isn’t this made from Rekol beetle dung?”

“No,” informed Khan, “it’s made from half-digested avo-cactus pulp retrieved from their stomachs, which is then fermented for several weeks. It is a serious insult not to drink it on an occasion such as this one.”

Khan and Bleeda slowly sipped their wine, savoring each mouthful. Bush and Cheney gulped theirs down, grimacing at the taste.

“Okay,” stated Khan, “the deal is sealed with the drinking of the wine together. I will be in touch to discuss the details of our occupation of Las Vegas and the delivery of your oil. My guards will show you back to your tank now.”

“Wait a minute, Nitra,” Bush ordered immediately, “aren’t

you forgetting something? What about our secret summit meeting?”

“This has been a secret summit meeting, Negon. Surely you don’t expect us to have sex now, before we get Las Vegas?”

“Yes, of course I do. Our monthly S&M sessions start today, or the deal is off!”

Cheney patted him on the back and said, “Nice going, Negon. Maybe Boota could show *me* a good time.”

Bush added, “Sorry, Beem, but for today’s activities with Nitra I would like Boota to participate as well.”

Boota looked at Bush, surprised.

Cheney stood up and said, “No problem, Negon, you’re the boss. I’ll wait outside.” He got up and showed himself out of the room and into the antechamber, where he took a seat on a long bench across from the She-Hun guards. Cheney pulled out his flask and had another swig of Kentucky bourbon. He ogled all four women warriors, flashing them a smile. They scowled openly at him.

In the conference room, Nitra Khan looked at Boota Bleeda with professional detachment. Wordlessly, Bleeda walked over to a cabinet and retrieved a four-tailed whip made of tanned battle boar leather.

Bush was euphoric with expectation. He had to have frequent S&M sex, which helped to ease the subconscious guilt he felt about the Bush dynasty and its corporate and political misdeeds perpetrated over the previous two hundred years, including acts such as the utter neglect of the earth’s ecosystem that resulted in the ever-present global storm that plagued the planet and the illegal invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria – and Canada.

Khan turned to Bush and shrieked, “Down on your knees, desert maggot. Lick my boots, now!”

Without hesitation, Bush fell to the floor flat on his stomach. Khan lifted her foot, showing him the sole of her boot. Quietly moaning, Bush began to lick – fervently.

Danton Gore, Sexual Superman

Danton Gore and Ella Houston lay naked on the king-sized bed in their luxury suite at the five-star Embassy Hotel. It was the first time that Gore was escorting this plain-looking, sensitive, thirty-eight year old wife-of-a-general.

“Danton, that was incredible!” Houston gently traced circles on his chest. “All you did was touch my belly button, nothing else, and you brought me to two orgasms in just five minutes. How did you do that?” She lay back lazily on the bed, reached over to her purse, pulled a gin-and-tonic-flavored blue ice crystal out and popped the cherry-sized drug into her mouth. This dosage was the equivalent of ingesting two shots of hard alcohol and was sold by Anheuser-Bush Corporation, Inc., in a multitude of flavors.

“Well, I have a special connection with the universe’s energy. I channel it through me and then into your sacral chakra.”

“Sacral chakra?”

“Yes, one of your seven chakras. It’s the one that influences human sexual energy, located more or less behind your belly button.”

“I’ve heard of the chakras but I never really believed they could actually affect how I feel. Are you some kind of magic man?”

“No, I’m just very practiced at it,” he lied.

Gore looked away from her, going back in time and reliving the day he went hiking alone in the Primm Valley outside of Las Vegas at the age of seventeen. He recollected perfectly the disk-shaped aircraft zigzagging away from him in the

early evening desert sky at a tremendously high speed. It nearly vanished over a ridge on the horizon and then abruptly reversed direction and zoomed back towards him. The seventy-foot wide, snow-white metallic ship next hovered motionless fifty feet above him; he had to half-close his eyes to avoid being temporarily blinded. After several seconds in total silence, a small, pink cloud oozed out of the belly of the shining ship and slowly descended towards him. To his surprise, he did not feel afraid and did not run away from what could only be a UFO. He calmly watched as the cloud moved lower and lower, finally enveloping his entire body, every fiber of his being suffused by a strong, loving energy. He looked down at his warm hands and saw that his fingertips were glowing pink. His whole body began to tremble uncontrollably, and he fell, unconscious, to the ground. When he woke up fifteen minutes later, the UFO had gone. Soon after the event, he discovered that when he summoned it, he could use the alien gift of super sexual energy to bring women to intense, multiple orgasms with just a touch. He realized that the energy was both an all-loving, cosmic-spiritual energy as well as a carnal, love-making energy to be shared with as many women as possible. Gore had never told anyone about seeing the UFO; officially reporting a sighting was illegal, punishable by ten years' imprisonment.

“Danton, are you okay? You sort of drifted off there.”

Gore was pulled back into the present, “Yes, darling, I’m fine. Now, where were we?” he turned Ella onto her stomach and began to caress her buttocks. He looked at the tribal, geometric tattoo in the small of her back. This was a sex-reactive tattoo, the latest rage in America. As Gore continued to excite her, the dark red tattoo began to change colors.

Touching her again on her sacral chakra, she began to moan, and as she came a third time, screaming with pleasure,

her tattoo blinked furiously a bright yellow, the color it assumed at climax. “I think I’ve died and gone to heaven,” she panted, rolling from her stomach onto her back and staring at the ceiling, taking a moment to regain her breath. “Danton, that really is incredible. I’ve never had such a strong, loving orgasm before.”

“Well, if you keep seeing me, I can guarantee it won’t be your last. Now, tell me about your husband,” Gore knew that to be a good male escort, one had to be a good listener. “I mean, why did you call me?”

“Well, my husband, four-star general Albert Houston,” she began, happy to have a sympathetic ear on which to unload her unhappiness, “is hardly the loving husband I’d hoped for. Over the years we have grown very far apart, and lately I barely see him at all.”

“Why’s that?”

“It’s that damn New Vegas project. I mean, we’ll be moving there and all, but I’m quite happy here in our fifteen-room mansion. Albert, on the other hand, is bent on helping Bush make New Vegas a luxury fortress for him and his corporate and military buddies. Albert has been working there for weeks at a time, overseeing the construction of a massive military base at Jacob Lake.”

“At Jacob Lake? Twenty miles to the west of New Vegas?” Gore continued stimulating her sacral chakra, delivering her small bursts of sexual pleasure.

“Yes, something about a tank compound to protect the new city from attacks from the west. He said it was already ready for occupation by the Defenders of the Light and that the confidential story is that the city is also ready to be inhabited.” She paused for a minute. “Can we talk about something else, please?”

“Of course.” Gore quickly considered this information

because the official story was that New Vegas would not be inhabited for at least another month. Again the male escort, he said, “Why don’t you tell me what Albert does to you that you like the most, and I’ll improve on it.”

Ella Houston began to weep.

“What is it, darling?”

“He hasn’t touched me in more than a year. He’s developed some rather strange habits lately.”

“Like what?”

“Well, he’s worn black fish-net stockings under his combat fatigues for years. But yesterday, I noticed that my pink, silk-lace bra was gone from its drawer.” Gore’s client now openly cried.

“Shhhh. I’m here for you. You make sure that you call me again soon.”

Gore truly enjoyed being with this woman and satisfying her natural needs. More importantly, she had provided important information for the Free Vegas cause. When he contacted Free Vegas’s leader, Cloud Base, later in the evening about Nana Pavlov’s assassination plan, he would pass on the information regarding New Vegas’s status.

The Deal is Sealed

Beem Cheney sat on a bench in the antechamber outside the conference room where Bush, Khan and Bleeda were finishing up the secret summit meeting; he had not heard Bush scream in masochistic pleasure-pain for several minutes. The American vice president continued making eyes at the She-Hun guards posted on the doorway. They shunned him.

Inside the room, Queen Nitra Khan exclaimed triumphantly, “That’s it Boota! Las Vegas is now officially ours.

A disgusting, debasing way to get it, but well worth it for our Sisterhood.”

Bush was looking up at Khan, smiling, indifferent to the pain caused by the welts that covered his back. Finally, he asked, “Was it as good for you as it was for me?”

Khan looked down at Bush on the floor and ordered, “Get the Hunza off my rig! Now!”

Saturday
September 3, 2101 A.D.

Operation Smoke Out

It was twelve o'clock, noon. One hundred high-ranking military, intelligence, Secret Service, and civic police force leaders had packed into the conference room at the Department of Homeland Security, located in the western wing of the House of Light. Nekon Bush ran the governmental affairs of the nation from this building, located in the District of Power of Las Vegas, a one square-mile sector of city level 28.

The president entered the room and sat down at the head of the table, next to Beem Cheney. Cheney, like Bush, came from a powerful family dynasty and shared Bush's social and economic beliefs and goals, excepting that he was not as devoted and fanatical a Christian as the president. These two families had worked closely together in business and government for one hundred years. In 2101 A.D., the two men owned dozens of oil production, weapons manufacturing, food and beverage production and distribution, and private equity investment corporations, whose stock was traded on the open market worldwide. International travel had all but ceased in the 22nd century due to exorbitant costs and extreme risk, however, international economic activity continued prolifically across fiber-optic cables that ran underground and under ocean waters; tens of thousands of satellites orbited the Earth uselessly, rendered inoperable by the extreme electrical activity of the global storms circling the planet.

Cheney leaned towards Bush and inconspicuously handed the president a small pillbox. "This is from a drug seizure this morning. It's primo stuff," he winked at his friend.

Bush opened the container, withdrew a black ice crystal, pulled a tissue out of his uniform, held it in front of his face

and inhaled the drug covertly. Content, he leaned back in his chair. “Thanks, Beem,” said Bush quietly, grinning and glassy-eyed. He was unable to sit through meetings like this without being high.

“You’re welcome,” said Cheney, with a heavy tongue. Despite the lunchtime hour, he already stank of bourbon.

Bush adjusted the microphone on the table in front of him, tapping it to test the sound. The room fell into silence.

“Lady and Gentlemen,” began Bush, still seated, “as you all know, the terrorist organization Free Vegas has become increasingly vocal in its opposition to my administration in recent months. We’re now talking about over eighty thousand suspected members. They have formed tens of thousands of autonomous terrorist cells. These cells don’t know one another and have very limited direct communication with one another. They operate independently right up until they commit a terrorist act.” Bush took a sip of water and continued. “Their leader is known as ‘Cloud Base,’ but nobody knows his true identity. The primary objective of these tree-huggers is to remove me from office by any means necessary, after which they’ll incite a revolution, hoping to radically reform American society and free market economy. Free Vegas seems to enjoy support throughout the entire population. People with a simple nature tend to sympathize with these greeno-commies. It is of the utmost importance that we destroy this organization before the move to New Vegas. Next Wednesday, we will carry out Operation Smoke Out, which will call on these terrorists to start the revolution. When the Free Vegas revolutionaries answer this call, you and your men will be waiting for them. They will be exterminated,” Bush slammed his fist down on the table, “like the vile bugs that they are!”

The room broke into thunderous applause. Bush paused, looking to his right where Special Agent Sadina Rice sat. She

nervously returned his gaze. Bush continued, "I now present to you all Special Agent Sadina Rice, on assignment with the Department of Homeland Security. Special Agent Rice will be commanding the operation. Ms. Rice, why don't you stand up and be recognized."

Sadina Rice, the only woman in attendance, stood up. Immediately, appreciative whistles sounded from around the room, including one from Cheney. She was an African-American beauty, with full breasts and long, slender legs. She wore a Department of Homeland Security uniform, consisting of a bright blue, tight-fitting jacket and skirt, along with a white blouse. Her skin was the color of milk chocolate. She wore her medium-length, loose-curl, black hair in a stylish, contemporary coiffure.

Sadina Rice looked around the room, confidently making eye contact with her peers gathered there, having overcome the nervousness she had felt only moments before. She was driven by a strong desire to attain power and influence within the government and private sectors.

"You may not all know of Ms. Rice," explained Bush, "however, she has been a valued advisor to me for the last eighteen months. Although she's only twenty-eight, she's being considered seriously to fill the office of secretary of defense, currently vacant due to the unfortunate heart attack suffered by the previous appointee."

Rice sat down again, and despite her youth radiated authority and competence out to the gathered crowd. Her family, descended from the same lineage as that of the famous 21st-century female politician, had been, of course, commercially and politically involved with the Bushes and the Cheneys for the previous seventy years. Negon Bush, Beem Cheney and Sadina Rice all wanted to lead America's military and economic domination of the globe, and in the process, as private

citizens, earn billions of dollars through their own privately-owned corporations.

Bush said, “And now, please give your attention to Special Agent Rice.”

All eyes were now on Sadina Rice, who began speaking into her microphone. “Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you all,” Rice looked around the room, “for coming and for your undivided attention. I don’t need to remind you that what you’re about to hear is top secret. Repeating it to anyone is treason and punishable by death. Operation Smoke Out will take place next Wednesday, four days from now, at precisely eight o’clock in the evening. One of the president’s clones will enter the Dark Temple, a well-known sex club located on Level XXX—” Rice paused for a few seconds, interrupted by whispered commentaries that ran through the room.

“Ahem,” Rice cleared her throat and resumed, “President Bush has never, himself, of course, personally visited this establishment.”

Bush smiled, staring at the ceiling and recalling his most recent visit to the Dark Temple, only two nights before.

Rice continued, “Based on information gathered during extensive intelligence operations carried out over the last twelve months, we are quite certain that an assassination attempt on the president will take place in the Dark Temple on Wednesday night. The terrorists will think that they’ve killed the real president, and soon after that will call their revolutionaries to arms. That’s when we’ll arrest or kill the as yet unknown terrorists, including their leader, Cloud Base.”

Rice took a few seconds to look around the room, confidence gushing from her countenance – it was a clever plan that she had devised herself and she was proud of it. All eyes were still on her; her listeners were completely mesmerized.

“We will have total control of all media in the city. Most,

if not all, revolutionary cells will hit the streets and be eliminated without the public's knowledge. We'll simply attribute any violence to gang wars. You're to arrest anyone helping the terrorists as well. If we work together and maintain excellent communication, Operation Smoke Out will be executed to a high rate of success. Thank you for your time. I now present you the general of the army, our commanding officer of the four hundred thousand Defenders of the Light who will be fighting on Wednesday night, five-star General Beem Cheney." Rice turned and nodded to Cheney, sitting a few places away from her.

Cheney looked solemnly around the room and bellowed into the microphone on the table in front of him, in a loud, authoritative voice, "Soldiers!" Bush tilted his head and sniffed at the air, smelling bourbon. "Not a word to anyone outside this room! Not one word! I will personally execute as a traitor anyone that violates this order!" he slammed his open hand on the table and began to stand up.

Rising, Cheney swayed noticeably to the right. Bush looked at him and giggled under his breath. The general of the army continued, without using his microphone. "Defenders of the Light! You *are* the Elite Republican Guard. We *will* give these sub-human socialists the ass-kicking of their lives! Show no mercy!" Cheney grinned maniacally, sat down and nodded to Rice.

Sadina Rice continued from her chair, "Gentlemen, the complete battle plan is posted on the military's restricted access network," she informed them. "Feel free to contact me for any further explanations or clarifications. Our final meeting will be held here on Wednesday morning, at eleven thirty sharp. See you all then."

The gathered officers and officials spoke among themselves and then slowly filed out of the conference room. Cheney said goodbye to Bush and, after a long morning,

headed off to a five-star hotel for a prearranged love tryst with a twenty-year-old intern. Cheney had become even more of a womanizer since his wife's death five years earlier.

Bush turned to Rice. "Nice job, sexy Sadie," he complimented, brushing his fingers along the hemline of her skirt. "Why don't you come and have a late lunch with me at my art museum in a few hours?"

"Actually, sir, I'm quite busy," she refused him.

"Sadina, really, that was not a request."

Hunzania – Capital City of the She-Huns

Nitra Khan woke up in her royal palace, whose facade looked onto the main square of the underground city of Hunzania. Located in the former Mexican province of Chihuahua, near the old cities of El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico, Hunzania was the capital city of the Queendom of Hunzania.

Boota Bleeda, one of Khan's current lovers, lay on the bed next to her, their bodies lit by burning candles made of avocactus wax.

It was one o'clock. The two She-Huns had been resting for several hours since arriving home after the long return journey from the previous evening's meeting with the Americans.

"How are you feeling, Nitra?" Bleeda asked tenderly, knowing that her queen was exhausted after having met with her rapist. She gently massaged avocactus oil on Khan's neck and shoulders.

"I'm okay, thanks for asking," the queen replied, giving Boota a quick kiss on the mouth. "Another ten showers and I will have washed the stink of that swine, Bush, off of me." Both women laughed lightly.

Bleeda finished giving Khan her massage, stood up, opened the heavy curtains and walked out to the bedroom bal-

cony. Khan lazily got out of bed and joined her. They gazed down onto the open square one hundred and fifty feet below them. The palace occupied thirty stories on the five hundred-foot long, southern side of the square. All city and national government offices were housed in the lower ten floors of the palace; Khan's personal apartments for herself, her extended family and close friends occupied the upper twenty floors.

Thousands of avocactus oil lamps hung on the walls and ceiling of the huge cavern outside, providing ample light for the women below to carry out their activities. In the square below, thousands of women, both military and civilian, milled about, shopping in the market stalls, eating and drinking on terraces and generally socializing; no men were present there among them in the social hub of the city.

Khan said a silent prayer to the 150-foot tall marble statue of Hunza, the She-Hun goddess, that stood in the center of the square. This two-headed, four-armed statue represented Mother Earth. Each head had two faces, one in front and one in back. The four faces wore the expressions of victory in battle, knowledge, harmony with nature, and defiance of patriarchy. In her four hands, Hunza held a submachine gun, a stone tablet bearing the ten Hunzanian commandments, an avocactus plant and a naked man. The man was alive and dangled, writhing, upside down, held by his ankle in two of Hunza's giant fingers. Carved into the base of the statue in large, golden letters were the words, "*Hunza, Our Goddess and Mother Earth, Says: Men, We Keep Them Down!*" Glowing, red molten lava flowed from the vagina of the giant representation of the goddess and down into a trough cut into the floor.

Khan finished praying and looked at Bleeda, standing beside her. "Boota, earlier this morning Bush sent a message that he will send us the security codes to access Las Vegas via the sewer system upon delivery of his crude oil next Saturday.

Since he has promised only minimal military resistance, we can take Las Vegas with very light casualties. We will then have a northern outpost city from which we can expand our queendom. But I'm a bit concerned that if we respect our agreement and leave him alone in New Vegas for too long, he'll become so strong there that we'll never be able to conquer him and all of America."

Bleeda thought for a moment and replied, "Don't worry, my queen. We'll just stick to Operation Lick Bush and take Las Vegas quickly, suffering only light losses. Once we get set up there with several million of our sisters in residence, we can formulate our next move. By then, Professor Wrjinn should have completed all testing on our latest living weapons."

Leaning on the balcony railing, Khan mulled it over in her mind. "Okay, Boota, maybe you're right. Our future after we take Las Vegas does depend on Professor Wrjinn and her newest living weapons. I'll just have to be patient – and faithful," the queen of the She-Huns quickly glanced down at the statue of Hunza. She looked at Bleeda once again. "Have you received an update on the project status lately?"

"Yes, she gave me one yesterday. She'll call me later today to confirm a test to be held this evening for your viewing. So far, she has been right on schedule and I don't anticipate any delays."

"Excellent." Khan now looked hard out at the statue of her goddess. "Finally, Hunza will lead the way to a matriarchal society in North America for the first time since the Native Indians were exterminated by the immigrant Western Europeans."

"So be it, my queen," agreed the She-Hun minstress of war. "Men, we keep them down!" declared Bleeda, as she made a cutting scissors movement with her right index and middle fingers, symbolizing the castration of all men.

Khan spoke the ritualistic reply, “Men, we keep them down!” as she, too, made the symbolic cutting gesture with her fingers. She added, “I look forward to the day that I wear Negon Bush’s diamond-encrusted, shrunken family jewels on a golden chain around my neck!” She looked passionately into her war ministress’s eyes.

The two women left the balcony and went back into the bedroom. As they were getting dressed to eat lunch, Bleeda received a call on her Hun-com. “Yes. Very good. See you in ten minutes,” she ended the call. “That was Professor Wrjinn. She’ll be joining us for lunch to give you a project update in person.”

“Very good,” replied Khan. They left the bedroom, famished, and went to Khan’s private dining room on the floor below.

Five minutes later, Khan and Bleeda were gorging themselves on a buffet of She-Hun delicacies spread out on a large dining room table. A whole, twenty-pound, roasted Rekol beetle sat on a golden platter garnished with deep-fried avocactus chips. Bleeda served herself a one-pound piece of meat and a large portion of steaming, pink, mashed avocactus puree flavored with battle boar butter.

“This is delicious,” Bleeda said, her mouth full, eating with her hands, grease running down her chin. This Rekol beetle meat was the finest available; living in the open desert feeding on avocactus fruits and other invertebrates, these giant insects were mass-processed on factory Hun-Vees specially equipped against the global storm. It was common for these mobile factories to handle 100,000 beetles each per month. Spending months at a time in the open desert, their crews of 500 She-Hun workers visited the capital city of Hunzania only three or four times a year.

Khan refilled their glasses with wine and poured a third

for Professor Wrijinn. Bleeda immediately slurped some down, spilling the greenish liquid on the table.

“Good afternoon my queen,” Wrijinn, the head-sister of the University of Hunzania, entered and greeted Khan. “Sister minstress of war,” she nodded to Bleeda and sat down at the table. Her Hunzanian accent denoted exceptional education and breeding.

Bleeda grunted a hello, as she rapidly crammed food into her mouth, slurping sounds filling the room. She had removed her armor breastplate to eat in comfort; her full breasts threatened to explode out of her bullet-proof corset and onto the table.

Khan lifted her glass. “To Hunza!”

Bleeda stopped gorging, picked up her wine glass and toasted, “To Hunza!”

“To Hunza, and to my queen!” praised Wrijinn, glass raised.

Wrijinn’s blue eyes burned intelligently in her dark, angular, Asian face. In her mid-sixties, her blond hair had turned almost completely silver. She wore a long coat made of tanned battle boar hide. The Hunzanian runes representing power and knowledge adorned her garment.

Professor Nara Wrijinn was the Hunzanian minstress of bioengineering. During her thirty-year career, she had perfected the Rekol beetle, the avocactus plant and the battle boar – all resulting from oil- and sex-purchased American biogenetics techniques and data. She had spent years working directly with plants and animals in the storm-beaten desert aboard her bioengineering Hun-Vee, laden with cutting-edge American laboratory equipment.

Wrijinn was also the modern mother of the decades-old She-Hun female parthenogenesis program. Her contributions to earlier She-Hun scientific work now allowed this race of

women to procreate perfect, female She-Hun babies without any DNA contribution from male sperm. Mixing the DNA of a She-Hun mother-to-be with that of female Huns buried in the 5th century, Wrjinn was responsible for the fearsome race of women-warriors that aimed to conquer America, and one day, the entire world.

Khan's personal servant, the captured Clear Channel clone Rush Limbaugh, entered the room carrying another bowl of avocactus puree and put it on the table, near Bleeda. His gaze lowered, he bowed and wordlessly left the room.

Bleeda served herself another large piece of roasted Rekol beetle meat and began to devour it.

"Boota, leave some for us!" joked Khan.

Bleeda gesticulated with her grease-covered hands as she spoke, "So, Professor Wrjinn, how are you coming along with our newest living weapons?"

Wrjinn responded confidently, "That's why I've come today. Everything has been going on schedule and I would like to invite you both to stop by my lab this evening at six o'clock to witness a live demonstration."

Limbaugh entered the room again, carrying a clay carafe on a serving tray. It contained "mordac," a stimulating, endorphin-rich tincture produced from a gland found in the Rekol beetle brain. This liquid was incredibly labor intensive to produce, and the carafe held the result of 50,000 beetle brains. He poured out three small glasses and placed them in front of the seated women. As he replaced the stopper in the carafe, it slipped from his hand and the bottle fell to the floor, smashing into pieces.

"Rush!" screamed Khan. "You imbecile! That bottle represented two thousand woman-hours of work. You will make up those hours yourself. You won't have a free day for years to come!"

Limbaugh said nothing for a few seconds, drilling his stare into his master's eyes. He could not help himself. The words, "Fuck you, you pagan, lesbian bitch," slowly issued forth from his lips.

Khan was stunned into silence. She could not believe this lowly man-servant had just demonstrated such insolence.

"Nitra, I think you should bring this foul-mouthed, inept servant along with you tonight," suggested Wrjinn. "It will fulfill his fate nicely."

"Excellent idea, professor. We'll see you at six o'clock, sharp."

The Sunlight District

Danton Gore checked the time as he parked his Mustang in front of his parents' house; it was two o'clock in the afternoon. The house was located on city level 22, in the Sunlight District of Las Vegas. Gore unbuckled his seat belt and briefly considered the danger that he might be putting his parents in; they had no idea that he was a member of Free Vegas. He dismissed all doubts and got out of the car, he wanted to see his parents – this might be the last time he ever did so in his life.

As Gore closed the car door, he sniffed at the air; even in this part of the city, which had the best ventilation system in Las Vegas, he could smell the lingering stink of automobile exhaust gases. More than 30 million vehicles running on internal combustion engines travelled throughout the underground metropolis on a daily basis. He slowly shook his head from side to side. *It's crazy to allow vehicles that spew air pollution to operate in an underground city*, he thought. *Our air is even worse than the Los Angeles smog early last century. Will those bastards Negon Bush and Beem Cheney ever have enough money from oil and automobile- and tire-production profits?*

Gore wore the bright green uniform of the Tunnels Protection Division of the Defenders of the Light, a special military unit originally tasked to defend the colossal tunnel system that was being constructed to connect the four American cities to one another. When that project was abandoned due to excessive cost in 2045, soldiers were stationed within individual cities. Domestic travel between them was infrequent, requiring expensive vehicles specially designed to withstand the ultra-high winds common in open terrain, and even in those travel on the nation's tattered highways was often a mortal undertaking.

Captain Gore patrolled the "southeast quadrant" of the extensive tunnel system that served as the transportation network of Las Vegas. Measuring ten miles by ten miles, his quadrant included 10,000 miles of connecting tunnels located on city levels 1 down to 150.

Danton Gore walked up the short garden path to the front door of the lower upper-class house. The quiet, residential street was brightly lit by lamps emitting synthesized solar radiation that hung from the concrete ceiling thirty feet above. Green gardens dotted the easements between the private houses and small apartment buildings.

Bridget DiCaprio-Gore, an attractive, sixty-year old woman and descendant of the famous, environmentally-conscious Leonard DiCaprio, had been expecting her son. Waiting by the front door, she opened it and walked outside a few steps, giving him a big hug. "Danton, it's so nice to see you. It's been way too long."

Richard Gore also came out of the house and gave his son an awkward hug. He said, "What's it been? Since Independence Day, hasn't it? You should come around and see your mother more often. You're her only child, remember."

"Yeah, I know, dad. It's been hectic at work and stuff." He

put his arms around both his parents and walked them up the path and into the house.

The family of three sat down in the living room. Gore admired a one-inch wide beam of sunlight that shone down from the ceiling onto a small, cut, crystal ball that sat on a coffee table in the middle of the room; the light was refracted everywhere, the crystal ball a small, glowing sun.

“Nice sun today, don’t you think?” Gore commented to his mother, who sat next to him on the couch sipping a bottle of RiceWater filtered water. He had a sip of his bottled BushCoke filtered water. Both brands were owned, through subsidiaries, by ConAg Rice, Inc.

“Yes, yes,” she agreed. “We’ve been getting up to almost two full hours of bright sunlight every day for the last five days!”

Richard Gore commented, “Yeah, with all the bullshit at my government contractor job, at least we get to live in the Sunlight District of town.” In the Sunlight District, city levels 1 to 30, every house had a beam of sunlight projected into it like the one in the Gores’ living room. The sunlight originated above the city, in nature, and was directed throughout this district via a complex system of tunnels, tubes and mirrors. Only eight million of Las Vegas’s sixty million citizens saw a beam of actual sunlight on a regular basis.

The family finished their drinks. Bridget went to the kitchen to get the food she had prepared and they all sat down at the dining room table.

“The butcher had excellent suckling meatballs today,” she said, placing a platter of the genetically-modified guinea pig on the table. Known as a “meatball,” this animal was mass-produced in large, tubular underground farms called “agritubes.” Meatballs weighed up to ninety pounds and had replaced beef, chicken and pork as the main source of meat in America.

“Light meat or dark, son?”

“A little of both, please. Thanks, mom.” She caringly served him the nicest pieces on the platter. She finished serving her husband and herself and they all began to eat.

“So, son, how is everything going at work? Why are you wearing your uniform?” asked Gore’s father.

“Well, I just finished an early morning shift. It’s been quite eventful lately. Today, we had a near-miss with a Hun-Vee that was after the shipment of McMeatball’s product I was escorting. But, before they penetrated the tunnel, one of our tank divisions destroyed it up on the surface.”

“Oh my God!” exclaimed Bridget Gore, her voice laden with concern.

“Don’t worry, mom. It was nothing. We’re well trained and well equipped.”

“Can’t you apply for that job as a psychology professor again? Surely, they can put your university degrees to good use.”

“Mom, you know that no universities in the city are hiring due to government funding cuts.”

Richard Gore looked at his wife, but continued on anyway, “Son, what you’re telling me supports what I’ve heard lately. People are saying that for the last two months small bands of She-Huns have been attacking facilities located in the outer tunnel rings of Las Vegas with increased frequency. What do you think about that?”

Danton Gore lightly put his hand on top of his mother’s to offer comfort. “It seems like they’re testing us. Many think they’re building up to a much bigger attack in the near future. But, come on, let’s talk about something else.”

Bridget shook her head as she served the men more fresh vegetables, also cultivated in the agritubes.

“Dad, how’s your work going?” Gore looked at his father, who had bags under his eyes; he was exhausted.

“Not so well,” replied the older Gore, who worked for Climate Control Corporation, a private company owned by Nekon Bush and Beem Cheney.

Richard Gore was the director of the Air Circulation Systems Division of Climate Control, whose main client was the federal government.

Danton Gore asked, “Why not? What’s been going on lately? I must admit, dad, you look pretty run down.”

“Thanks a lot, son!” the elder Gore jokingly glared at his son. “Seriously though, I know it. I’ve been very frustrated recently. Most of my people have been reassigned to work in New Vegas. It seems like they don’t give a rat’s ass about what happens here in Las Vegas anymore.”

“Really?” asked Danton Gore, feigning surprise, recalling what Ella Houston had told him about the early move of the elite to New Vegas the day before. He could not say anything about it to his parents; they did not know either that he was a member of Free Vegas or a paid, male escort.

“Who knows? They must be behind on their schedule. You know that the wealthy who will be living there won’t tolerate delays. All I know is that my job is virtually impossible. I’m understaffed, under funded and I have no spare parts for routine maintenance. Only yesterday, five hundred people died of a lack of a fresh oxygen supply down on city level 129.”

“Those poor bastards,” commented Danton Gore. “How many people live down there these days, anyway?”

“At last count, I’m responsible for every aspect of the air circulation system for three million prisoners living on city levels 148, 149 and 150 and thirty-six million poor and destitute living in slum conditions between city levels 101 and 147.

And I only have a staff of ten thousand to maintain and operate the system in my fifty city levels.”

“Only ten thousand? Are you serious? How many do you need?”

Richard Gore sighed and replied, “I need at least fifteen thousand, if not twenty, to avoid incidents like the one yesterday. But, our beloved President Bush, who has raised taxes on the lower and middle classes every year for the last ten years, has cut the government funding to his own company.”

“Climate Control?” asked Danton Gore.

“Yeah, Climate Control. My division of the company has taken a budget hit of a fifty percent reduction in operating capital. Everyone knows that the money has been diverted to defense contracts, which earn his companies much higher-percent profits on every government dollar spent.”

“He really is a bottom-line, profit-margin-rules-all bastard,” said Danton Gore. “Someone should throw him and his good old white boys in jail down there on city level 150. Then we’ll see how they like living on the Guantanamo Level forever, never even having had a trial.”

“Don’t say things like that, Danton,” chastised his mother. “You know what happened to my parents. Just do your job and don’t make any waves.” Bridget Gore got nervous whenever her son spoke badly of the government. “Why don’t you settle down with a nice girl? It seems you have a different one every few months.”

Eight years earlier, Bridget’s mother and father had been arrested by the Defenders of the Light during a public protest against Negon Bush’s environmental policies – in 2093 the Bush dynasty was still refusing to acknowledge that massive air pollution and global warming were causes for concern and that the formation of the global storm system and the hundreds of localized systems that plagued the planet were simply the

result of Mother Nature's natural course of events. Bridget had not heard from her parents since that day, and unknown to her their disappearance is what had motivated her son to join Free Vegas.

"Danton is right!" exclaimed Richard Gore. "Negon Bush is a profit-driven tyrant. Every year, he and his colleagues get richer and richer and everyone else gets poorer and poorer. The middle class in America has disappeared completely. At work, it seems as if Las Vegas is considered to be a thing of the past. Bush seems to be putting all of his resources into New Vegas."

"Well, Richard, once the six million people move to New Vegas, I'm sure things will improve for us here in Las Vegas. We'll have more maintenance workers here in town and Bush promised that profits from the selling of the houses of emigrants to New Vegas will be given directly to the city government. Then those of us that remain here in Las Vegas will have a much better life."

"Ah, always the optimist, my love," said Richard Gore, leaning over and giving his wife a kiss. "But you know every time that man opens his mouth, only shit speweth forth."

"Okay," said Danton Gore, laughing lightly, "let's talk about something less depressing."

The three Gores finished their meal and retired to the living room once again.

"Ah!" exclaimed Bridget, pointing to the beam of light and glowing crystal ball on the coffee table. "Look at that sunlight. It hasn't been so bright so often in weeks. It must be a good omen!"

Lunch with a Letch

Sadina Rice checked in at the guard's station outside the fence

line of Nekon Bush's private mansion, located on city level 1. The estate covered one hundred acres and consisted of a forty-room, 20,000-square-foot Victorian mansion, a four-acre lake and acres upon acres of gardens, woodlands and meadows. In several areas of the estate, the clear, high-strength plastic ceiling could be opened, allowing fresh air and direct sunlight to enter from the Earth's surface above in good weather.

A butler showed Rice into the main foyer of the house. He led her down a hallway and into Bush's sprawling art studio. When inspired, the president spent as many as twenty hours a week painting, sculpting and drawing in the 2,000-square-foot room, lit by natural light that entered through the transparent roof. Unlike any of his ancestors, and very much like Adolf Hitler, Nekon Bush fancied himself a capable man of the fine arts.

The butler led Rice out of the art studio and into Bush's private art museum. The president awaited her at a beautiful, polished, Brazilian ipê-wood table that could easily seat twenty people. An entire acre of rainforest had been cleared to log the one tree from which the lumber to make this table had been milled.

Bush was singing the refrain of a contemporary popular song to himself, in anticipation of the afternoon's meeting with his female advisor.

She's Miss Extreme
A nightmare and a dream
She's Hell and Heaven
She's so cute and she's so mean

Rice walked over to the elevated platform where the president sat, situated in the middle of the 4,000-square-foot museum. This cavernous space, also lit by natural daylight,

housed Bush's private art collection. Hundreds of paintings from all epochs of art hung on the walls: ancient cave paintings, prehistoric tribal paintings from around the world, pre-renaissance, Picasso, Monet, Durer, Michelangelo and Warhol. Sculptures ranging from Hellenistic Greek to relatively modern French, such as Niki de Saint-Phalle, stood all around the room. Bush bought anything he could get his hands on, as long as his advisors assured him it was expensive and rare. Rice noticed that at least a dozen pieces were stacked near the door, ready for shipment to New Vegas.

Bush stopped his singing. "Ah, hello, Ms. Rice. How good of you to come," the president welcomed her, as she climbed the short staircase up to the table and chairs and took a seat.

"Thank you, sir. You have added some new pieces since the last time I was here. The gallery looks great." She wanted to compliment him as much as possible, as she was unsure as to why he had asked her here today. She hoped it was to discuss Operation Smoke Out in more detail, and not to engage her as his dominatrix. Although she knew serving in this capacity was one of the main factors in her rapid rise up the power brokers' ladder, she simply did not feel up to the task today.

"Thank you," responded Bush mechanically. He clapped his hands once, and called out, "Charles, bring the champagne."

A fifty-year old man wearing a fashionable tuxedo climbed the platform and served the two politicians champagne in expensive, Hungarian-crystal flutes. Bush employed twenty-six house servants, including four cooks and a pastry chef, who were available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Their salaries were covered under the Homeland Security budget, as all employees were confirmed non-terrorists; the art in the museum, under national defense, as the president had

to maintain a positive state of mind to carry out his military duties as the commander in chief.

“Thank you, Charles,” said Bush.

“You’re welcome, Mr. President.” He turned to Rice and said, “Welcome, Ms. Rice,” the waiter greeted her enthusiastically as he finished serving the champagne and put it into a bucket beside Bush. He smiled at them both and rubbed his hands together. “Today’s menu will consist of four courses. We’ll start with lobster salad, followed by roast pheasant and chestnut dumplings. Next, we have Big Macs filled with eighty-year old Russian caviar. And finally, for dessert, home-made chocolate mousse.”

“Sounds delicious. Bring it on!” Bush raised his glass and toasted Rice, “To you, Sadina. It’s hard to believe that only eighteen months ago you were just an entry-level assistant to my public relations officer, and now you’re on the brink of becoming one of my cabinet members as the secretary of defense.”

“Thank you, Mr. President. Soon enough, I hope to truly be a household name.” They clinked their glasses and Rice swallowed a small mouthful of the fine champagne, a product of Bush’s private agritubes. The president downed his entire glass in one, noisy gulp.

Bush refilled his glass. “Do you remember the first time we met?” He continued narrating the story. “It was at a party you helped organize to publicize my victory on the complete elimination of federal funding for local public libraries and television. I remember we spent the money we saved on that legislation to increase our military presence to protect oil interests in Africa. HalliBush & Cheney has recorded record sales there since then.”

“Of course I remember, sir. Even with my family connections, I felt incredibly lucky to meet you personally back then

as only a twenty-six year old college graduate with a degree in psychology and no political experience.”

“And you remember that I called you the next day and invited you to a meeting at the House of Light?”

Rice responded, “Of course. I can tell you now that I would like to think I’ve won your respect since then because I’m a competent politician, and not just because I’m your favorite dominatrix.”

“Of course, Sadie,” Bush spoke to her chest, laughing. He recalled how he had researched her file that first night after meeting her and then invited her to the meeting the following day after discovering that she had completed a six-month course at the Las Vegas Dominatrix School. Having finished in the top five percent of her class – passing her practical exams in Torture Techniques and Mental Cruelty and Domination in Everyday Situations with flying colors – Bush had known that he had to meet her. He later found out that she had gained much practical experience working weekends for fun on Level XXX.

When first considering her to lead Operation Smoke Out several months earlier, he gave her a job in the Department of Homeland Security and provided her with a cover personality. Since that time, he had kept her out of the media and out of the public eye to conceal her true identity from Free Vegas.

Charles, the waiter, appeared again, carrying a small silver bowl filled with lobster salad in one hand and a small garden salad in the other. He placed the garden salad in front of Rice first, and then served the president the lobster salad.

Bush began to inhale the white, lumpy stuff on his plate. “Did you know this canned lobster is fifty years old?” Bush asked Rice. He continued before she could answer. “My grandfather had several thousand cans frozen in liquid nitrogen. I’m the only man in the world who can eat lobster. Quite

a feeling of power to eat an extinct animal fifty years after its disappearance from the face of the Earth, I can tell you.” A large piece of lobster fell out of his mouth and onto the now-extinct, tropical ipê-wood table.

“Quite.” Rice watched him eat. He shoved enormous quantities of food into his mouth and made loud smacking and slurping noises as he chewed and swallowed. She knew no one that ate as repulsively as he did. Apart from this habit, his social skills were impeccable. Aside from his long nose, Bush was a good looking, fit man, who dressed well and took pride in his appearance.

Rice looked past Bush, at the original Picasso painting that hung on the wall behind him, *The Crying Woman*. Feeling the emotion of the painting, she again hoped that this lunch meeting would not end in sexual activity.

Bush noticed that Rice looked a bit uneasy and had not touched her food. “What’s wrong, Sadina,” he spoke with his mouth full, a piece of lobster meat dangling down his chin, “don’t you like your salad? It’s the good stuff, organic produce from my personal agritubes. Not the pesticide- and chemical-fertilizer-laced poison we sell to the masses through ConAg Rice, Inc.” Bush sat on the board of directors of the Sadina Rice-owned agricultural-products corporate behemoth.

“I know that, sir. It’s just that there are so many things on my mind for Wednesday,” responded Rice. “I had a late breakfast, and to be honest, I would rather be at work right now.”

Bush winked at her. “Operation Smoke Out will be a complete success, Sadina. After the move to New Vegas, we won’t have any more problems with these Free Vegas greeno terrorists. Then, I will appoint you as the U.S. secretary of defense.”

Rice smiled, emotionally indifferent to the price she had to pay to attain such a position in Bush’s cabinet.

Bush finished his enormous serving, gulped down his last

mouthful of champagne, and belched loudly. Immediately, Charles appeared and cleared both plates. Two other waiters carried in the next course on a large, silver platter – a whole, roasted pheasant, its feathers arranged decoratively around it.

“I hope you like this, Sadie, I shot it myself on my private hunting range.” Apart from fresh, organic vegetables, the upper classes in America ate gourmet-quality meats raised in private agritubes. The vast majority of Americans, on the other hand, barely subsisted on low-quality meatball meat and frozen vegetables sold by ConAg Rice, Inc. The traditional high-fat, high-sugar McMeatball’s restaurant food enjoyed widespread popularity, resulting simultaneously in both malnutrition and obesity all across the nation.

Without offering Rice anything, Bush grabbed a pheasant leg and started to devour it. Between mouthfuls, he asked, “Have you had sex yet with the target we decided on?”

“Yes, as necessary,” Rice answered a bit defensively; she could not determine with what meaning Bush was now looking at her.

“Oh, you don’t have to defend yourself. It doesn’t bother me,” Bush said, honestly. “But, tell me then, why does he want to kill me?”

“His grandparents were detained and executed without due process of law.”

“Without due process is a necessary thing in America, despite what the Constitution guarantees. From lynching to vigilanteism to the Patriot Act of early last century.”

Bush once again dug in to his food, swallowing mouthfuls of meat without chewing.

Rice sighed as she watched him continue to eat like a pig. She swallowed a big gulp of champagne, and asked “How will your clone perform, Nekon? I mean, will they believe that he’s actually you? That’s my biggest concern right now.”

“I’ll speak personally with the clone and tell him that he’ll survive and become a rich, free man for the rest of his days.”

“But the likelihood that he’ll survive is minimal,” said Rice.

“Of course, but he doesn’t know that. I’ll motivate him, don’t you worry about that,” proclaimed Bush.

Rice was amazed at the quantity of food that Bush could shovel into his mouth as the two ate on in silence. She estimated that he had already eaten at least a pound of meat.

Charles appeared again and cleared the dishes from the second course, pouring yet more champagne.

As the couple ate the third course, Big Macs with caviar patties instead of beef patties, the president’s stomach began to emit loud, rumbling, bubbling noises. Bush grimaced and pressed a button on his multifunctional device. Rice sighed again in resignation. She knew what was about to happen.

Bush wiped his hands on a napkin and unbuttoned his shirt.

“Charles, we’ll have a pause in the meal,” he called in a loud voice. Charles appeared with an empty champagne bucket.

Activated by his MFD, a thin plastic hose one inch in diameter emerged from Bush’s navel, humming quietly. The flesh-colored tube grew longer and longer, reaching a length of two feet. Charles held out the champagne bucket and looked to the side as Bush put the end of the hose into the pail and pressed another button on his MFD. A motor buzzed as the contents of Bush’s stomach were pumped into the bucket for the next thirty seconds; Charles sprayed expensive perfume around the table to cover the foul odor. Bush cleaned off the hose and it retracted, vanishing into his navel once again. Charles bowed and disappeared carrying the full bucket. Bush

buttoned up his shirt and, whistling light-heartedly, grabbed another Big Mac.

“Lots of the secret special sauce, just the way I like it,” he said to Rice with a nod. He ate the sandwich in only four bites.

Bush had had an artificial stomach surgically implanted about three years earlier. This way, he could enjoy without moderation all the delicious flavors reaped from his private agritubes and not gain a single pound – a 22nd-century bulimic and glutton.

Thirty minutes later, the working meal was over. Bush had approved Rice’s battle plan on all strategic points.

“Should we go back to the House of Light?” Rice asked wishfully.

“In a little bit,” said Bush. He stood up. “First, I think we need to go to you know where.” His eyes glinted in anticipation.

Rice said nothing, putting her mind into political-ladder climbing mode. Bush put his arm around her shoulders and led her out of the art museum and down the hallway to a guarded doorway. The president nodded to the soldier and entered a security code into the keypad by the door. It slid open, revealing a passenger conveyer belt. They stepped on and rode it for several minutes through the mansion. Bush again sang the lyrics to the popular song that had been on his mind since the morning’s military meeting. Rice listened wordlessly.

She’s Miss Extreme
A nightmare and a dream
She’s Hell and Heaven
She’s so cute and she’s so mean

The president and Special Agent Rice got off the conveyor belt and stood in the doorway of the first of three rooms where

Bush personally tortured political prisoners. Rice forgot about her anxiety and accepted the fact that she had to assume her persona of dominatrix. Slipping into her role, she suddenly commanded in a sharp voice, "Open the door and shut up!"

Bush silently obeyed, a smile crossing his lips.

Limbaugh and Living Weapons

Nitra Khan and Boota Bleeda entered the laboratory complex at the University of Hunzania. Professor Nara Wrjinn was waiting for them in the biogenetics wing.

"Greetings, sisters. Everything is ready for you. Please, follow me." The old She-Hun scientist strode ahead with a vigorous step, despite a slight limp due to a war injury she had picked up as a warrior many years earlier in a battle against the Americans.

Wrjinn led Khan and Bleeda through a maze of laboratories. They passed one of many massive Hunputers, which utilized a liquid metal hard drive. The Hunputers were essential to the design and creation of genetically complex, "living" weapons.

Thousands of beakers filled with nutrient solutions lined the shelves in this room. Connected by electromagnetic fields to the Hunputers, the embryos of living weapons initially developed inside the beakers before being transplanted to larger vessels. Unseen centrifuges whined loudly and dozens of scientists worked hectically all around them.

Wrjinn led Khan and Bleeda into a large testing area that housed multiple test booths. They stepped into an observation room built onto the end of a 1,000-square-foot booth, its walls of high-strength glass. The women sat down and looked onto the floor in front of them, which was covered with soil. Apart from that, the booth was completely empty.

“Ok, roll the cameras. Confirm,” Wrjinn ordered into the Hun-com she wore on her wrist.

“Cameras functional and operating,” confirmed a voice.

“Release the Titanas.”

A door slid upward in the far wall of the test booth and twenty large insects slowly crawled into the booth. Khan estimated their length at about thirty inches.

“*Gryllotalpa titana*. We call them ‘Titanas,’” Wrjinn informed the two women with pride. “Each one of them carries one thousand ‘procto-dragonfly’ larvae in a pouch inside its stomach.”

“And that is going to be our battle-breaking weapon?” asked Bleeda skeptically. “They’re as slow as they are ugly.”

All twenty insects had entered the test booth and were waiting motionlessly. Their front and rear limbs were shaped like gardening spades and rested, poised, on the ground’s surface. Their heads were grooved like a drill bit to allow dirt dug up with the front limbs to pass over and behind it while tunneling down into the Earth.

“Boota, give our most accomplished scientist some credit!” Khan chastised. She turned to Wrjinn and encouraged, “Professor Wrjinn, never mind her. Please continue with the demonstration.”

“Yes, my queen.” Wrjinn smiled and spoke into her Hun-com, “Zenturia Tara, come!”

A warrior in combat uniform entered the booth. She looked up to the observation platform and saluted before lowering the golden visor of her helmet down over her face.

“Zenturia Tara will now steer the Titanas with eye movements that are detected by the face visor. Each Titana has had a biochip, Series 7, implanted into its brain.”

Bleeda interrupted the professor, “Biochip, Series 7? Isn’t that the chip we tested unsuccessfully on men for behavior

control? Do you remember, Nitra? They disobeyed the order to sit while urinating. Then they all went berserk in the lab and we had to shoot them all dead.”

Khan looked questioningly at Wrjinn.

“Although it may sound incredible, the psychology of a Titana is even simpler than that of a man. Believe me, sisters, this will work!”

The Titanas began to dig into the ground with their front two limbs and their heads. Through the viewing glass the three She-Huns heard quiet scratching as the Titanas began to burrow down. A moment later, the giant mole crickets had vanished, leaving small mounds of earth at the tunnel openings.

“These Titanas dig at a rate of one hundred feet per hour, depending on soil composition. They carry Hun-C explosives in several body cavities, which detonate when they encounter man-made concrete. The explosion is directed forward, with the procto-dragonfly larvae being protected inside the Titana’s body. The explosions blow a hole through steel-reinforced concrete up to three feet thick. A small secondary explosion throws the larvae through the hole, spreading them out over an area of at least four hundred square feet. Now watch, sisters.”

Zenturia Tara moved her eyes and the Titanas crawled backwards, out of their holes, where they waited, motionless.

“Fine,” continued Wrjinn. “Now, imagine that the Titanas have reached the exterior walls of an underground city. The explosives inside them detonate automatically. The microchip distinguishes between rocks and other hard materials and man-made concrete. We will now simulate that.”

Zenturia Tara left the test booth and joined the women in the observation room. Then, four warriors wheeled in a prefabricated concrete wall and placed it across the width of the room. It was three feet thick. After that, two She-Huns led the

Clear Channel clone of Rush Limbaugh into the booth, threw him down to the ground, and left.

“Ah, poor Rush. Our plump little sacrificial lamb in the name of science and She-Hun domination of men,” laughed Bleeda.

Limbaugh looked around him nervously. He saw the four She-Huns standing in the observation platform above him, waved at the women and walked towards them. Smiling uncertainly, he was very much regretting his outbreak earlier in the day. Limbaugh could not see the giant mole crickets on the other side of the concrete wall behind him.

“Zenturia Tara, go ahead,” commanded Wrjinn. The observers watched as three of the Titanas crawled toward the wall and made contact. Suddenly, their bodies exploded and three holes burst open in the concrete wall, each three feet wide. Limbaugh was knocked to the ground and showered with debris.

Instantly, 3,000 thin, gray larvae landed all around the blubbery mass-media star. The entire floor of the test booth around him was covered with them. Within seconds, they wriggled free of their wet, protective sacks; their bright red, dragonfly bodies now exposed to the air for the first time.

“This is our deadliest weapon,” explained Wrjinn. “Aeshna euplagia atrox procto. The procto-dragonfly! These insects are derived from the DNA of the dragonfly, the African killer bee and the tapeworm.”

Within several minutes, the larvae had completely unfolded their four wings to their final wingspans of five inches, blood visible pumping through the tiny veins in the clear membranes. All three thousand, three inch-long insects were now flying around the booth, forming an organized swarm.

Rush Limbaugh knew that he was in a very bad situation. He ran to the end of the booth, screaming at the She-Huns

sitting only inches away from him on the other side of the viewing glass. Pounding his fists against the wall, he pleaded, “Nitra, my master, I’m so sorry! I take it back! I shouldn’t have spoken so harshly to you today!”

A part of the swarm now flew directly at Limbaugh. He ran back and forth across the booth, but there was nowhere to hide. A procto-dragonfly landed on his buttocks, and in a flash crawled under his loincloth and pushed its way into his rectum, secreting a lubricant through tiny glands on its skin.

Limbaugh faced the women once again, “What kind of warped minds do you have, you lesbian perverts?” he screamed at the top of his lungs.

Limbaugh felt a sharp pain in his anus as the insect used its thick, stiff bristles to work its way farther up the canal. He tried in vain to pull the insect out; the bristles acted as anchoring hooks and pricked his fingers, releasing a strong irritant. He screamed again in both fear and pain, looking at Khan with pleading eyes, jumping up and down as he tried to extract the insect with both hands.

Khan switched on an intercom into the booth and said, “I’ve seen your show, you chubby pill-popper. This is what you deserve for spouting such bald-faced lies and oversimplifications. And besides, you’re a terrible servant.”

In his heart of hearts, Limbaugh knew Khan was right; he had made millions of dollars promoting beliefs he himself did not believe. Hate and intolerance sold well in America; for him, it was as simple as that. Suddenly, as if struck by lightning, he fell to the ground, motionless.

“Is he dead?” asked Khan, without emotion.

“He will be. His muscles are useless and he will die within minutes,” replied Wrjinn, equally indifferent.

“How?” Khan asked.

“Well, a procto-dragonfly pushes its body six inches up

the anus of the victim, where it injects a paralyzing poison through its bee's stinger. The lungs can't move and the victim dies of suffocation," explained Wrijinn with clinical aloofness. "I derived the chemical formula of the poison directly from that of American nerve gases, excuse me, weapons of mass destruction, that were stockpiled at Rocky Flats in Colorado last century. But that's not all; the invading insect also lays about one hundred eggs, which develop in the lower intestine. Shortly after injection, the original insect dies, however, the deposited eggs will develop into full-fledged procto-dragonflies within twenty-four hours. Unless the bodies are burned, one hundred new insects will come from each original procto-dragonfly!"

"My Hunza," said Boota, as she looked down at the motionless Limbaugh, whose eyes were still open and alive with terror. "Sorry I doubted you earlier, Nara. You've really outdone yourself on this project."

"Thank you very much, Boota."

"I'm very impressed, professor," said Khan. "Okay. This was a lab test. I think it's time for a field test. Present me with three attack options by tonight at midnight."

"My queen, I've already taken care of it. I'm sure you will find my idea satisfactory. We can leave in one hour."

Cloud Base Calling

It was 6:30 in the evening. Danton Gore ate his McSalad. He had just finished a brief emergency shift patrolling the tunnels after having been called in to work straight from lunch at his parents' house earlier in the afternoon. He took a long sip of his BushCoke, the recipe unchanged for more than one hundred years – fifteen teaspoons of sugar for every twelve ounces – except for the addition of a one-tenth dose of blue

ice. Unexpectedly, his MFD buzzed with an incoming text message that showed on the holographic viewing screen projected from the device:

SECRET SWEETHEARTS, LINDA, TEN MINUTES.

Immediately, Gore became anxious, looking around him to see if anyone was watching. This McMeatball's restaurant was only one block from Military HQ, Las Vegas South; he was surrounded by government soldiers. Finishing his meal, he got up and left the restaurant, heading two blocks away to a quiet, down-scale bar that had public, anonymous access to the internet.

Gore ordered a cup of bootleg organic green tea and sat down at a computer terminal. He logged into a chat room on the Secret Sweethearts website, a site where married people advertised themselves to have affairs. Reading some of the postings, he laughed out loud, *no wonder the divorce rate in America is at eighty-five percent.*

Several minutes later, a message from Linda appeared. "Go to abcdzxyv.com. Use password for Saturday, 16:00."

Gore went to the website indicated and used the appropriate password; Cloud Base's technical team had just set it up, it would have a cyber-lifetime of only a few minutes. Cloud Base was already online waiting for Gore, who was one of only five people that had direct internet contact with the Free Vegas leader. After receiving directives from Cloud Base, Gore relayed them to five other two-person cells, each of which then relayed them to five other cells, and so on, and so on. All communication was untraceable, thanks to Cloud Base's technical people – the best money could buy.

"Freedom fighter x158, have you been sailing lately?"

"No, my ship is in dry-dock," Gore answered the question,

one of more than 200 that could be asked of him to verify his identity within the Free Vegas movement. Such communiqués were also digitally encrypted for even higher security.

“We have three minutes. First, assassination plan with Nana Pavlov approved for Wednesday night at 20:30 hours. My technical team will provide you with the exploding, RDX-loaded device and a new MFD containing a hair analyzer that will verify identity after the kill. After identity confirmation, you will send your five sub-cells and me an MFD message on a secure frequency that I will have set up. I will then give the go ahead to the other four cells in the inner circle. Within minutes we’ll call out a total of 60,000 fighters in the first wave or the revolution. We’ll then call a wave of 10,000 reinforcements every twenty minutes after that, sending them where they’re needed most. We have a total of 90,000 willing to lay down their lives for our cause. Any questions?”

Gore looked all around him; no one was paying him any attention. His adrenal gland was dumping its heart-racing stuff into his bloodstream – the revolution was on! It seemed surreal. A second American revolution was really going to happen and he would go down in history as having had a key role in it. He could not help wonder if history would remember him as a hero or as a traitor. He typed, “What are primary targets?”

“Primary targets are the four military headquarters at Las Vegas north, south, east and west. Secondary targets such as television stations and key transportation routes will be determined during the battle. We will gather the revolutionaries in large groups near the targets and they will hit the streets en masse when we call them to arms at 20:30. The future is green! Cloud Base out.”

The website closed automatically, disappearing from the information highway forever. Gore stood up, paid his bill and went out onto the street. He felt as if he were walking through

a dream, the import of what would happen in a few days' time not having completely sunken into his psyche yet.

Danton Gore stood outside the entrance to Military HQ, Las Vegas South, and concentrated on composing himself. He walked in, paranoid, feeling as if everyone was scrutinizing him, and headed over to the parking lot to retrieve his car. Without incident, he left the military base and headed home.

It had been a very stressful day and he looked forward to his appointment that night with one of his favorite clients, Gwen Stephens.

Painful Presidential Pleasure

"Hurry up, you swine!" Special Agent Sadina Rice commanded President Bush in the dimly lit hallway that ran in front of the three presidential torture chambers. Bush quickly punched in the security code and the door to the first chamber swung open, blue neon light spilling out into the hallway. They entered the room and Rice laughed to herself at the hypocrisy: a Christian metal cross, eight feet high having hand and foot-holds, was mounted on the far wall of the torture chamber. In the far right corner of the room stood an authentic, medieval torture rack and a gynecological chair with leg shackles. A 600-year-old portrait of Niccolo Machiavelli adorned the south wall. A selection of whips hung on the north wall. This room served equally well for both military torture and S&M sessions.

Bush pressed a button beside the door and Gregorian chant music began to play from unseen loud speakers. Smiling, he took two black ice crystals from his pocket, inhaling one and offering the other to Rice.

She slapped him hard across the face. "How dare you do anything without first being told!" She knocked the black ice crystal from his hand to the ground.

Wordlessly, Bush continued smiling euphorically at his dominatrix; they had done this here many times before. Fingers trembling, he reached into another jacket pocket and withdrew a huge diamond, held it between two fingers in front of Rice's face, and silently pushed it into her cleavage.

The dominatrix slapped the president again, punishment for a second uncommanded action. Retrieving the stone from her bosom, she eyed it thoughtfully; it caught the blue, neon light on its dozens of faces. "Impressive," she said without emotion, hiding her amazement. "Five karats, more or less. Not too shabby." She tucked the rock into a pocket. "Speak!"

"Does the president deserve to be punished today?" asked Bush, rhetorically. "And a harsh punishment it should be! He has been truly naughty. He met secretly with the queen of the She-Huns in order to betray millions of his own people. *And*, he has eaten without manners in the presence of a lady again. What would his mother say about that?"

Rice assumed the part, and looked at him with authority, "Negon, I command you to strip yourself naked, you disgusting bastard!" Bush tore his clothes off eagerly. Within seconds, he stood before her, naked.

Rice walked over to the whips and took a twelve-tailed one down off the wall. "Kneel before your mistress, you pathetic piece of white trash!" Bush dropped down onto his knees. She walked around behind him and continued, "You will answer to me here and now for your shameless acts. This—" she reared her arm backward and then flogged her submissive slave, "—is for stuffing your face like a gluttonous pig while millions of Americans can barely put food on the table!"

Bush cried out in pain-pleasure as all twelve tails of the whip bit into his back.

"And this—" Rice yelled louder, rearing her arm back

again and whipping the president savagely, “—is for pumping your stomach in front of a lady!”

Bush howled again, his head and shoulders slumping forward and down.

“And this—” Rice was now screaming at the top of her lungs, as she had learned to do in dominatrix school, “—is for your worst crime of all,” she knew this insult would particularly excite him, “sacrificing fifty million Americans to the murderous and enslaving She-Huns so that you and your wealthy, nepotistic cronies can live on in luxury in the taxpayer-built and protected city of New Vegas!” She swung the whip back as far as she could and whipped him a second time for this last crime. Bush’s back and buttocks were covered in open, bleeding wounds; welts had risen up everywhere.

Bush moaned again loudly, almost unconscious from the pain; masochistically aroused as never before. He looked at her lustfully through half-closed, tear-filled eyelids.

“Ah, Sadie,” the words came out slowly, his mind in a haze, “it’s so wonderful to be the most corrupt and evil Bush president of all time. I deserve one more lash for that accomplishment.”

With precision, Rice flogged him a final time on his buttocks, avoiding his back and kidneys, not wanting to put him in the hospital again.

As Bush arched his back in pain, pushing his hips forward, he ejaculated, screaming in pain-pleasure. He then fell to the floor, resting on his side.

With neither hatred nor compassion, but rather with professional detachment, Rice retrieved an aerosol can and sprayed a medicated agent on Bush’s wounds, which would heal them within forty-eight hours. “Oh, shit!” she muttered under her breath, as she looked down and noticed tiny blood droplets sprayed across her dress uniform skirt.

Dancing Prohibited

Danton Gore stood in front of the “no-dancing” discotheque called “Take Off.” It was 9:45 p.m., and he had already been waiting twenty minutes for his client of the evening, Ms. Gwen Stephens. Take Off was located on city level 54 and was the most popular no-dancing discotheque in Las Vegas. There was a line of about one hundred people waiting to get in. A redhead with perfect cleavage stood in front of Gore, constantly shooting him smiles and glances. Although very tired from his second shift at work, Gore looked sharp tonight in his original, black silk Armani suit. He was looking forward to being with Gwen Stephens, who was not the typical client for him. She was young, attractive, recently divorced and emphasized to him again and again that she did not want a serious relationship at the moment.

Gore had met her three months earlier while ingesting crystals of blue ice at the bar of a female-frequented, male brothel called Surfer’s Paradise in Level XXX. She owned the catering company that supplied the House of Light with all of its food and beverage. On their first night together, she had consumed a lot of blue ice and relayed to Gore the inside scoop on the Men of Light and other key players in the District of Power.

Gore looked away from the pretty girl who had been flirting with him and saw, finally, Stephens emerge from the passenger elevator across the street. Swinging her hips, the pretty black woman walked up to him, flashed him an energetic smile and gave him a hug. *He still has no idea who I am.*

Gwen Stephens was well known in powerful circles, but not as the owner of a catering company – in those circles she was known by her real name, Sadina Rice. For the last three

months, she had been using Gore to pass false intelligence directly to Cloud Base and Free Vegas. She was not even interested in milking Gore for information about the revolution; her only purpose was to plant her false information deep within it.

“Hey, lover boy,” she lightly kissed him on the lips. In reality, she was feeling a bit depressed. She had violated the cardinal rule of a secret agent, allowing herself to have personal feelings for her target. Gore had a master’s degree in sexology and knew what he was doing between the sheets better than any man she had ever been with. Additionally, he was a decent, good-natured man, unlike those that surrounded her all day in her ordinary life within Bush’s inner circle. She had seen him more than twenty times during the previous three months, many more than were necessary to perform her military duty. Recently, she thought of him often during her day.

Rice knew, however, that after Wednesday night and the staged assassination, he would either be dead or imprisoned. She had to break her dependence on him immediately – after one or two more nights of incredible love making.

“Hello, Gwen, I’m so happy to see you,” he said genuinely. Gore also felt something special for this beautiful woman, beyond her relationship to him as simply the client of a male gigolo. He hugged her and kissed her back.

“I have a surprise for you, Dani,” Gwen Stephens, a.k.a. Sadina Rice, called Gore by his pet name as she traced her index finger along his cheekbone.

“Yeah? Like what?”

“I have reserved us the Paradise Beach Suite in the love hotel Desire,” she said, her eyes twinkling.

“Great, I love that place.”

“Tomorrow night, from ten o’clock on. I didn’t say when we’d be checking out. Think you can handle that?”

“I can handle it no problem, baby. But how can you afford such an expensive place for so many hours?”

“Now, since the divorce, I can afford it every day if I want to!”

The line continued moving forward. The couple in front of them was having a vehement argument with the doorman. Finally, the girl was allowed in and the man forced to remain outside, testing his luck by loudly swearing at the gargantuan doorman.

“Hello, Boris,” Gore offered his hand, which disappeared inside that of the bouncer.

“Hello, Mr. Gore. M’am,” he nodded at Rice. “Have a nice evening you two.”

Gore walked his date down a hallway, softly lit by green neon light. At the end of it, they entered the actual no-dancing area, which was covered by a dome three city-levels high. Underneath the dome, the floor of the fifty-foot wide, sunken, circular “launch area” was lit from below by pulsating lights that included every color in the spectrum.

Dancing with the feet touching the ground had been prohibited nationwide in the U.S.A. about eighty years earlier. It had all started in the beginning of the 21st century in New York City.

The then mayor, Michael Bloomberg, got it into his head that the citizens of the city that never slept should not be allowed to dance in bars not having a cabaret license. He sent out the dance police and simply refused to issue new licenses anywhere in the city as part of a “silent night” campaign. Years later, the third Bush president took Bloomberg’s idea even further, passing a federal law against dancing in public in any state of the union as an affront to Christian values; heavy fines were imposed and repeat offenders were punished with prison terms of up to five years. The neoconservative Bushes actu-

ally used taxpayer money to put advertisements on television professing the consequences of dancing to “devil’s music” and encouraged all U.S. citizens to stay home on Saturday nights so that they would be fresh and alert for church on Sundays. The ad campaign was a complete success.

By the end of the 21st century, however, clever businessmen were making profits through the concept of “no-dancing” discos. Rather than dance *on* a dance floor, new technology allowed people to float, weightless, *over* a dance floor – legally defined, “floating” was not “dancing.” The “floaties” hovered and bobbed up and down rhythmically to the music, gyrating hips and asses much more than was possible under the restrictions of gravity. Launch areas had been named after their mayoral inspirer, and were known as “Bloomberg Fields.”

Gore laughed to himself as he read the huge sign mounted on the wall behind the launch area:

Rhythmic Bodily Movements In Public
With Feet Touching the Ground
Are Illegal and Strictly Prohibited by Law
United States Code of Federal Regulations
§35028.20.

Gore involuntarily swayed to the Rolling Stones tune that was blasting on the sound system.

“Hey, buddy,” a large bouncer tapped him on the shoulder, “no dancing. Can’t you read?” the unfamiliar bouncer pointed to the sign.

Gore responded, “But I wasn’t moving my feet, only my hips.”

“Are you looking for trouble? Just take it to the launch area. I’m not going to tell you again.”

Gore did not argue the point further. He took Rice by the

hand and led her over to one of the bars near the no-dance floor.

“Two blue ices,” Gore ordered from the young, conservatively kempt bartender. “A vodka-and-orange-juice flavored for the pretty lady, and a dark-rum-and-BushCoke flavored one for me.”

“Coming right up, sir.”

The couple stood at the bar and popped the crystals into their mouths. They listened to the music, checking out the Saturday-night crowd around them.

Gore screamed above the music, “My grandfather saw the first Stones clones play back in 2040.”

“Small world,” Rice screamed back. “My grandmother worked for Clear Channel and headed the project to dig them all up and get their DNA for cloning.”

“Impressive!”

The Clear Channel cloning project first produced viable, adult human clones in the year 2038. Multiple generations of the Rolling Stones Clear Channel clones had now been on tour for almost sixty years straight. By 2080, the Stones Clones were performing a new version of the 2005 song, *Sweet Neo Con*. Clear Channel had rewritten the critical lyrics to praise and support the Bush dynasty – the clones performed it without dancing in the slightest so as not to defy the Bush-backed no-dancing law.

A ticket for a show in the 22nd century cost about 1,000 dollars, more than a month’s salary for a full-time minimum-wage worker. The Stones clones had just released their one hundredth album, entitled “Satisfied? Never! More!!” Listeners had to buy a special electronic device, manufactured by a subsidiary of Clear Channel Global, Inc., to listen to any album. Consumers had to buy a new device to listen to each

new album released by any band; normal hi-fi equipment and computers could not read the encoded music.

Gore and Rice climbed up a circular staircase to the semi-circular bar that ran along the edge of the dome and ordered two more blue ice crystals. About twenty-five feet below them, fifty people were already waiting to start floating in the Bloomberg Field above the launch area.

Gore looked above him at the DJ, who hovered weightlessly with his sound equipment just under the roof of the dome. Flashing strobe lights reflected off of smoke that billowed upwards from the floor.

The DJ gesticulated wildly with his arms and legs, yelling into his microphone, “A hearty welcome to one and all, ladies and gentlemen! I’m Kirk, your space captain this evening!” He turned the music up even louder. A David Bowie song pulsed into the very bones of the floaters on hand. He screamed, “Let’s get it on! Ok. Float!”

The waiting crowd began to rise up off of the floor of the launch area. Everyone started moving their arms and legs in the air, bodies twitching rhythmically to the beat of the pounding bass guitar. The Bloomberg Field extended from the floor all the way up to the domed roof, creating a cylinder of weightlessness. One girl pushed her dance partner and he went spinning head over foot away from her. When he hit the boundary of the launch area, electromagnetic forces bounced him back toward the center. He touched hips with another girl and they both went flying off, gyrating and shaking every part of their body.

“Careful, now! Slam-floating is prohibited tonight!” warned the DJ. This was a “mellow” night at the club, with most of the couples floating tightly embraced, spinning slowly around every possible axis. One dancer floated upside down,

spinning, his necktie sticking out perpendicular to his chest, a colorful propeller rotating in time to the music.

Gore and Rice swallowed their third dose of blue ice. Rice was feeling better now, her anxiety and sadness of earlier in the evening melting away with the effects of the drug. She tenderly caressed Gore's hand.

"That was our first spacefloat," said the DJ. "Careful with the landing, folks. Go get your blue ice! We'll start again in three minutes!"

Gore and Rice joined the next spacefloat, hugging one another closely and spinning horizontally ten feet under the dome. Above them, a huge disco ball, fifteen feet in diameter and covered with thousands of tiny mirrors, spun around, throwing spots of moving light all over the "dance" hall.

Rice fondled Gore's tight, muscular ass, gently kneading both cheeks. Then she broke away from him and slowly floated a few feet above him, inviting him to look up with a smile and a slight nod of the head. She gradually opened her legs just enough so that he could see she was not wearing panties under her miniskirt. "Think about this while you're on the job tomorrow," she taunted Gore; she had already informed him that this night's activities would be limited to no-dancing.

The Beautiful Art of Negon R. Bush

It was eleven o'clock at night; it had been a long day for President Negon Bush. Nevertheless, he was unable to relax and go to bed. When he saw that it was a relatively clear, windless, full-moon night outside he had immediately called a model to pose for him in his 2,000-square-foot art studio. Dozens of finished and half-finished canvases and sculptures were scattered all about the spacious room.

The moonlight flooded in through the transparent ceiling;

it shone unobstructed through large gaps in the clouds, a rare phenomenon given the global climate.

The president was painting a large picture of a female nude with broad, hasty strokes. Like Adolf Hitler, he liked to paint very much; also like Hitler, most considered Bush to have no artistic talent whatsoever. This wide-spread opinion of his work did not subdue his own enthusiasm for it in the least.

The roof of the studio was constructed of transparent, bullet-proof glass; Bush did not want to be shot during the only time that he allowed his mind to abandon the goals of financial gain, world domination and masochistic sex acts. While painting at times like this, he experienced the human notions of beauty and empathy with other beings. The only other time he experienced such feelings was while enjoying the close bond of friendship he shared with his only friend in the world, Beem Cheney. At all other times, Neron Bush was completely devoid of a conscience; he was incapable of feeling any degree of guilt or responsibility knowing full well the life-destroying outcomes of his behavior – such is the defective hard-wiring of the psychopathic personality.

Bush looked at his model, “You’re doing great, Seeta. Keep it up.” The model, a dominatrix he had met a few days earlier in the Dark Temple sex club, was lit by beautiful, wan yellows and oranges. Seeta stood erect, her legs apart, leaning over a mannequin that was in a kneeling position about two feet in front of her. She held a heavy-link, black chain that was wrapped around the neck of the figure before her. Except for the thigh-high, black leather, high-heeled boots, she was naked. Seeta had made-up her face to bear Asian features. She wore a blond wig, the hair tied back in a shoulder-length ponytail that hung below a She-Hun battle helmet.

On the canvas, Neron Bush was not painting the image of Seeta, but rather that of Nitra Khan, queen of the She-Huns.

Bush considered his work and smiled. “Great, Seeta. Ok. Tummy in a bit... Good! Bust out a bit more... Perfect! Don’t move a muscle! That’s a great pose and the light is simply astonishing tonight!” He mixed a dark skin color of Van Dyke brown, Amarillo yellow and Zinoberry red.

In the painting, Nitra Khan stood over Bush, pulling him towards her by the chain wrapped around his neck. His face was contorted in an expression that clearly conveyed physical pain and mental pleasure. Khan was grinning like a demon who had just claimed a new soul; unlike Rice, who professionally dominated Bush, Khan performed the same function with true hatred. The scene was inspired by his recent summit with Khan and was set in the desert, at the base of Ryan Mountain, amid burning avocactus plants.

“Sir, my whole body aches. This chain must weigh fifteen pounds!” complained the model.

Bush quickly checked the weather radar monitor that he kept in the studio. He saw a massive cloud bank rapidly approaching Las Vegas from the northwest. “Damn it! Just a few more minutes, please,” he begged Mother Nature. “Seeta,” he coaxed, “five more minutes. I will pay you an extra one thousand dollars.”

Seeta clenched her teeth, strengthened by the thought of the extra money. One thousand dollars’ worth of work right now in five minutes was the equivalent of four hours of her professional time as a top-level domina on Level XXX and 160 hours of some poverty-stricken full-time employee’s life behind the counter at a McMeatball’s restaurant.

Bush absent-mindedly scratched himself between his chin and lower lip. Happily, he critically contemplated his work. “I can’t believe how lucky we are tonight! Really, I haven’t seen moonlight like this for at least a year!”

Seeta's left foot ached. She transferred her weight onto her right leg.

Bush looked up from the canvas. "Wait, have you moved? Turn a bit to the left."

Seeta moved to the left carefully.

"Yes, yes, that's it. Don't move an inch!"

Seeta's muscles quivered with the sustained effort; she had been posing for almost ninety minutes now. Her arms were leaden.

Bush mixed a new color on his palette and began to paint Nitra Khan's combat boots. Unexpectedly, the door burst open and Vera Dan Bush entered the studio.

Bush's second wife was twenty-eight years old. A dirty blond of Scandinavian descent with bright, emerald-green eyes and freckles, she was the daughter of a society family and had been a model and actress before marrying Bush.

Vera Dan staggered visibly as she walked over to Bush standing at the easel. It had been a typical day for her, consuming eight doses of blue ice.

"Hello, my darling. It's lovely to see you," greeted Bush facetiously, "but please don't disturb me right now." He was barely able to contain his anger at the interruption.

Vera Dan stood beside him, glaring at the naked model. Then, pointing at the painting, she slowly shook her head. "Who the hell is that, then?" She yelled angrily. "Nitra Khan?"

"Yes, it's the queen of the She-Huns."

Vera Dan abruptly changed the subject. "Negon, listen to me! I just got back from New Vegas and have seen my bedroom. It's completely different than what we agreed on last month. It's only one thousand-square feet and has no balconies onto the main light shaft. The rooms for my servants are tiny—"

“Not now, Vera Dan!” Bush could not remain calm any longer. “I have only a few minutes of this light left and I must take advantage of it. We can talk about this tomorrow!” Bush’s voice rose.

“Shut up about your precious light!” she continued, completely ignoring him. “The servant’s rooms are tiny. They’ll be very disappointed and vindictive. Of course, your rooms and studio get all the light. For what? For this so called,” she made a sweeping gesture with her hand and took on a sarcastic tone, “art?” The president’s wife stared at Seeta’s breasts, “And now you’re bringing your whores here, right into my house?” she jeered.

“Vera Dan, leave at once!” commanded Bush.

Vera Dan continued, “Where did this one come from, president crooked-cock?”

Seeta suppressed a laugh.

Bush could not tolerate this insubordination from his wife. Even after plastic surgery for a penis extension and beautification, she continued to make fun of “little Nekon.” Bush was truly frustrated and angry now. He could sense that the artistic inspiration of moments ago had abandoned him.

“What do you think of his cock?” Vera Dan aimed the question at the naked model, who stood a few feet away.

“Okay, that’s it Vera Dan. Leave right now or else!”

“Or else what?” she folded her arms and waited. Now, speaking directly to the model, she said, “Our bible-thumping president spends millions on advertising against pre-marital sex and for monogamy, but he fucks anything that moves. Well, anything that inflicts pain on him and moves—”

“That’s it, woman!” Bush pushed a button and screamed into his MFD, “Code P, red!” *God damn this woman. I should have her eliminated, like the last one,* he thought. He looked

upward and said softly, “Really, my Lord, damn her straight to heck.”

The door flew open and four Secret Service agents rushed into the room. They scanned the room for an enemy threat and were clearly surprised not to see one.

“Sir? Code P, red?” asked the lead agent.

“Yes, yes. Get this woman out of here,” he nodded towards Vera Dan. “House arrest. Take her to her quarters.”

The soldiers grabbed Vera Dan by the arms. She resisted fiercely as all four men struggled to get her out the door.

She screamed at the top of her lungs, “Kill him with that chain, you bitch! Do it for me! I’ll reward you richly!”

The door closed behind them. Bush pulled a black ice crystal from a pillbox next to the easel and inhaled it deeply. He looked up through the ceiling; the moon had already disappeared behind the thick blanket of clouds. Bush calmly picked up the mixing palette and pressed it onto the painting, watching as it slowly slid down the canvas, leaving a trail of jumbled colors in its wake.

“But, Mr. President, surely that was worth saving? We could have finished it another day,” said Seeta, trying to calm him down.

The frustrated artist looked up at her with an expression of maniacal rage on his face. There was no trace there of the happiness of only moments before. She knew not to say another word.

Without warning, Bush kicked the easel and the painting flew across the room, landing on the floor with a thud. He walked over to it and jumped up and down on it, a childish temper tantrum gripping him completely.

After destroying the painting, Bush closed his eyes, took a deep breath and walked over to Seeta, who retreated backwards a few steps. “Don’t worry, Seeta, it wasn’t your fault.”

Out of the artistic mindset, Bush was already thinking of Wednesday night and Operation Smoke Out; he did not want Seeta to be afraid of him.

“Wait here in the studio. One of my guards will pay you and escort you home.”

“Thank you, Mr. President,” she said. “I’m looking forward to our Wednesday night session at the Dark Temple.”

“As am I.”

She strode past him towards a chair, grabbing his balls and giving him a quick, hard squeeze. A jolt of pleasure shot through Negon R. Bush.

Sunday
September 4, 2101 A.D.

Procto-dragonfly Field Test

Nitra Khan, her ministress of war, Boota Bleeda, and Professor Nara Wrijinn sat on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee. It was 7:00 a.m. They had covered the 535 miles between Hunzania and the American capital in thirteen hours; the She-Huns had made excellent time on the journey, despite a near miss by a mega-tornado, twisting at over 250 miles per hour.

The royal Hun-Vee now sat in position near the southern border of the city of Las Vegas, twenty-five miles from the city center. Although the early morning sun occasionally peeped through the low-hanging, dark storm clouds, it was very bad weather, which provided additional visual cover to the electronic radar cloaking used by the massive royal Hun-Vee and its small escort force of battle Hun-Vees.

Three hundred Titanas had already been digging through the sandy ground of the Mojave Desert for almost an hour. The genetically engineered mole crickets, loaded with their cargos of procto-dragonfly larvae, were now just yards away from the concrete walls of the McMeatball Corporation's Agritube number M/15/12.

This underground farm had been built eighty feet below the ground's surface and was located in Las Vegas agritube row fifteen, the farthest from the city center. The main products cultivated in this facility were potato trees, corn trees and meatballs. The agritube was one of 50,000 such facilities located in ten different underground levels that completely surrounded the city proper; all operated twenty-four hours a day. Guarded and "motivated" by forty-two soldiers of the Agritube Protection Force, 110 forced laborers worked each

eight-hour shift and brought 200,000 pounds of meatball meat and vegetables to the Las Vegas food market every year.

On the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee, Khan asked Wrjinn, “What, exactly, are they doing?” pointing to the three Zenturia warriors across the room.

Wrjinn nodded towards the three women, who wore helmets with golden visors covering their faces, “As you saw during our test yesterday, the Zenturias are controlling the progress of the Titanas with their eyes. By moving their eyes and blinking, sensors inside their visors relay electronic commands to the microchips implanted in the Titanas digging below.” Professor Wrjinn paused and smiled, “Sisters, they’re doing better than I expected in this compacted soil. The first Titanas will be reaching the outside wall of the agritube in just a couple of minutes.”

Agritube M/15/12

Corporal David Hings was twenty-eight years old. The stout, five-foot-eight-inch tall, 200-pound administrator turned off his computer, whistling cheerfully. The Irish-blooded soldier ran his fingers through his red hair, stood up and walked out of his small office in Agritube M/15/12; his graveyard shift was now over. He went to the canteen, where he bought himself a Super-Supersized breakfast plate, complete with a sixty-four ounce BushCoke.

Two minutes later, he entered the communal housing area on the lower floor of the five-city-level high agritube. He opened the door to his bunk room and squeezed his portly body through the small opening, turned on the light and closed the door behind him. He sat on the bed inside the six-foot by nine-foot bedroom, which had a small sink, a toilet and a wardrobe; a foot locker contained his possessions and personal effects.

One shelf on the wall held a few books about model rockets, a photo of his parents and a photo of his ex-wife, who had run off with his best friend two months earlier.

Hings stripped down to his boxer shorts, happy to be free of his always-too-tight uniform. He quickly devoured the two McMeatball burgers, each with two, fat-laden, one quarter-pound patties, savoring each chemically flavor-enhanced mouthful. He slurped the last of his BushCoke through the straw and lay back on the comfortable bed.

Grinning in anticipation, Hings pulled out an electronic men's magazine entitled *3-D Dynamite Dames* from under his pillow. The "magazine" was a single, half-inch thick, square aluminum device. He turned it on and tapped the upper left-hand corner. A three-dimensional hologram of a nude show girl appeared; she smiled at him encouragingly as she hovered over the magazine. The blonde was about eighteen inches tall and in her early twenties. She walked a few inches from the magazine and floated above Hings's fat belly. Over his navel, she halted and thrust her hips in all directions. The hologram-girl was freshly showered; silver droplets of water ran down her tanned skin. Other than her size, she was completely life-like. She looked into his eyes and winked seductively. Lying on his back, he removed his boxer shorts, grabbed a tube of Astroglide, squeezed some onto his hand, reached down and began to fondle himself gently, his hand disappearing from his view behind the mound of his stomach.

"Hello, David. I'm Tracy," whispered the girl over a speaker built into the magazine. "You're so strong and manly, David. I like strong men. It's your birthday soon, right?" the hologram asked him, smiling.

"Yes, you're right, Tracy. One week from today," Hings meaningfully answered the image in front of him; he had entered his personal data into the device the night before.

“You are *so* my type, baby! Do it now, you hunk! Do it right now. Right here!” crooned Tracy.

Hip-hop music sounded from the speakers. The hologram turned around and bent over, moving her hips to the rhythm of the music.

“I want you. Come on, David, come to me! You do it so well! You’re the *hottest* guy I’ve ever seen!”

“Look, Tracy. Look at General Purple. Isn’t he impressive?”

Tracy opened her eyes, wide. “Oh, my God, David, that *is* impressive.”

Hings was now masturbating with gusto.

“I love you, David. You’re so perceptive and passionate! And, yes, General Purple, he’s so beautiful!” Tracy began to fondle her breasts. Her legs spread wide apart, she hovered quietly over Hings’s face. Now, she began to masturbate as well. “Well, David, do I please you?” she asked, full of emotion.

“Yes, you are...beautiful...Tracy,” moaned Hings. He reached with his thumb and forefinger for her breasts, which shimmered as he touched them. Hings felt a slight electrical shock.

“Not so hard, David,” complained the image. Hings withdrew his hand. Tracy licked her pink tongue slowly around her bright red lips. A black vibrator materialized in her hand.

“Yes Tracy, do it, do it,” pleaded Hings. He was just about to climax.

Tracy bit her upper lip. “Ah David, I love you, you beast,” she panted, as she energetically used the vibrator on herself.

Hings looked into the eyes of the image floating just over his face and readied himself for orgasm. At that very second, he heard a loud explosion and felt his bed move beneath him. Some of the books on the shelf fell to the floor.

A pang of fear shot through the pit of Hings’s stomach,

and he involuntarily stopped masturbating. Tracy immediately wore an expression of surprise.

“Damn it! Shit!” yelled Hings, frustrated and irritated.

“Please, don’t stop, David, I want to come together!” murmured Tracy, disappointed. The user-friendly program in the magazine could sense whether the user had climaxed or not.

Hings heard five more explosions, all within one second of one another. He considered finishing what he had started, but fear and the survival instinct cut off his desire for pleasure as adrenalin began to pump through his system.

Hings pressed the off button on the cyber magazine and Tracy dissolved, shimmering, into thin air. He cleaned himself up and got dressed hastily. He ran out of his quarters towards the sound of the nearest explosions and stopped at the door at the end of the hallway, fifty feet from his own. Just as he began to open it, another series of explosions sounded within the communal living room on the other side. The sturdy metal door was flung open and torn from its hinges, blown outward; it hit Hings full on the chest and knocked him backwards to the ground. The door landed on him and squeezed the breath from his lungs; he lay on the floor, ears ringing. Groaning, he lifted the door off of himself and pushed it to the side.

The lights went out and it became pitch black all around him. Hings stood up, shakily, and listened intently, in shock. The emergency lighting flickered on and now, trembling with real fear, he entered the communal living room. He saw gaping holes, about three feet in diameter, in the far wall. The smoldering body parts of gigantic insects lay all over the floor before him.

Three soldiers of the Agritube Protection Division of the Defenders of the Light who had been watching TV lay motionless in the debris; their limbs were burnt and twisted into unnatural positions. He looked down and saw thousands of

three-inch long, gray, shiny larvae sacks squirming around in the pale, fluorescent light. Hings bent down to look at one of them more closely. A reddish dragonfly-looking insect was moving beneath the translucent sack that encased it.

“The lesbos must be getting their periods!” a deep, hoarse voice surprised Hings from behind. He turned. Captain Louis Brimmer stood before him. A six-foot-three-inch tall, shaved-headed Latino with a thick, black mustache, Brimmer held a pulse rifle upright against his right shoulder, surveying the destruction.

“Sir?”

“I was saying that it must be those perverted She-Huns.”

“Yes, sir.”

Brimmer shouldered past Hings and walked over to the men lying on the floor. He examined them one by one. “Jameson, Miller and Quaid. All dead,” Brimmer stated flatly.

Hings, who rarely made it out of the office, had never seen live action, not to mention a dead man lying right in front of his eyes. Brimmer walked back towards the door, consciously squashing insect larvae on the way.

“Corporal Hings, we will find these women and cut them up good. That’s an order! Afterwards, I’ll make them cook us a good dinner and then give us a long, slow blow job.”

Hings stood at attention and saluted his commander. Pale with fright, he responded weakly, “Yes, sir. Captain Brimmer, sir.”

“What do you know about all of these abortion-looking things lying around on the floor?” asked Brimmer.

“I believe they were carried inside the big insects, sir.”

Meanwhile, a procto-dragonfly had freed itself from its larvae sack. The eyes on its head rotated and it looked directly at the two men.

“These things can’t be good news, Hings,” said Brim-

mer, crushing newly born parasites under the heel of his boot. “Come on, corporal, let’s go hunt us some She-Hun!”

Brimmer led Hings from the room, down the hallway and through the door into a stairwell. They climbed the stairs up to a meatball production room on level four, but could go no higher, rubble blocking the way.

“Let’s go through here,” Brimmer indicated the doorway to the meatball production room, “and into the potato-tree production room at the far end.”

The two men entered the production room, their faces lit by the wan light of the fluorescent emergency lamps. Hings could see gaping holes in the walls all around the room. The squeaking sounds of terrified, caged animals filled the room; the smell of charred flesh hung in the air, wisps of smoke clung to the ceiling. Meatballs ran freely among the dead animals and twisted cages that littered the floor. Thousands of the strange larvae sacks also lay everywhere.

The meatball cages in the production room were spread out over a 200-yard long by fifty-yard wide warehouse space; they were stacked one on top of another up to the thirty-foot high ceiling. Hings followed Brimmer into a narrow aisle that ran between the cages; the big eyes of the meatballs followed their movements anxiously as the men made their way to the far end of the room.

The sound and concussion wave of another explosion ripped through the room; Hings felt it in his bones.

“That door ahead leads into the potato tree plantation,” Brimmer pointed to a door thirty yards in front of them. “There’s a service elevator in there. We can get out of here in one of the transport trucks up on the top level of the—”

Brimmer was cut off as several more explosions jarred the agritube simultaneously.

*

Nitra Khan, Boota Bleeda and Professor Wrjinn were watching the main monitor on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee. Ground-penetrating radar provided images in real time of dozens of Titanas exploding and blowing holes in the exterior concrete wall of the American agritube.

Boota Bleeda crammed avocactus chips fried in battle boar fat into her mouth. "What now, professor?" A few crumbs fell from the corner of her mouth.

"It's working," said Professor Wrjinn. "The first procto-dragonflies are surely hatching. They will be ready to attack in just a few minutes," the old She-Hun rubbed her hands together in anticipation. "If this technology works here at the agritube, there is no reason that it shouldn't work just as well on a large scale!" she declared triumphantly.

Boota Bleeda listened intently to her Hun-com. "Twenty armored personnel carriers have just penetrated the fifteenth tunnel ring, as planned," she informed her comrades-in-arms. "They will reach Agritube M/15/12 in approximately ten minutes. Then they can verify that the procto-dragonflies have performed successfully."

*

Brimmer and Hings stood at the door that led into the potato tree plantation next to the meatball production room. As Hings was about to open it, he discerned the loud buzzing of insects' wings coming from behind him. Perplexed, he turned and saw an organized swarm of thousands of red procto-dragonflies flying from the other end of the room directly towards him and Brimmer.

"Hings, get that door open," hissed Brimmer from behind, but Hings froze. "Hings!"

Brimmer pushed past the dazed Hings and quickly pushed down on the door handle. He rushed through into the next room, pulling Hings by his arm behind him. Brimmer slammed the door behind them, immediately hearing dull thuds as the procto-dragonflies hurled themselves into the metal barrier.

“Sorry, sir.”

“That’s okay, son. You desk jockeys just aren’t used to this kind of thing.”

“Thank you, sir.”

The two soldiers stopped for a moment to catch their breath and get their bearings. Everything seemed quiet for now.

In this plantation room stood thirty-foot tall trees, densely covered by purple-colored potatoes. Nourished by halogen lights, thousands of trees grew in this underground crop, and would bear potatoes used as food for both the meatballs and consumers.

They continued moving towards the middle of the room, picking their way through the rows of potato trees. Brimmer pointed, “The service elevator is up there, ahead.”

Moments later, Brimmer and Hings walked out of the forest of potato trees and stepped into a large, open, asphalted area that led up to the large elevator.

“Look!” pointed Hings. “The elevator is on this floor.”

A few yards in front of the doorless elevator shaft stood machinery used in the automated packing of the potatoes. The conveyer belts were not moving and hundreds of empty plastic sacks lay around on the ground.

“Wait here, Hings.”

Meanwhile, one floor above the potato tree plantation, Agritube M/15/12 housed a sweet-corn tree plantation of equal size. Twenty Titanas had already detonated there, easily breaching the outside wall of the structure and delivering their

procto-dragonflies. Now, a fire-red swarm of the three-inch long insects circled above the sweet-corn trees.

Problems in Paradise

It was seven thirty in the morning. Negon Bush and his second wife, Mrs. Vera Dan Bush, sat in the back seat of the Cadillac-Chrysler presidential limousine; they had just left the six a.m. service at the Las Vegas Pentecostal Holiness Church. The thirty-five foot long limo flew along the four-lane highway 450 feet underground. Speeding along through the tunnel that connected Las Vegas to New Vegas at 170 miles per hour, they would reach the new city in just over sixty minutes. Negon Bush wanted to make up to his wife for the argument of the night before and they would spend the entire morning with their architect inspecting their future home in New Vegas.

Negon Bush studied his young wife sitting in the back seat next to him. Vera Dan wore a white, high-necked, vintage Kenzo outfit. Like Bush and Cheney, Vera Dan was the child of an oil tycoon; she had been born with the silver spoon.

Vera Dan's perfectly symmetrical face was slightly bloated due to the overconsumption of blue ice. Bush gazed at her lovely breasts, appreciating the fact that they were real – a rarity among upper class women in 22nd-century America. He sighed quietly to himself as he reflected on the fact that they had only been married for one year and they already argued constantly. This woman was completely inappropriate for him. Sexually, she did not have the slightest inclination to be a sadistic dominatrix. Her idea of good sex had nothing to do with domination or inflicting pain on a willing partner, but was rather all about tender foreplay followed by energetic, prolonged intercourse. Bush had not had any interest in such love-making for ten years, since his first wife, Mary, died in a

car “accident.” Since that time in his life, he had to be abused, humiliated and tortured in order to become sexually aroused. For Bush, the actual physical act of coitus usually lasted less than a minute.

Bush and Vera Dan did not mesh on a moral level either. She was a decent person who genuinely wanted a better world for all Americans; for him, a man who possessed no conscience, such thoughts were, quite simply, unfathomable. Bush chuckled to himself: *there will be, however, a much better world for me and my friends soon enough!*

“Are you laughing at me?” asked Vera Dan, indignantly.

“No, never, my little meatball. At myself. At my mistakes and weaknesses.” He looked at her, caringly. “I am so sorry about our little fight last night,” he lied. Then, “You look very well today,” he lied again.

Vera Dan turned away and looked out the window, watching the tunnel walls race by in silence. Before they were married, she had seen a successful politician and businessman in Negon Bush. She had found him attractive back then – good looking and physically fit. He was humorous in his own, superiority-complex kind of way. Of course he had his flaws, but at that point in their relationship, she still believed, like all women, that she could change him more to her liking.

Vera Dan’s father had advised her not to marry Negon Bush, which is exactly why she had done so. However, the marriage was not living up to her expectations at all. It was degrading to have to play first lady to this masochist-Machiavellian.

Negon Bush reflected: *It was the right public relations decision to marry her.* The public had taken to the marriage very well; Vera Dan turning out to be the darling of the masses in a Princess Diana kind of way; she had done much work with the poor and needy in Las Vegas. Shortly after the wedding, Bush

was reelected by a landslide. As usual in American politics, his “liberal” opponent, also a billionaire, did not take a real stand on any issue and never pointed out with clarity and authority the weakness and hypocrisy in Bush’s character and policies – most notably the president’s failure to keep church separate from state, a foundational pillar of the American forefathers’ societal philosophy. As a result, Bush was currently serving his third term as president of the United States.

“Honey,” Bush pleaded, “I beg your forgiveness for last night. I’ve been under a lot of stress lately.” He needed to appease her; she had an important public relations task to perform in just two days.

After several seconds of silence, Vera Dan responded, “I don’t know. Maybe I’m taking too much blue ice lately.”

“Look, you already know that the day after tomorrow there will be an official reception for Queen Nitra Khan,” said Bush. “We will sign a peace treaty live on television. I really need you to be sober for that, okay?”

Vera Dan studied her husband. “What are you up to with that, anyway, Negon?” she asked. “Why would Nitra Khan want peace now? The She-Huns have been preparing to kick your butt and conquer America for the last ten years. Then you kiss up to her and let her off easy. She really has bewitched you, hasn’t she?”

“Listen to me, honey,” he practiced the speech he would give to the unsuspecting masses in two days’ time, “I have negotiated ingeniously with Nitra Khan and now she realizes that war means only death and hardship for both of our nations. Peace will bring – ahem,” he choked on his own words, “a better life for both societies. Furthermore, my little meatball, the oppression, maltreatment and exploitation of the one million male slaves in the city of Hunzania will soon be

a thing of the past. I've also negotiated the abolition of their mandatory castration."

"I don't believe a word you say," said Vera Dan. "Since when does the misery of other people interest any Bush, Negon? The only thing that moves you is killing in the name of your Christian God and the swelling of your bank accounts. When the slums of Las Vegas flooded last month and thousands drowned, you didn't show up to assess the situation and send relief for seven whole days. Your precious rocket-golf was more important to you then your duty to aid those poor people."

"Well, it *was* the American championships of rocket-golf, after all," he said matter-of-factly.

"Whatever." Vera Dan turned away from him, giving up on the argument. She pulled a blue ice crystal out of her jacket pocket and popped it into her mouth. The first lady looked out the window and distractedly sang the lyrics of a fifty-year-old protest song, written about Negon Bush's grandfather, which she had heard recently on an officially-banned internet radio website:

Wild beasts are running
In Bush's brain
And I don't know
Whether he's insane
He's taking orders
From a Father on high
He's given strength
Straight from the skies

"What? What are you saying?" Bush's voice rose in anger. "Do you want to be convicted of sedition?"

"Fuck you, Negon."

That's it, woman. How dare you talk about and to me like that. I'm the greatest, most powerful man alive. You've made the decision for me. I think you'll be having a car accident of your own in the very near future.

Attack of the Procto-Dragonflies

Corporal David Hings watched Captain Louis Brimmer step onto the square floor platform of the service elevator. Brimmer looked up and could vaguely make out the walls of the elevator shaft above him, lit by the light entering from this elevator access as well as from the ones on the levels above. Suddenly, the shaft went dark; a cloud descended down it from the level above him. Before he knew it, thousands of procto-dragonflies were swarming all around him.

"Shit!" Brimmer yelled; this service elevator had no doors and he could not trap the insects inside the shaft. He turned and, running off the platform and into the potato packing area, screamed, "Hings, get out of here, now!"

Hings hesitated a moment, frozen with fear. Out of the corner of his eye he spotted an empty plastic sack and dove for it. He quickly pulled it over his head, covering his body completely, praying that these evil creatures could not chew through.

Hings heard pulse bullets, fired from Brimmer's weapon, hitting the machinery around him and the ceiling above him.

Brimmer screamed out in pain and dropped his weapon, grabbing his buttocks with both hands. One of the procto-dragonflies had landed on his pants, broken through the material and gained access to his anal orifice. It flapped its wings wildly as it disappeared, nestling itself farther up his rectum. Excruciating pain shot through Brimmer's entire being.

Hings heard Brimmer shout from a few yards away from

him, “My God, Hings, these fucking things lodge themselves right in your asshole! Ahhhhhhhh!”

A few seconds later, Hings heard the buzzing of the insects; then they began to hurl themselves against the sack. He was dimly aware that water was spraying onto him; some of Brimmer’s bullets had hit irrigation pipes mounted on the ceiling.

Brimmer dropped his pants and grabbed at the rear of the invading insect. He tried to pull it from his anus, but the black bristles that covered its entire body pricked his finger, injecting their strong irritant. Brimmer had to let go, again letting out a painful scream. Within seconds, the procto-dragonfly had implanted one hundred eggs deep inside Brimmer’s anal canal. Simultaneously, it injected a paralyzing poison. A mere ten seconds later, Brimmer collapsed to the ground, where he lay on his stomach, completely paralyzed. Brimmer tried to scream, but his throat muscles and tongue were frozen. His lungs could not function either, and in a few minutes he would die of suffocation.

“Captain Brimmer? What’s happening?”

There was no response.

Hings began to tremble. His mind went blank; he could not think of a way to escape safely once he took the plastic sack off. One procto-dragonfly had managed to gnaw through the plastic at the level of Hings’s mouth, and he was now looking at its head, at its two red eyes at the end of one-quarter-inch long eyestalks, at its tiny mouth filled with meat-cutting fangs. Hings thought, *What kind of mind would invent a weapon such as this?* He covered his nose and mouth with one hand and his anus with the other.

Just then, the main water tower of the plantation room, located twenty feet from the elevator, burst open, having been glanced by pulse bullets. A torrent of water gushed out and

directly onto Hings, knocking thousands of procto-dragonflies to the ground.

As the water sloshed around him, Hings held his breath and thrashed desperately to free himself from the plastic sack. After an eternity that lasted only a few seconds, he succeeded, swallowing water that was still spilling out of the tank. Coughing, he ran to the elevator fifteen feet away from him.

My God, Captain Brimmer is dead. Hings was very shaken up as he looked down at his fourth corpse of the day; Brimmer lay dead, his body washed lifeless onto the elevator platform. Hings had never seen such sinister weapons; the She-Huns had not only designed them to kill, but to inflict maximum pain before death. *If I survive this, I'm out of the military.*

The insects now flew in haphazard circles, as water sprayed everywhere from the main water tank and broken irrigation pipes on the ceiling, disrupting the swarm. Thousands of the death-sentence insects floated motionless on the surface of the water which had drowned them.

Hings pressed the button for the top level of the agritube three levels above him, where the transport trucks were parked. With a jolt, the elevator began to move slowly upwards; water rushed from the plantation room down the shaft below him.

A few insects landed on Hings, but he was able to smash them immediately. He screamed in pain as the insects' bristles did their work on his palms. Hings waited in terror as the elevator platform, flush with the shaft walls, finally rose above the doorway opening, cutting off access to him for any of the procto-dragonflies in the shaft below.

On the top level of the agritube, an unarmed meatball transporter truck was just pulling out of its berth toward the main gate. Hings flagged it down and climbed into the back of the cargo trailer without looking into the cab, joining a handful of agritube laborers who were sitting there, guarded by a few

soldiers. The truck passed through the gate of the agritube and turned, tires squealing, into the fifteenth tunnel ring.

A few hundred yards down the tunnel, the transporter driver saw half a dozen She-Hun chitin-armored vehicles. The invaders cut off the truck's escape and opened fire with large-caliber machine guns. The defenseless Americans surrendered immediately; the She-Huns took them hostage. She-Hun vehicles carrying warriors wearing protective clothing proceeded to enter the agritube on multiple levels, planting thousands of pounds of Hun-C explosives and dozens of incendiary bombs throughout it.

A few minutes later, the underground farm disappeared in a massive fireball that ejected dust and rock 500 feet into the air above the desert. All traces of the newly tested She-Hun living weapon, as well as the victims, were incinerated.

Nitra Khan, Boota Bleeda and Professor Wrijinn stood on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee and watched the huge cloud of debris as it was blown away by strong winds.

Khan commented to Wrijinn, "Well done, Professor Wrijinn. Based on our sonar scans, only the one captured American transport vehicle escaped the procto-dragonflies. That's only ten men of the more than three hundred people that were in that agritube. That's a pretty impressive kill rate." She raised her glass of Rekol wine and toasted, "Here is to the complete success of this living weapons test!" she paused, reflecting silently, "and, to having Boota modify the battle plan for Operation Lick Bush."

The three women clinked glasses and sipped their wine.

New Vegas and the Statue of Non-Liberty

Negon Bush sat in the back seat of the limousine as it sped on through the underground tunnel. Vera Dan sat next to him, giving him the silent treatment. He shrewdly put his mind back

into political mode. He reached over, caressing his wife's knee clumsily. "You know you always get what you want, meatball. Miguel Flauta will be with us all morning listening to your requests. We will rebuild the whole house to your liking if we have to. Okay?"

"We'll see," she said, not wanting to give in yet. She was quite intoxicated on blue ice and became quiet and content.

The presidential couple finished the trip and rolled up to the first of three heavily armored gates at city level 15, where the tunnel entered the city limits of New Vegas. The limo passed through all three gates and stopped to pick up Miguel Flauta, Bush's architect. Flauta, a short, overweight Latino with thinning, white hair, climbed into the car, breathing heavily, and sat down opposite the Bushes.

"Hello, Miguel!" Bush greeted the man enthusiastically and shook his hand.

"Mrs. First Lady," the man nodded as he addressed Vera Dan, kissing the back of her hand.

"I want to see the statue first," Bush said, before Flauta could get a word in. He leaned back and inhaled a piece of black ice. Vera Dan looked at her hypocritical husband in disgust.

"Of course, sir. Perhaps I can give your wife some background information about her new city?"

"By all means," said the president.

"Well, first, let me say that I think you'll be quite happy with what we've finished building here. I know you were at your apartment the other day, but the president told me that you were not familiar with the entire layout of the city." He took a drawing out of his briefcase so the first lady could see for herself. The architect continued, "Mrs. Bush, New Vegas is smaller than Las Vegas, measuring six miles long by six miles wide, and reaching down into the Earth about half a mile. A

main air and light shaft, half a mile square, has been built in the center of the city. It reaches down the entire depth of half a mile, and its floor serves as the main city square. Other, smaller air-light shafts have also been built throughout the city. The roof, which covers the whole city, can be opened as the weather permits. Tens of thousands of cutting-edge technology agritubes surround the city and will provide more than enough gourmet food and drink for its residents. Now, as for the monument dedicated to your husband,” Flauta shifted his gaze to the president, “we’ll see it in just a few minutes!”

The limo entered a vertical link elevator and ten minutes later the driver stopped the car and turned off the engine, parking on the edge of the main city square, the floor of the main air-light shaft.

Hurriedly, Bush got out of the car and, squinting, stared lovingly up at the largest American-made statue ever built. He looked it up and down, seeing the completed work of art for the first time. He himself had designed it: a 400-foot tall tribute to himself, a sword held high in the right hand, and a giant globe of the Earth in his left. It stood on top of a square pedestal measuring 300 feet tall, which bore video advertisements for BushCoke, Inc., HalliBush & Cheney, Inc. and the Karlyle Groups, Inc., among other corporations. The president shook his head in amazement, overcome by emotion. Vera Dan and Miguel Flauta got out of the car and now stood next to Bush, also gazing skyward.

Vera Dan read the inscription, etched into the snow-white marble pedestal in ten-foot tall, golden letters.

NEGON RUDY BUSH
U.S. PRESIDENT AND
COMMANDER IN CHIEF
CEO, CFO AND COO

“At night, it will be even more impressive,” Flauta informed the president. “There will be a laser show projected from the eyes of the statue all around the interior of the light shaft.”

“What a beautiful, capable man I am,” said Negon Bush in a hushed voice. “It’s just like I’d envisioned it.”

Vera Dan Bush looked at the ground, shaking her head in disbelief. She then looked her husband in the eye, “Negon, to commission a monument of yourself while you’re still alive puts you with the likes of Stalin and Lenin and Hussein. Besides which, you’re celebrating the fact that you and your corporations have taken the world by economic and military force?”

“Of course, freedom and democracy for all!” Bush continued to admire the massive statue, a dreamy expression on his face; he was enraptured, stroking his blond hair slowly and tenderly. “Miguel, I’m truly impressed! You’ve done a wonderful job here.”

Flauta said, “Thank you, sir. It was my pleasure. I know I’ll enjoy looking at it from my apartment.”

The group climbed back into the car again and fifteen minutes later they parked in the garage of the new, palatial, thirty-room private Bush mansion. The group got out of the car and Miguel Flauta took the lead.

They entered the foyer, where a seven-foot diameter sphere hovered over the floor. Its surface was covered completely by active video screens. On each of the screens, a scene from Negon R. Bush’s life was showing: Bush as the public speaker; as the commander in chief; as the painter; as the statesman; as the businessman with Cheney; as the rocket-golf player; as the son; as the father with his two sons at military academy.

“And why am I nowhere to be seen, my love?” asked Vera Dan, clearly offended.

"In time, my precious meatball," assured Bush. "Miguel, tell me, where is my art studio?" asked Bush.

"No, let's first talk about my bedroom," hissed Vera Dan, looking at her husband defiantly.

Negon turned to her, "My love, in a minute."

Miguel Flauta led them into Bush's new artist's studio. It was huge. Measuring 600 feet long and 150 feet wide, it occupied the entire side of the flat that had long balconies hanging outside into the central light shaft of the city. The mansion was on city level 1 and the ceiling in every room was made of clear, bullet-proof glass.

"My meatball, I'm so sorry all the balconies are here in my art studio and that we made your dressing rooms interior ones that only get light through the ceiling. I can sacrifice some of the daylight coming through the windows here in the studio. We'll build your rooms here. They will extend from this column over to that one," Bush pointed to a column about 200 feet away. "As you can see, darling, you will have four balconies where you can take the daylight and fresh air. Will that be okay?"

"And my servant's quarters?"

"Of course, we'll expand them considerably." Bush looked deep into his wife's eyes. "Truce?"

Vera Dan thought for a moment and then grunted in approval; she could not deny her husband the fact that her private rooms would be astounding. Slowly walking the length of the studio, she opened a French door and stepped outside onto one of the balconies. The statue was 2,000 feet below her.

Bush joined her. "Now, tell me for real, Vera Dan, are you okay?"

"It'll have to do," she said and gave him a quick smile.

Bush turned and yelled, "Everything's just fine, Miguel! We'll be moving in on Friday, as planned."

“Just one question, Negon.”

“Yes, my baby meatball?”

“Doesn’t it bother you that you can only see the top of the head of your precious monument?”

“Oh no, honey. The statue isn’t for my pleasure. That would be selfish. It’s for the people to appreciate and remember the sacred basis of American society – liberty and justice for all.”

A Hotel Named Desire

Danton Gore waited in the lobby of the love hotel called “Desire.” At ten p.m. sharp his client Gwen Stephens/Sadina Rice entered. This love hotel was one of several located in the heart of the poshest neighborhood of Level XXX. The gigolo and his client had been spending time together in love hotels regularly over the last three months. Love hotels catered mainly to couples looking for lively sex in unique surroundings; most clients were monogamous couples who occasionally desired additional paid lovers in the room.

Rice walked over to Gore and gave him a kiss. “Hello, Dani, have you had a good day?”

“Yes. For me it was just a quiet day patrolling the tunnels in the southeast quadrant. The guys in the southwest quadrant weren’t so lucky.”

“Oh yeah, I heard about that. The McMeatball’s agritube, right? The generals were discussing it passionately at lunch.”

“Yeah. Were they surprised?”

“Oh, I didn’t really listen to them, Dani. I was just doing my job, you know, feeding the rich, white men that run the country.”

Gore chuckled and gave the matter no further thought.

The couple walked over to the reception counter and Rice

said, smiling, "Hello. Gwen Stephens, reservation from ten p.m. on. Thank you."

"Must be a special occasion tonight, huh?" said the pretty Brazilian receptionist, impressed, as she checked her computer. Suites in Desire were very expensive, going for 1,000 dollars an hour. A normal rental was one or two hours. "Yes, here it is. It's available until four a.m. That will be six thousand dollars, please."

Rice paid the woman.

"Female or male social sex partner this evening?" The woman turned her computer monitor towards Rice. Photos of scantily clad women and men appeared, under which read:

Meet your desire love crew for today. Sally, Ginger, Tony and George. We will be happy to help you make your wildest fantasies come true. Please remember that same-sex sex acts are illegal by law.

"No, thanks. Not tonight," Rice declined.

"Ok. Elin will escort you to the Paradise Beach Suite now."

A hotel employee wearing skin-tight, red latex overalls introduced herself and led the paying-relationship lovers away from the reception desk and to their suite.

Elin unlocked the doors and they all entered the suite, which consisted of several large rooms. Artificial sunlight shone through the panoramic windows and onto the bamboo furniture. Outside, three-dimensional holograms depicted the Mediterranean Sea and a small, white-sand beach lined with palm trees. The smell of salt water hung on the breeze that blew through the open windows. Pink flamingos flew past, low over the deep-blue water. In the distance, the silhouette

of a mist-shrouded island was discernable, where small waves broke and crashed onto a crushed white coral beach.

They walked through the living room and into the bedroom. A white leather canopy hung over the gigantic, heart-shaped water bed. Through a gated, Moorish archway in the bedroom wall they saw a large swimming pool filled with crystal-clear, emerald-green water; artificial sunlight beamed down onto it, light reflecting throughout the volume of the water. At one end of the thirty-foot long pool was a hot tub. The sounds of birds and wind rustling through palm leaves drifted into the bedroom from this side.

“The water in the pool is at seventy-six degrees,” explained the blond escort, “the same as the Spanish Mediterranean in summer in the pre-storm days. The hot tub is set at one hundred and four degrees. You can change both temperatures as you wish. Shall I stay?” Elin asked, eyeing Gore. “Your desire is our command.” She now stood right next to Gore and quickly unzipped her latex overalls down to her navel. Her big, perfectly shaped, “thinking” silicon breasts sprang out, bobbing up and down with completely natural movement, only inches from Gore’s face.

“No, thank you. Maybe another time, Elin,” said Rice hurriedly; she knew the power that breasts like those had over a man. Gore’s client handed Elin a tip and nodded goodbye.

“Thank you. If you have any unfulfilled desires, just call reception. Enjoy!” Elin turned and showed herself out.

Gore took Rice’s hand and led her over to the bed. They sat down and he opened the drawer in the nightstand. Inside was a plentiful supply of “thinking” condoms; this technological marvel, the size of a garden pea, automatically rolled down over the penis and adjusted itself perfectly to all changes in an erection, insuring a perfect fit and zero percent chance of any escapees.

“Whoaaa! They got a McDonnell-Cheney-Douglas in

here,” Gore said, impressed, as he retrieved a vibrator and several attachments from the drawer. “Up until now, we’ve only used Wild Widows from Boeing.”

When the eternal storm began rampaging across the entire surface of the planet seventy years earlier, the aircraft manufacturing business died out almost overnight. So, in a stroke of genius, these companies switched markets and began to produce sex robots and sex machines like the one in the room. Boeing’s current slogan was: “Only flying could get you higher!”

Gore began to input data into a keyboard set into the nightstand: the length of his penis, the location of Gwen’s g-spot, their heights and weights. This information was relayed to the vibrator via infrared signals. “You’re gonna’ get some good lovin’ tonight, sweetheart!” he promised.

Rice giggled in anticipation, kissed Gore lightly and ran out of the room over to the pool.

Gore continued inputting the data into the memory of the sex machine; this model was called the “The Screaming Valkyrie.”

“Come on, Dani,” he heard Rice call him from out at the pool, “hurry up and get over here!” She had already undressed and was paddling around in the warm water. “The water is perfect! It’s salt water, just like the sea!”

“Yeah, yeah. In a minute. This is important stuff over here. Tonight, we’re going to break a record!”

Gore finished inputting all the information into this top-of-the-line, 50,000-dollar device. He replaced it in the nightstand and turned toward the terrace. “Is my black mare ready to get the ride of her life?” he called, now undressing.

“You know I am. Get over here!” Rice was dying to feel his hands on her skin.

Gore ran over to the pool and jumped in, splashing Rice playfully.

“Oh, Dani, take me now!”

Gore was, of course, thinking of screwing this beautiful woman’s brains out for the next six hours. However, he could not let the pleasure of that thought cloud his greater mission: extract precise information about the Defenders of the Light in Las Vegas and New Vegas and about Negon R. Bush and the protection he would have on Wednesday, the night of the assassination.

Rice rolled onto her back and closed her eyes, floating easily in the salt water. Her full, dark breasts faced the ceiling and slowly wobbled side to side with her lazy stroking movements. Like most upper-class women, Rice had breast implants made of thinking silicon; the element had been re-engineered to allow the atoms completely natural movement when it came to the influence of gravity – they were also bullet-proof.

Gore walked over to her, and without a word began to gently trace circles around her breasts – smaller and smaller until he was only fondling the nipples.

“Oh yeah, Dani,” whispered Rice. She opened her eyes and looked at their image reflected in the huge mirror that hung over the pool. She admired Gore’s muscular back and neck; the “V” of his well developed lats easily visible. She closed her eyes again and tried to relax and enjoy the moment – but between knowing that this would be her last night with this amazing lover, the stress of the upcoming Operation Smoke Out and the knowledge that she would be personally responsible for the demise of the man she was about to make love to, she was simply unable to do so.

“Oh, Dani, so much on my mind,” she whispered, unaware that she had said it out loud. Then her intellect kicked in,

“Focus!” it warned her, *“You could blow this whole operation in a single second if you’re not careful here!”*

Rice relaxed a fraction. Just then she felt the gentle movements of Gore’s tongue on her clitoris. She opened her eyes and looked into the mirror, seeing his head between her thighs, slowly moving around in small circles.

“Oh, yeah,” she crooned.

Gore had sensed that his lover was extremely tense and anxious. He knew what had to be done; he had a lot of experience and had read the book, *Licking for a Living: The Successful Sex Suggestions of a Veteran Gigolo*, many times. Written by James Wiener, it was an autobiographical best seller and advised “...be adaptable. Every woman is like a different flower and must be opened up just right. You cannot presuppose anything. Even every woman is different from day to day and hour to hour depending on ...”

Gore continued performing cunnilingus for another ten minutes. When he sensed that Gwen was much more relaxed, he slowly rubbed his hand on her abdomen, over her sacral chakra. She jerked with pleasure and life as he discharged his super sexual energy directly into her entire being.

“Oh, God! What amazing hands you have, Dani!” Rice managed to say between convulsions of ecstasy. *What skill, she thought. The hands of a sculptor. The tongue of a saxophone player. The empathy and intelligence of a writer.* Yes, Gore was the conductor of the symphony orchestra of her senses.

Rice felt a sexual charge jolt through her entire body, even in the roots of her hair and the tips of her toes and fingers.

She began to moan quietly, contentedly. This man had washed her anxieties away and she was now fully present in the moment. She felt only his gently circling tongue and the

stream of pure sexual energy that flowed from his hand into her navel and throughout her entire body.

“Oh, baby, I’m going to come. Oh, God!” Rice climaxed and had an explosive orgasm, releasing all of her stress as well as the guilt she felt about her role in betraying Gore. She thrashed her arms in the water, screaming “Yes! Yes! Yeeeeessss!” She was now completely lost in space and time.

“Computer, sunset,” said Gore.

Instantly, the room’s walls transformed and showed a beautiful sunset on the western horizon, the sun a scarlet-red disk sinking below the water. Soft reds, oranges and pinks filled their field of vision.

They climbed out of the pool; Rice lay on her back on the warm flagstones and took Gore’s hand, placing it on her sacral chakra again. She looked at him tenderly.

Gore was sitting next to Rice. Smiling down at her, he said, “Well, you were a bit tense at first, but I assume you feel a bit better now, my love, no?”

Rice looked up at him and lazily responded, “Is Negon Bush a conniving bastard?”

They both laughed, then sat in silence for a few seconds.

Gore thought hard about how he could begin to extract information from Stephens without changing the mood too abruptly.

“So, Gwen, will you be moving to New Vegas soon?”

“What? Yes – no.” Rice was still lost in sexual bliss. Gore had caught her off guard. She recovered instantly. “No, not yet. The official move date is October 1st. But, you want to know something really strange, Dani?” she kept her poker face on perfectly. “Four hundred thousand Defenders of the Light are leaving Las Vegas as we speak, under top-secret, media black-out conditions. They’ll be permanently stationed

at New Vegas and Jacob Lake from now on. Only one hundred thousand will remain here in the city.”

“How do you know that, Gwen?” Gore asked very interestedly, recalling what Ella Houston had told him about New Vegas’s status two days earlier.

“By chance, I overheard two generals talking at a very high-level lunch meeting. I have maximum level security clearance, you know.”

“So only one hundred thousand will remain here.” said Gore, contemplating the implications for Free Vegas and the revolution for the night of the planned assassination.

Rice looked earnestly into Gore’s eyes. “Dani, you have to keep this to yourself. If they found out that I was a leak, I think they’d have me killed.” *He’s swallowing this misinformation hook, line and sinker. Good job, Sadina.*

Gore remained silent for a full minute. “It doesn’t really affect me. I’m not moving to New Vegas,” he finally said. “The most important thing is that we can keep meeting. We still have hours and hours to go tonight,” he nodded towards the bed in the next room, “*and* the Screaming Valkyrie awaits us.” He smiled broadly.

“You brute,” Rice joked, already having slipped back into her spy persona of Gwen Stephens.

*

Four hours and twenty-five orgasms later, Sadina Rice walked out of the love hotel Desire arm in arm with Danton Gore. She had to exercise all of her mental toughness not to begin crying as they crossed the street to a passenger elevator. Standing at the elevator door, she contained her emotions and said casually, “It’s been a wonderful night, Dani. I’ll call you soon.”

“Good night,” replied Gore. They exchanged a brief good-night kiss, and Gore watched as the elevator door closed.

Inside the elevator, now alone, Sadina Rice burst into tears. They streaked down her face, carrying her make up with them as they dripped, black, down onto her silk blouse. As the day of Operation Smoke Out grew closer, her feelings for Gore were intensifying dramatically.

Sadina Rice had had only one boyfriend in her entire life – an eight-month, deeply emotional relationship when she was twenty-one years old. Since then, she had only engaged in sex to make money as a dominatrix, and during the previous eighteen months, to gain political power. But it had been very different with Danton Gore during these last few months. She now had to admit to herself that she had fallen in love with him; sexually and emotionally she was hooked. He was a kind, intelligent, sensitive man who was willing to die for a social cause and to redeem his murdered grandparents. And, fulfilling her childhood fantasy, he had been the starting quarterback of his college football team.

Outside the elevator, Danton Gore walked around the corner and ducked into an unlit alcove. He pressed a button and began punching a message into the holographically projected keyboard of his MFD:

400,000 DEFENDERS OF THE LIGHT
ABANDONING LAS VEGAS THIS EVENING.

Gore pressed the “send” button. Cloud Base would read the encoded message at a secure Free Vegas website within the hour.

Monday
September 5, 2101 A.D.

Impeachment Vote

United States President Negon R. Bush sat with his vice president, Beem Cheney, and three Secret Service bodyguards in the back of the presidential limo. They were headed north on Donald Rumsfeld Boulevard, the main thoroughfare in Las Vegas's District of Power.

Bush looked at Cheney, a trace of concern on his face. "Beem, do you have any idea why this emergency session of the Men of Light has been called?" Bush inhaled a crystal of black ice, maintaining his calm.

"No, sir. It must have to do with the She-Hun attack on the agritube yesterday, but beyond that, I have no idea. The Men of Light don't know about the peace treaty with Khan yet. I think you'll have to tell them about it today."

"Yeah, I wanted it to be a complete surprise for greater media impact, but I guess you're right." Bush thought of the betrayal of the citizens of Las Vegas and giggled to himself quietly – a schoolboy in the principal's office who knows he is guilty but will get away with some act of gross insubordination or vandalism. He was confident he could smooth things over within the government during the emergency session. *I will drop in on Sadina afterwards. I'm a very bad boy.* He lightly touched himself.

The driver parked the car and Bush and his group got into an elevator that carried them to the assembly hall of the House of Light. This is where the single remaining chamber of the American Congress held its sessions.

The structure of the American federal government had changed drastically in 2050, when Las Vegas became the

capital of the country. The fifth Bush president and Nekon Bush's grandfather, Prescott Sheldon Bush III, was the first American president to administer the nation's affairs from the House of Light in Las Vegas. The building, a smaller replica of the old U.S. Capitol, was so named because the then president received divine enlightenment there while praying, prostrate on the ground, before declaring war against Kuwait and its recently-declared-by-America terrorist monarchy.

In 2052, Prescott III championed an amendment that abolished both the House of Representatives and the Senate, replacing them with a group of elected officials known as "the Men of Light." He assigned the ratio of the number of representatives relative to the country's population to be the same as that of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2004. In that year, American "representative democracy" was based on a total of 435 elected federal officials in the House – one official representing the interests of every 690,000 men, women and children. In 2101, there were 173 Men of Light – all of them multi-millionaires and billionaires. They spoke on behalf of 120 million Americans in all national concerns, even though attempting to speak personally with one's elected representative in order to directly voice an opinion, either by MFD or internet, was, ten out of ten times, a completely fruitless endeavor.

Nekon Bush looked ahead of him as the elevator door slid open. He was shocked by what he saw: every single elected representative was present, something which rarely happened in the entire history of the country. Bush knew that uneasiness had been growing in the ranks of the government, but he had not expected every Man of Light to show up just because of one attack on an agritube.

Nekon Bush and Beem Cheney took their seats on the stage that faced the semi-circular rows of seats where the Men

of Light sat. There were actually sixteen women, also called “Men” of Light. This title was appropriate for these women because, like the historical Janet Renos and Condoleeza Rices, they were simply war mongering, bottom-line capitalist, domineering, vicious men trapped inside women’s bodies, without a single maternal or feminine instinct such as empathy or compassion among the lot of them.

The democratic speaker of the House of Light called the emergency session to order.

“All Men of Light, President Negon R. Bush is present and I officially notify him that this session has been called to take a vote to impeach!”

“What the fuck?” shouted Bush. Immediately, more softly, “Sorry, my Lord.” Bush was now dazed.

Cheney leaned over and whispered, “I advise you to lie, Negon. You won’t be under oath, as if that matters. Remember, just like in the mainstream media you’re not required by law to tell the whole truth. Don’t worry too much, I think we have enough votes to avoid a new election.”

The Speaker announced, “The leader of the democratic Men of Light, Luther van Hong, now has the floor!” Less than half of the gathered officials broke into applause.

Although Bush was now much more anxious, he was not too upset. This was his third impeachment vote, which was not nearly as serious a matter as the U.S. Constitution had originally intended.

In 2064, George H. W. Bush III, Negon’s father and sixth Bush president of the dynasty who reigned for six terms, greased a lot of palms and got a historic amendment to the Constitution passed because he was worried about his and future Bush presidencies. The “GHWIII Amendment” stipulated that, once impeached, the president was not replaced by the vice president and did not have to stand public trial for his

criminal actions. Instead, presidential elections had to be held within seven days and the impeached president was still eligible to run in the new elections if he won the candidacy within his own party.

As Van Hong began to speak, Bush looked around the room at his political enemies with disdain. *How did I let these “intellectual elitists” organize themselves and call this session?* He became dizzy with rage; his pulse pounded in his ears.

Van Hong, a shortish, gaunt man of Chinese descent in his early sixties, spoke in an elegant, theatrically-trained voice. “Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Silence, if you please. Today I address all Men of Light, not just the democrats! As you already know, yesterday the She-Huns attacked an agritube located in the fifteenth tunnel ring. It was completely destroyed in the bloodiest She-Hun attack on our city to date. President Bush,” he paused, looking over at the president, who was whispering to Cheney, “has clearly been negligent in his duty as commander in chief to allow yet another She-Hun act of aggression occur here in Las Vegas. However, on a more serious note, I hold here in my hand a very interesting official document from the Climate Control Corporation,” he paused again for effect, making eye contact with several men whose votes would be crucial to impeachment. “According to the president’s own company records, five thousand citizens have died in city levels 101 to 150 over the last six months!”

The room burst into a fury of shouting; republicans called out “Liar!” and democrats called out “Criminal!”

Bush looked at Van Hong; the Chinaman now had his complete attention. *You damn old slanty-eyed bastard. Where did you get those confidential numbers from?* Bush shot a glance at Cheney. Cheney returned his gaze and shrugged his shoulders slightly, managing to sip a bit of bourbon, unnoticed.

“Order! Order!” commanded the Speaker, pounding his gavel, “Order in the House of Light!”

Several seconds later, the yells subsided and Van Hong continued, “These five thousand deaths were caused by, among other factors, and I quote, ‘insufficient oxygen supply, toxic gas buildup and carbon dioxide saturation, all of which were exacerbated by the shamefully dilapidated state of the entire air circulation system in these lower levels.’ This document,” continued Van Hong, “only addresses clean air issues in the lower levels of the city, but you all know that even in the upper fifty levels of the city, Climate Control is not doing its job satisfactorily regarding both clean air and drinking water. Aside from the fact that the president is using government soldiers to defend the private city of New Vegas, which is a complete misuse of taxpayer money, I charge him with criminal negligence in the deaths of these Americans!” Again, an uproar from the gathered Men of Light. “Clearly, Negon Bush, as both the president of the United States of America and of the Climate Control Corporation must be held responsible for the oversight of his company’s billion-dollar, multi-city contracts with the federal government.”

Yet again, the room exploded into sound and movement, this time into complete chaos. Men were standing and shouting at each other, threatening physical blows. Two of the women present traded cardio kick-boxing blows. Some of the neoconservatives were even cheering for Van Hong.

The Speaker of the House of Light again pounded his gavel on the sound block on his podium. “Silence! Silence! Thank you, Mr. Van Hong. You may step down now,” Van Hong took his seat. “Mr. President, your statement please.”

Bush was truly in a state of shock; he had been completely blind-sided. He had no idea how Van Hong had got that document into his hands; it should have been buried, never seeing

the light of day. If impeached, he would lose business in many of his corporations, but more importantly he would lose the incredible power to which he was addicted.

Bush took a second to collect himself, stood up and walked regally over to the podium. He reached out and adjusted the height of the microphone, nodded confidently to some of the friendly faces gathered and cleared his throat.

“Men of Light, I acknowledge that, of late, we’ve fallen into some unexpectedly hard times. However, I’m not guilty of anything except loving my country and our God. Certainly not of somehow aiding in the destruction of Las Vegas, either by the She-Huns or a malfunctioning infrastructure. And definitely not of having contributed to the deaths of those poor, Christian souls, as Mr. Van Hong so recklessly accuses!” A few republicans shouted out their support. The president paused and threw a vicious stare at the leader of the democrats, allowing the others time to look at the man as well. “I would like to tell you all that only tomorrow, on Arnold Schwarzenegger Day, Nitra Khan, the queen and undisputed leader of the She-Huns, will be in Las Vegas to publicly sign an unconditional, permanent peace treaty with the United States of America. Then, life will be better for all Americans, not only a select few,” again, he threw a nasty stare at Van Hong. “I’m confident that yesterday’s attack on the agritube was some sort of failure in communication within the ranks of the She-Hun command, and obviously I will demand an explanation from Khan. Now, about using government troops to protect the privately constructed city of New Vegas, I’m completely justified. The New House of Light will be there. Besides, this new city will redefine underground living in all of America and is a matter of National Security for all wealth—” he caught himself and quickly restated, “for all well-thinking Americans. Thank you for your attention.”

The room erupted into turmoil. Whistles and shouts of

approval sounded with some of the men stamping their feet on the floor. Others shook their heads in disbelief, booed or hurled insults at the president and at other republicans. It was mayhem.

“Silence!” screamed the Speaker. Thirty seconds later, the room finally fell silent once again. “The voting will begin in two minutes.”

Despite all of the technology in America in 2101, to avoid electronic vote-rigging the Men of Light employed an age old method that made it impossible to cheat. Each official had in his or her pocket a green poker chip and a red poker chip. They formed a line and one by one passed the podium where the Speaker of the House stood, watching over a box with a sunken slot in the top. Each representative dropped his chip into the box, his hand hidden from view.

The Speaker was the last to drop his chip in the box, casting the final vote. He then opened up the box and began to take out the chips, placing them in a counting machine to his right. A large scoreboard, bearing the words

Cheney, Brown and Root Oil Pipelines, Inc. -
You Bomb, We Rebuild!

kept a running tally on the wall behind him.

As the scoreboard displayed the changing total of the number of votes for and against, as well as the running percentages, the Men of Light oohed and aahed. It came down to the last few votes. Finally, the scoreboard read:

VOTES FOR IMPEACHMENT: 116 (67.05%)
VOTES AGAINST IMPEACHMENT: 57 (32.95%)

Negon Bush stared blankly at the final tally. In the dozens of impeachment votes against Bush presidents, never had the

Men of Light achieved the two-thirds majority needed to impeach. The president unconsciously reached into his pocket and grabbed a black ice crystal. He looked over at Cheney, who was already opening his flask of bourbon.

Suddenly, in a black-ice induced rush, Bush stood up and declared authoritatively to all present, "I veto this bill!"

The Speaker, the democrats and even some of the republicans broke into laughter.

Cheney tugged at Bush's jacket; he leaned over and Cheney informed him that what had just happened was an impeachment vote and not a vote to pass a bill. Bush looked at Cheney, puzzled.

"Negon, you only have veto power over Men-of-Light approved bills that end up on your desk, and not over impeachment votes."

The president slowly sat down, bewildered.

When the laughter had subsided, the Speaker declared, "The Men of Light have spoken. As per the GHWIII Amendment, parties must announce their candidates for the reelection within twelve hours of now. The reelection Committee, formed at the beginning of the president's current term, shall report to my conference room at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow. That is all!" A final slam of the gavel concluded the session.

The democrats stood up and high-fived and hugged one another. Some of the republicans filed past Bush and offered their subdued support for the upcoming nomination within their party.

Bush shook hands with all of his supporters and took his seat again. He had recovered from the initial shock of the defeat and was already thinking about how best to maximize his chances of victory. The impeached president motioned, and the democratic Speaker of the House walked over to him.

Sacrifice on the Altar of Divine Desire

Corporal David Hings awoke; he shivered with cold.

Damn! What happened to the heating? He looked over at the thermostat mounted on the wall above his bed. He saw rough-hewn stone. *What the hell?*

Then it all came rushing back to him. He sat up quickly, taking in the unfamiliar surroundings for the first time, as the She-Huns had deposited him in this room in a drugged slumber.

Hings sat on the dirt floor of a prison cell. Two Agritube Protection Force soldiers and three agritube forced laborers lay sleeping on the floor, scattered about the room. There was no sign of the other Americans taken captive with Hings outside the agritube. A wave of anxiety and fear hit him hard.

A biogas lamp, fueled by gas produced from composted avocactus plants and Rekol beetle remains, burned in the hallway outside, dimly illuminating the cell through the latticed, metal door. Footsteps sounded in the passageway, growing louder. A She-Hun wearing a wide, gray cloak made of tanned battle boar hide appeared and wordlessly pushed a big bowl of cold Rekol beetle meat and several earthen jugs of water through a small opening at the bottom of the cell door. She disappeared, the sound of her footsteps receding away down the hallway.

Hings grabbed a jug and took a deep drink of the life-sustaining fluid. “Hey, wake up you guys, we have some food and water!”

The American prisoners stirred to life and although bewildered and afraid they all ate and drank greedily without speaking; they were famished. They finished the provisions within a few minutes and began to study their surroundings.

“Where are we?” one of the agritube laborers asked one of the Agritube Protection Force soldier-motivators.

“I’d say we’re up shit’s crick without a paddle. It looks like—”

“Silence!”

The Americans started, as a She-Hun voice boomed into the cell from the doorway. Two young She-Huns now stood there, armed with submachine guns. The warriors wore black uniforms made of Rekol beetle skin, the insignia of a two-headed, four-faced woman adorning the breastplates. The women scrutinized the prisoners through the bars, looking hard at each one. “Get up!” commanded the taller She-Hun in English, spoken with a very heavy Hunzanian accent. She turned to her comrade, “Klyta, only six of them left.”

The men stood up, extremely anxious after hearing the comment.

“Strip down!” Klyta ordered. The men hesitated, looking at one another in confusion. She raised her gun and pointed it at the midsection of Hings. “Now! Or I will blow your balls off!”

The Americans undressed and dropped their clothing to the floor.

Hings noticed that both of the She-Huns were staring directly at him.

“You, come here!”

Hings looked around him uncertainly.

“Yes, you, fat man!” the taller She-Hun bore her gaze into Hings’s eyes.

Hings summoned all of his courage and stepped slowly over to the door, stopping about four feet away from it.

“Turn around and bend over.”

Hings looked his captors in the eye and considered disobeying, but after a brief hesitation he followed the order.

“Quite big, this one’s ass, Bruta” said Klyta. “I think the

priestess will like him very much. Hunza is very hungry today. Come closer, big ass!”

Hings moved forward, now standing right next to the bars.

Klyta touched the muzzle of her submachine gun to Hings’s genitals. “Show us an erection, or you’re dead!”

Hings looked up at the She-Huns, both taller than the American, in disbelief; he had no idea how he could possibly get an erection at this point in time.

Hings could not help but notice that both of these women had beautiful faces and perfect, long legs. To his own amazement, his penis began to enlarge and stand up. The She-Huns observed with clinical attention. Finally, Bruta said “Ok, you’re the one. Get dressed and come with us! Do it quickly!”

Wondering what these She-Huns wanted with him, Hings wordlessly put his clothes on. The other men were still on the floor, staring at the warriors. “If any of you move an inch, it will be the last thing you ever do!”

Klyta opened the cell door and ordered Hings out into the unpolished, stone-block hallway. He stepped out and she closed the door behind him. The two women warriors bound his hands with avocactus-fiber rope and covered his eyes with a blindfold. They pushed and pulled the American captive through the poorly ventilated hallways; the air hung heavy with the odor of mold and mildew that grew on the damp surfaces of the passageway.

After walking for ten minutes, Hings detected the odor of sulphur in the air. He felt heat on his face and heard the sizzling and crackling noises of bonfires coming from ahead of him. He also heard a rhythmic metallic rustling and the sounds of beating drums. The trio stepped out of the passageway and into a large cavern – the central square of the underground city of Hunzania.

The sounds now overwhelmed Hings's hearing. Bruta removed his blindfold and the first thing the American saw was the gigantic, two-headed statue of Hunza 200 feet in front of him. Molten lava flowed from its vagina and down into a trough cut into the floor. The lava flow ran in the trough for fifty feet, where it finally pooled in a large depression in the floor.

In one of her four hands, Hunza dangled the figure of a naked man upside down. Hings studied it for a second, and realized it was not a figure, but rather a live man. Hings felt that he recognized the man but could not be sure.

Amid dozens of open bonfires, thousands of women were gathered here, drinking from ceramic goblets, talking and laughing among themselves. Many played drums of all sizes and others played distinctive instruments made of thinly pressed metal sheets attached to beetle-leg handles; they emitted different rustling tones when waved and shaken about. Suddenly, the entire room fell quiet and the women all faced the huge statue, directing their gazes toward the belly button.

Hings's guards pushed him forward again and they slowly made their way through the crowd and toward the statue. A pang of worry shot through the American prisoner as it dawned on Hings that his guards were obviously taking him to be sacrificed. They stopped and listened. Bruta whispered to Hings, "The sacred lava-Mother-Earth-blood flows from the vagina of Hunza three days of every twenty-eight. On the stroke of every hour, one man is sacrificed on the days that she bleeds. This nourishes her molten innards and renews her strength for each lunar monthly life cycle. Today is the third and final day this month."

"Just my luck," said Hings out loud. He sighed in resignation, unable to tear his eyes away from the man dangling

upside down one hundred feet away from him. “My God,” he muttered out loud in realization, “that’s Medic Brown.”

“Yes,” said Bruta calmly, “one of your fellow prisoners of war from the transport truck. He failed the test. Shut up and watch.”

Hings did as he was told. The room remained in complete silence. At the navel of the statue of Hunza, one of the high She-Hun priestesses stood in a small balcony there. She raised a golden chalice of Rekol wine to the onlookers, and began to recite prayers in the Hunzanian language. At the end of each verse, the crowd sang back “Halabamos Hunza!” – “We praise Hunza!”

After twenty-eight verses of prayer, one glorifying each day of the lunar cycle, all the She-Huns raised their arms aloft; holding wine cups in the left hand, they made a scissors-cutting gesture with the index and middle fingers of the right.

On a signal from the priestess, a final shout of “Halabamos Hunza!” rose up from the crowd and the fingers of the huge statue released the dangling man. He fell one hundred feet down through the air, arms and legs flailing, his scream of “hysterectomies to all you evil bitches” filling the entire cavern. With a thud, he landed in the large pool of 1400-degree lava. As he was consumed alive by the glowing magma, his screams of pain piercing the silence in the room, he died in a ball of flames seconds later. His body was sucked down into the molten liquid, each arm extended straight upwards out of the lava giving the middle finger to his murderesses.

The assembled crowd broke into revelry, cheering and drinking Rekol wine, as the man’s body was carried by the lava back into the center of the earth through a drain in the bottom of the pool. Every citizen of Hunzania witnessed at least one of the monthly sacrifices, spiritually uplifted by the

goddess's renewed strength that would sustain these faithful female followers until the next bleeding days.

Hings stood motionless and speechless; he had only seen a She-Hun for the first time twenty-four hours earlier and had had no idea about their society and customs. Now, after witnessing the attack of the procto-dragonflies and the ritual before him, he had a very bad feeling. Bruta and Klyta led him over to the base of the statue, where they all stepped into an elevator. The doors closed and they began to descend amid loud, mechanical crashing and gnashing noises.

After descending 300 feet, the elevator doors opened into a small, stone-walled chamber. Two women warriors, also wearing black armor with a stylized insignia of Hunza on their breastplates that denoted them as members of the Temple Guard, stood at attention next to a doorway that led into a second chamber. Klyta saluted the guards and said, "We have a fat American to see the high priestess."

The guard motioned them through, saying, "My Hunza, he's very flabby indeed. He'll serve us very well – one way or another."

Hings began to shake involuntarily; he had no idea what was going on. Bruta pushed him into the secondary chamber, Klyta following them in.

Biogas torches dimly lit the large room; flickering light splashed across the hewn stone walls. Three statues of Hunza lined each of the four walls, all having large, high-quality diamonds for eyes. A fresco depicting ancient She-Hun warriors mounted bareback on horses and fighting with bows and arrows adorned the ceiling; their Asian male adversaries looked away in fear and desperation. "This is Hunza's most beautiful sanctuary," Klyta whispered to Hings. "You should be honored, American man, that you have seen this place."

The Hunzanian high priestess sat on a large pallet, stuffed

with insect hair, that lay on top of a black, basaltic base. She was a stunningly beautiful She-Hun; her long, dyed, lava-orange-red hair braided and wrapped turban-like upon her head; her long, slender legs were crossed in front of her. She wore a cloak of red battle boar hide.

Bruta and Klyta saluted her saying, "Praise Hunza and her high priestess, Cooba."

"Praise Hunza and you, her daughters and my sisters," the priestess responded. Then she addressed Hings in accented English, "You have been honored. I'll decree if you satisfy Hunza today with just your sexual energy, or if you will have to sacrifice your physical body for the good of all She-Huns. Strip down and step into the cleansing basin," she nodded to a large, basaltic basin near the bed.

Hings followed orders, having now resigned himself as best he could to whatever fate awaited him. He removed his clothes and climbed into the deep, eight-foot diameter vessel.

"We're lucky to have such a plump man around. Hunza prefers fat men in bed and in the lava pool!"

"Praise Hunza!" Bruta and Klyta sang in unison.

Hings looked around him, bewildered. Cooba got up off the bed, walked over to the basin and took a bone ladle from a hook on the side. She reached over the edge and began to ritualistically wash the American, ladling the water over his head and body while chanting prayers in Hunzanian. The two other She-Huns joined in for portions of the prayers.

After twenty-four ablutions with the ladle, one for each hour of the day, Cooba led Hings over to the bed. Standing, she removed her cloak and revealed her large, full breasts; the hair of her pubic area was shaved into a rune that represented two ideals simultaneously – divine pleasure and divine retribution. A tiny figure of Hunza worn on a golden chain rested in her cleavage. She and Hings climbed onto the bed. He was

now breathing deeply, fear in his eyes, uncomfortable that the two other She-Huns stood in the doorway watching.

“Sit up and drink this,” Cooba poured two chalices of a specially prepared and blessed Rekol wine. Hings sat up and took the cup, looking at the dark green liquid doubtfully. “Take it all in one gulp.” They both drank their wine down. The effect was immediate. Hings felt light headed from the libation, which contained a high-percentage alcohol Rekol beetle wine and a hallucinogen, a cousin to mescaline, derived from the avocactus plant.

Cooba took the cup from him and said in a sharp tone, “So it begins. Lie back, American. The conditions of this trial are simple. We will have intercourse. If you climax too early, you will be sacrificed – dangled from Hunza’s hand in the main city square and then dropped into the lava pool to return to her womb in the center of the Earth. If you cannot orgasm at all, you will be sacrificed. If your sexual energy and spirit do not mix with mine, you will be sacrificed. Hunza feels through me. If for any reason she’s not satisfied, you will be sacrificed. Do you understand?”

Without hesitation, Hings asked, “Could I have another cup of that green stuff, please?”

“You dare address the priestess directly, you American man-pig?” chastised Cooba. “But I must say, I’m impressed that you have the courage to do such a thing.” She reached to the small table next to the bed, poured him another chalice of the wine and handed it to him. He downed the bittersweet liquid in one, long pull and handed the chalice back to her. She replaced it on the table.

Cooba again began to chant in Hunzanian, raising her arms above her, mentally communing with Hunza and falling into trance. Still chanting, she lowered her left hand and began

to fondle Hings's genitals, massaging his entire pubic area in order to get him aroused.

Hings now felt the effects of the wine he had drunk; the room and everything in it was spinning and everything he looked at had a surreal edge to it. Distantly, he reflected: *Well, there are certainly worse ways to go. Especially for a soldier.* To his relief, he felt himself beginning to get an erection.

"Ah, yes. Very good, American man," Cooba said. In Hunzanian, she called out, "Bruta, bring the condom."

Bruta walked over to the bed and placed the condom, which was made of battle boar intestine, on Hings's hardening penis. She returned to her place at the doorway.

Cooba climbed onto Hings, who was on his back. Her breathing became deeper and louder. Straddling him, she began to gyrate her hips. As the minutes passed, she gyrated faster and more wildly on top of the American, her big breasts swinging around in front of her. In English, she screamed, eyes glazed in trance, "Just as men have raped your land and water of natural resources for thousands of years, Mother Earth Hunza, so now you rape a man to gain energy, strength and power from him."

The minutes went by, the high priestess continuing to thrust her hips in every direction, Hings deep inside her. He felt climax approaching. *Damn it Hings! Distract yourself; do you want to die in a molten fireball at the hands of these She-Hun fanatics?*

As Cooba began to moan, approaching her own climax, Hings thought to himself, *I wonder what it would feel like to have one of those She-Hun dragonflies go up your ass?* He closed his eyes to imagine this feeling completely.

"Look at me, American man!" yelled Cooba as she gave Hings a resounding slap across the face. She rode him more and more fervently. She leaned far back over his legs. Then

she threw herself forward, beating him on the chest with both hands.

Hings was seconds away from ejaculation. Still looking into Cooba's eyes, he forced himself to concentrate entirely on the preparation of chili con meatball: *ingredients necessary – onion, garlic, ground meatball, tomato sauce, spices, beans. Marinate the ground meatball in garlic, spices and oil for twelve hours. Soak beans overnight before cooking.* A breast bumped into Hings's face and he was forced to think about sex once again, admiring the She-Hun's body anew. He forced himself into distraction: *Chili powder. Not too much. Not everyone likes spicy chili. Oh yeah, ground cumin. Very important.* The high priestess grabbed his hands and put them behind her, on her satin-soft, full buttocks.

"Yes, American man! It will be over soon!" she panted, opening her mouth and showing white teeth. Her long, pink tongue circled around her lips in ecstasy. She looked down at him – a predator eyeing its prey. Cooba stretched upward, inhaling deeply and thrusting her chest outward.

Hings could not see the woman's face now, only her breasts; *Surely it can't be much longer.*

"Oh yes! Oh yes! Hunza is going to come!"

Hings felt the bed begin to shake and vibrate. He saw the other statues in the room vibrating as well; the diamond eyes in the heads glowed orange-red.

A low rumble issued forth from deep within the Earth beneath them. The whole room shook. Flakes of gold-leaf came off of the ceiling and floated down to the ground. Bruta and Klyta closed their eyes and recited a sacred prayer for this occasion.

With a protracted, primal scream, Cooba came to orgasm. She leaned back and supported herself on Hings's thighs. The statues now shot narrow beams of orange-red light from their

eyes, a grid pattern covering the entire room. The vibrations began to subside. Then all went silent.

Cooba leaned forward again, still deeply in trance. Hings kissed her breasts and moaning, ejaculated, mostly with relief that he had not come to orgasm before the She-Hun, although he had enjoyed this bizarre experience on some level.

He looked up at Cooba expectantly.

The She-Hun priestess looked deep into the American's eyes and patted him lightly on the cheek. "Not bad, fat man. Hunza has been satisfied. You get to live another lunar month, then Hunza will try you once again." She reached over to the bedside table and picked up her Hun-com. "My queen?"

"Yes, high-priestess?" the voice of Nitra Khan answered.

"I have one for you."

"That is excellent news for our sisterhood. That's the first one to pass the test in three months, isn't it? He couldn't have shown up at a better time."

Rocket Golf

Negon Bush sat with Sadina Rice and Beem Cheney in the passenger compartment of the luxury presidential rocket golf Hummer. Measuring sixty-five feet long, it was equipped with a wet bar, video room, full kitchen, fifty-square-foot S&M closet, an art studio and, of course, a hot tub. They headed through the Mojave Desert, traveling southwest of Las Vegas, burning one gallon of gas for every mile covered. Five hundred M10-A10 tanks, manned by 2,000 Defenders of the Light, surrounded the Hummer in a spread formation to protect it on all sides against any She-Hun or Free Vegas attacks.

The global storm's wind speeds blew relatively mildly, at between only twenty-five and thirty-five m.p.h. It was a good

day for rocket golf, and Bush needed to think some things through.

Inside the Hummer, Beem Cheney tried to calm his friend. “Looks like we’ll make our three o’clock tee-off time, Negon,” Cheney joked; rocket golf had no tee-off times – there was plenty of desert for everyone.

Bush remained silent.

“Look, Negon, don’t worry about these elections. We will work it out, no problem. Here, I called in a favor,” Cheney handed the president a small glass vial. “This is the freshest, most potent black ice available on the market. It was just confiscated at Military HQ West about an hour ago.”

Bush accepted the vial with a smile, opened it and sniffed a crystal. “I don’t know, Beem. I still can’t believe they voted to impeach.”

“Sir,” Rice interrupted, having just ended a conversation over her MFD, “I just received word. It seems as though Cloud Base managed to buy off the extra votes to impeach. Did you know he had that kind of money?”

“No idea. My Lord, that means he’ll be moving to New Vegas if he can afford those kinds of bribes.”

Cheney consoled, “Don’t worry, we’ll get him on Wednesday night. Let’s brainstorm here and figure this thing out.”

“Mr. President,” the driver’s voice addressed the president over the intercom system, “we’ll be arriving at the tee-off location in just a few minutes.”

Bush asked his advisors, “Where were we?”

“Mr. President,” Sadina Rice took a deep breath to draw Bush’s attention to her breasts. She was a bit worried about her political future and wanted to make sure that Bush remembered her input during this crucial meeting. “What those idiot Men of Light think and what the public thinks are two totally different things.”

“Sadie is right,” assured Cheney. “Look, we can easily influence the popular vote through the media, not to mention with a bit of good old-fashioned strong-arming from the Defenders of the Light.”

“Ok,” said Bush. “First off, let me tell you both that for a very reasonable price the Speaker of the House has guaranteed me that the elections will take place tomorrow evening and not in seven days. That way, the voting public will be in a positive mood after Khan and I sign the peace treaty. Second, I’m expecting a call within an hour to confirm that I’ve secured the nomination as the republican candidate in the election tomorrow.”

“Whoa! Nice going, Negon,” complimented Cheney. “How much did that cost you?”

“In total, a cool hundred million – and a dozen guaranteed city level 1 spots on the main air-light shaft in New Vegas.”

“Not bad,” commended Cheney. “So, with the election in only thirty-six hours, the democrats won’t have time to mount a campaign and the idiotic public won’t have time to consider the real meaning of an impeachment vote. Let’s start slinging some serious mud at Van Hong on SkyFox TV immediately.”

Bush considered things for a minute. “Okay. Sadie, you’re responsible for SkyFox TV. Go to Albert Murdoch and offer him double what we paid him for his services before the last election. First priority is to get commercials on nationwide TV telling the people about the signing of the peace treaty with the She-Huns. This should give the voters immediate confidence in me. Next, get some good anti-democrat and anti-Luther Van Hong commercials on tonight. Say that Van Hong is the descendent of a commie, North Vietnamese Frenchman. Say that his great grandfather voted against both wars in Iraq and the invasions of Iran, Kuwait, and Canada last century. And if you have to stare at the ceiling with everyone over there from

Murdoch on down to the coffee boy then, by God, you'll do it! Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly, sir." Rice laughed inside at the irony that for all of his masochistic desires, Bush could only associate the act of intercourse with the missionary position. "Don't worry, Mr. President," added Rice calmly, "I'll do whatever it takes." She knew her career was on the line as well. "Everything will be fine. Tomorrow evening you will be reelected president of the United States."

The Hummer came to a stop.

"Let's continue this little chat out on the rocket golf course, shall we?" ordered Bush. Rocket golf was the most exclusive sport in America. A round of eighteen holes cost more than forty years' salary for the average working man. Only 10,000 Americans could afford to play the game regularly.

Bush opened the sliding door and stepped out into the desert winds for a moment. The president leaned back inside the Hummer, "It's not too bad out here. The wind hasn't picked up at all! Let's golf!"

Cheney and Rice got out of the truck and joined Bush. They walked to the back of the vehicle. Jim Rogers, the head caddy for the day's game, had already sat himself at a control console and fifty-inch monitor. Around them, the M10-A10 escort tanks had stopped, awaiting orders.

"So, Jim, let's see what we've got here," Bush looked at the screen over the technician's shoulder and studied the eighteen-hole course that Rogers had laid out in three dimensions on the monitor. The course covered a total land area of 400 square-miles. "Looks good, Jim. Well done."

Jim Rogers punched numbers into the keyboard for about thirty seconds and hit the "execute" command. A door slid open on the roof of the Hummer and a missile launcher, carrying three rows of six missiles, rose up out of it.

"Fire when ready, sir."

“Fire away!” commanded Bush.

With a deafening noise, the modified Tomahawk cruise missiles launched off the missile rack and flew in all directions.

“Yeeeeeeee-haaaw!” yelled Bush and Cheney together, exhibiting their typical adolescent behavior.

Within a minute, all of the missiles had detonated in the desert, creating holes fifty feet wide and ten feet deep. Bush surveyed the distance and spotted most of the plumes of red smoke that would mark the holes for several hours; they rose 300 feet up into the air, trailing off downwind. The M10-A10 escort tanks set off to set up their perimeter around the missile-crater holes. Including the expense of the military escort, Bush would spend millions of dollars of tax payer money in just a few hours. The funds came from the national defense budget because if the president and vice president were not relaxed, they could not carry out their obligation to protect the nation from foreign and domestic threats.

Steve Thomas, the driver and assistant caddy, opened a storage area and retrieved all the clubs, handing them to the players. Then he walked about ten yards away from the Hummer and pushed three semi-circular tees into the ground, placing the one-foot wide rocket golf balls on them. He walked back to the golfing trio. “All ready for hole one, sirs. Distance is 1.2 miles. Par 3.”

“Ladies first,” said Bush, motioning Rice to the tee-off area.

Rice walked over to the tee a few yards away.

“You know, Negon,” thought Cheney out loud, “why don’t I have fifty thousand Defenders of the Light posted near the polling netpoints in the lower fifty levels of the city. We can prevent a good many people from voting, a la Miami in 2000 – between eight and ten million, at least.”

“Yeah. But don’t stop too many white men from voting, even if they are democrats. Otherwise we might raise some eyebrows.”

“Don’t worry about it. We’ll have complete control over the media tomorrow night.”

Bush admired Rice’s curvaceous profile in her skin-tight, flame-resistant, American-Fila rocket golf suit as she took a few practice swings.

“God Bless America,” slurred Cheney as he ogled Rice as well, gulping down another swallow of liquor. “Remember, Negon, all criminals convicted of embezzlement, insider trading, price fixing and collusion, tax fraud, insurance fraud or any other white-collar crime are allowed to vote in this election.”

“Yes, yes,” pondered Bush, still distracted by Rice’s body. “That should be almost two million votes for me. That was a nice piece of legislation you pushed through there, Beem!”

“Thank you very much, Negon.”

“Let’s watch Sadie.”

Bush and Cheney watched as Rice pressed a button in the grip of the club and activated the rocket engine in the ball on the tee in front of her. The motors ignited with explosive bangs; the ball would be held on the tee until a sensor detected contact by the club.

Rice took a long, high backswing, thinking that she would have to slice this shot considerably due to the prevailing wind and then swung through the ball with all of her strength, simultaneously turning the handle of her club to give the ball’s engines full thrust. Each player was allowed to give an initial, continuous, main-engine burn of up to five seconds. After that, three separate adjustment burns of up to one second on the two side engines were allowed.

The ball shot off the tee, hissing loudly, at an angle of

about sixty degrees. At a height of 800 feet, Rice cut off the thrust. The storm now drove the ball directly towards the first hole. Rice used one adjustment burn of half a second, putting the ball down about 300 feet in front of the red smoke column.

Rice walked back over to the Hummer.

“Great shot! Nice ball control!” said Bush, slapping her robustly on the ass.

“Yeah, not bad for a girl, Sadie,” commended Cheney, “but let me show you how it’s done. Cheney took a swig of bourbon, zipped up his suit and staggered over to his tee. He fired up the rocket engine, took a shaky back swing and clumsily followed through, giving full thrust on the club handle. Flames spewed out from the small rocket nozzles and the ball climbed almost vertically into the sky.

Bush broke into gut-busting laughter. Rice smiled, a rare peep of laughter escaping her; today, she was an equal with these men of supreme power.

Cheney turned at the throttle control and reduced the thrust sharply. Too much. The rocket motor fizzled out and the ball, now fifteen-pounds of deadweight, fell back to Earth.

“Hey Beem, you really showed her, huh?”

He ignored the president. “Mulligan.” He teed up again.

Cheney took his backswing, which was even shakier than the previous one, and followed through with the stroke. His left foot slipped, causing him to turn the handle and give too much thrust. More importantly, it caused him to slice the ball almost ninety degrees to the right. As it sped towards the Hummer, Bush and Rice hit the dirt. Steve Thomas, who was leaning into the storage area checking equipment, did not see the ball coming. It glanced off his shoulder with enough force to slam him into the door frame, then grazing the roof of the Hummer. Thomas fell to the ground moaning in agony, as the

ball continued onward fifty feet spinning out of control, finally slamming into a large boulder and exploding into flames.

The vice president laughed. Bush laughed too. Rice, still on the ground, shook her head. *Fraternity boys running the world.*

Cheney walked over to the injured man and summoned a medic on his MFD. "I'm very sorry, Steve." Another laugh. "Really. As general of the army, I'll make sure you get a purple heart as you were injured protecting your country. I'll make sure the Department of Defense finds a way to get a little something into your bank account as well. Okay?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir." Although in pain, Thomas had not been seriously injured.

The golfing trio finished out the game without further incident, while discussing additional strategies to be used to win the reelection. Predictably, the president won. Rice came in second. Cheney only played twelve holes before passing out in the Hummer.

On the return trip to Las Vegas, Bush stared out the window thinking of the intense few days that lay ahead of him – the meeting with Khan, Operation Smoke Out and Friday's move to New Vegas. His thoughts were interrupted by an incoming call on the maximum-security channel of his MFD. He detached one of the tiny wireless earpieces on the device and inserted it into his ear.

"President Bush here." He spoke at a normal volume; the sensitive, calibrated microphone on his MFD picked up his voice and relayed it to the listener. They spoke for a few seconds and Bush ended the call with, "That's great. Really great."

Rice looked over at Bush and raised her eyebrows. He gave her a thumbs up.

The president then looked over at his friend, Beem Cheney, wanting to share the news of his nomination within

the republican party with him, but the vice president was still asleep, snoring loudly, mouth open, drooling slightly.

A Surprising Sex Story

Danton Gore lay on a king-sized bed, panting. Next to him, lay Ella Houston, his attractive, early evening, wife-of-a-general client. She was really panting. She reached over to the bedside table, removed another crystal of blue ice from her twenty-four-karat gold pillbox and popped it into her mouth.

“It never ceases to amaze me, Danton,” Houston slurred in a drugged, sexual state of ecstasy. “That chakra thing is simply mind-blowing. I can’t believe that you can do that just from lots of practice. Surely, there is something you’re not telling me about.”

Gore considered telling his client about the visit he had had from the spaceship all those years before, but he still did not know her well enough to trust her with such dangerous information.

Maybe another day. Out loud, Gore said, “No, my dear, it really is just practice. Surely, I’m not the only man who ever thrilled you like that?”

Ella Houston paused a few seconds. “Well, actually, maybe once before. But it wasn’t thrilling in a positive way, like with you.”

“What do you mean?”

“It was more due to, well, overwhelming fear.”

“Overwhelming fear? Why would you make love in fear?”

Houston sighed; she had not thought of this in years and now that she was doing so, she remembered just how painful it really still was for her. “Well, it was about ten years ago,” she slurred on, “somewhere in the District of Power. It was with the general of the army himself, Beem Cheney, before I was

married. He led me, blindfolded, to a guarded building where we did it on top of a nuclear bomb!" She stopped suddenly and wept lightly.

Gore said nothing, looking into her eyes, mentally urging her to continue. "I shouldn't be telling you this, Danton. Cheney said he would kill me if I ever spoke of it and I never have." She looked at him, sensing trust between them. "Anyway, he armed the fucking thing and we went at it for about twenty-five minutes. Then the bastard kept me in fear for my life for a few more minutes before finally disarming the damned thing only eight seconds before detonation. It was horrible. I really thought he would kill us both and all of Las Vegas along with us just to prove his manhood and bravado."

Gore was shocked, but said only, "That must have been terrible. I'm so sorry." He began to kiss her once again, but his mind was elsewhere. America did not have nuclear bombs. No country on the planet had since 2062.

Ella Houston nodded off into slumber a few minutes later.

Danton Gore grabbed his MFD from the bedside table and began to type a message to Cloud Base.

Sexy Sadie at Sky Fox Studios

Albert Murdoch sat in his office chair eating his lunch, a supersize McPizza with meatball bacon. Sadina Rice sat across from him on a leather couch, looking around in disgust at dozens of food containers and wrappers and half empty BushCoke cups. She tried not to convey her aversion to the fat, forty-eight year old workaholic with whom she had to deal right now.

"Albert," she spoke with a controlled voice that conveyed authentic respect, "you're the president and CEO of the Foxy Media Group. You own virtually every television network and

city newspaper in the country. You've seen the polls that I just conducted. The president and I are requesting your immediate aid until the end of the elections tomorrow night."

"Well, Sadina, what did you have in mind?" Murdoch eyed her skin-tight blouse with expectancy.

"I've been authorized to do whatever it takes," she gave him a long look.

"Whatever it takes to accomplish what, exactly?"

"Whatever it takes," she slowly opened and crossed her legs, "to ensure that Nekon R. Bush continues to serve as the president of the United States."

"Uh huh," answered Murdoch absentmindedly, having had a full look at Rice's bush.

She continued, "The elections will be held in twenty-four hours. I need you to begin broadcasting pro-Bush commercials on all one thousand of your channels nationwide immediately – on the hundreds of porn channels, the hundreds of all-sports channels, the dozens of movie channels, the game show channels, the talk show channels, the infotainment channels, even the one hard-news channel – all of them. We also need you to contact Clear Channel and get us advertising spots on the radio stations every twenty minutes. Oh yeah, and you won't run a single ad for the democrats on any channel."

Murdoch leaned back in his chair, considering her words. His paunch popping out over his belt, he asked "And I would do this because...?"

Rice stood up and sat down on his desk, pulling him forward by his necktie and leaning over so that her breasts were in his face. She lightly caressed his ear. In a flash, she put a black ice crystal under Murdoch's nose, which vaporized immediately, shooting up into his nostril.

"Well, Albert, there are lots of reasons." Calmly, she opened the locket on her necklace, releasing pherheroin, a powerful narco-aphrodisiac. "Here are two very good ones."

Rice took Murdoch's hands and placed them on her breasts. After a few seconds of enjoyment for the media mogul, she removed his hands and continued, "But there's a much more pressing reason for you and your corporation. You do want your reporters to be invited to presidential press conferences in New Vegas, don't you?"

Murdoch's mind was cloudy. He twitched his nose like a hare, inhaling the aphrodisiac and looking into the beautiful canyon of Rice's cleavage. "Of course I do, Ms. Rice."

"Well, I think we understand each other then. And, oh, Albert, that's not all. We'll need you to put subliminals into the commercials starting tomorrow afternoon. Don't want to raise any eyebrows by airing them too soon. We'll need them during the broadcast of the speeches as well."

"What do you mean, Ms. Rice? I'm committed to objective reporting of the news."

"Really, Albert, have you watched SkyFox News lately? Is that what you call 'objective'? Those reporters speak in terms and innuendos so far to the right, they're in the European time zone! And in first person, no less!"

Rice got off the desk, took Murdoch's hand, and led him over to the couch. He followed, spellbound. She lightly pushed him and he fell onto the couch. She sat down, very close to him, her red, one-piece minidress having climbed way up her thighs. Caressing his chest, she said, "Now, Albert, there will of course be a considerable financial reward as well."

"Okay, Ms. Rice." He looked her in the eye, "I hope, for your public life's sake and for Bush's, that you keep up your end of the bargain."

"Don't you worry, Albert. I'm very committed to the cause. Now, why don't we get to work."

"Yes. Quite." Murdoch responded with far away eyes; he was well intoxicated by the black ice and the pherheroin, as well as by the thought of the promised sex that awaited him.

He slowly stood up, and led Rice through the offices to the editing room.

“Ms. Rice, this is Alfonso Castillo.” Albert Murdoch was trying, unsuccessfully, not to ogle the woman while in the presence of his underling.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Castillo.”

“My pleasure,” said Castillo, shaking her hand. “Now, Ms. Rice, we will take a two-pronged approach: aural and visual. Sound good?”

“Sounds great. For visual, I think these images should be fine,” Rice handed him a quantum memory stick.

“What are they, if I may ask?” said Castillo.

“Oh, I fabricated them from existing archive photos. Van Hong sexually molesting children, having sex with goats and accepting bribe money. I’d like to use all three, if that’s possible.”

“No problem. I’ll cut each one in for a thousandth of a second from the beginning of the election broadcast. Each image will be seen twenty times a minute.”

“Okay. That’s perfect. Explain the hearing side of subliminal suggestion to me,” requested Rice.

“Of course, first—”

“By the way, Ms. Rice,” Murdoch cut Castillo off, “for the record, this is experimental technology only. We’ve never used it in any advertisements for paying customers, even though sales for those customers may have increased by up to forty percent after running ads on our network. Is that understood?”

“Of course, Albert. I would never have assumed otherwise. Please, continue, Mr. Castillo.”

“Okay. I can also mask a voice into the entire election broadcast, regardless of who is speaking. Up to three words

at once, Ms. Rice. Just tell me what you want to say, and I can have it electronically inserted.” He awaited her response.

“Let’s see,” began Rice. “Straightforward is best, I think. For pro-Bush suggestions let’s go with ‘vote Bush,’ ‘Bush is better’ and ‘Bush dynasty forever.’ For anti-Luther Van Hong, let’s use ‘Van Hong immoral,’ ‘democrat spineless leadership,’ and ‘Luther liberal loser.’”

“Excellent.” Castillo tapped the keyboard and the manipulation of the media was complete. “That’s it, M’am. All done. We’ll get those on the air for you, no problem.”

Tuesday
September 6, 2101 A.D.

Queen Nitra Khan in America

Nitra Khan stood on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee and studied the road through the one-mile wide minefield that surrounded Las Vegas. A pathway of deactivated mines was demarcated by flashing red lights mounted on three-foot high posts, a long airport runway of the days of old. It was just before two o'clock and the sun could barely be seen overhead – a milk-white disk shining weakly high overhead in the sand-filled, late-summer sky.

Ten minutes later, Khan and her diplomatic team of “legatas,” officers in her army having an equivalent rank to that of general, had parked at Las Vegas, main gate, south. The city gate consisted of an area of 10,000 square yards, housed by a building having a roof that resembled a gigantic clam shell, designed to withstand the worst of the fury that the perpetual global storm had to offer. This building was called city level 0 of Military HQ, Las Vegas South, and was commonly referred to simply as the “south gate.” The Defenders of the Light operated and policed thirty vertical link vehicle elevators at the south gate. Any individual entering one of the four city gates of Las Vegas had to stop his vehicle at security checkpoints before then entering one of the vertical link elevators to be carried from the city gate to other levels of the underground metropolis.

From the front of the royal Hun-Vee, a long tube descended and the She-Huns walked through it down to the ground to meet the presidential party. Secret Service agents and TV reporters were everywhere.

“Ah, Nitra Khan, so nice to see you again,” the president of the United States greeted her at one of dozens of large door-

ways that led into the south gate building. “You look stunning. Sexier than a singer at the Grammys.”

Before Bush could move closer to her, Khan offered her hand. Bush took it and squeezed tenderly, looking her deep in the eye. He looked down and admired her breasts shaking in her “diplomatic” uniform, which consisted of very narrow strips of diamond-encrusted chitin held together by gold filaments. Everyone in her party wore such garb, which left nothing to the imagination as far as the chest, legs and butt were concerned; Khan knew full well its effect on a man’s judgment.

The president took a step backward and guided Vera Dan Bush forward by the elbow. As the TV camera zoomed in on the queen’s face, he mouthed, smiling, “You’re the most beautiful woman in the world.”

Khan ignored him completely.

“Your highness, may I introduce my wife, Mrs. Vera Dan Bush?” Vera Dan wore a dark blue, vintage Christian Dior outfit, the miniskirt providing ample leg for the male onlooker.

The first lady offered her hand to Khan and curtsied. The She-Hun kissed the back of it, looking up into Vera Dan’s eyes, and said, “You’re truly a beautiful woman, Mrs. President. I thank you and your husband for the invitation to visit your lovely city.” Khan had never legally been anywhere in America before.

“The pleasure is ours, and thank you for the compliment. I could say the same about you.” Vera Dan was conducting herself very well on behalf of her husband, despite the fact that she had managed to down four doses of blue ice already today without his knowing about it.

Vera Dan stepped back. “And this,” continued Bush, nodding to Cheney, who was just replacing his platinum hip flask

in his inside jacket pocket, “as you know, is my vice president and general of the army, Mr. Beem Cheney.”

Cheney stepped forward and took Khan’s hand, pulling her towards him and clumsily kissing it. “Once again a pleasure, your highness,” slurred Cheney.

Khan withdrew her hand, wrinkling her nose. “What’s that odor?” she asked, looking at the two men.

Bush laughed lightly. “Ah, that’s nothing, your highness. Just the smell of good Kentucky bourbon.”

Cheney grinned sheepishly.

“And now, let us head towards the speedway,” Bush directed. “We have a big day ahead of us!”

Bush, Vera Dan and Cheney climbed into the presidential limousine and Khan and her party climbed into two others. Escorted by 1,000 Abrams M10-A10 battle tanks, the motorcade entered the underground city and descended twenty nine levels to Las Vegas Boulevard, where hundreds of thousands of people lined the street behind police barricades.

“Ah, look at them all. They love me!” boasted Bush, sitting in the sun roof of the limo next to Vera Dan, protected by a transparent, bullet-proof box of plastic a la Popemobile. “They’ve already forgotten about the attack on the agritube yesterday. Those brain-dead cattle will reelect me tonight, without a hitch.” Bush and Vera Dan waved to the crowd, smiling from ear to ear. “They’ll blame our societal troubles on the likes of the convicts that will be executed today and on the liberal democrats like Luther Van Hong.”

“You know it,” affirmed Cheney, calling up from the back seat inside the limo.

Vera Dan gave both men a stare of pure loathing.

The motorcade slowly passed by the Caesar’s Palace V, MGM Grand II and New York, New York hotel casinos, finally arriving at Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway. The limousines

passed the 150-foot tall statue of the actor as he appeared in the first Terminator movie, entering the main tunnel and passing into the ten city-level high stadium.

Amid a jubilant crowd, the limousines and escort vehicles pulled into the artificial-turf infield of the racetrack and parked next to a large stage that had been set up there. Two hundred thousand spectators packed the grandstands, with an additional 200,000 fans having crowded onto the infield in this, the biggest auto racing venue in the world.

All of the dignitaries got out of the limousines and mounted the stage, taking their places at a long table. After everyone had settled into their places, Bush got up and walked over to the microphone. He was not concerned about a Free Vegas threat here; everyone in the stadium had been searched rigorously.

“Hello, one and all. Today, you can all be proud to be Americans, for today we celebrate freedom in two ways. As always, on Arnold Schwarzenegger day, we will ‘terminate’ one hundred and fifty convicted felons.” Bush extended his arm, indicating the fifty electric chairs, provided by General Electric, set up to his left. In glowing, 12-inch high red letters the words, “GE, we bring good things to life!” flashed on the backs of the chairs. Cheers and applause rang out from the crowd. “Also,” continued Bush, “today, we will celebrate freedom and peace through the signing of a new peace treaty with the She-Huns.” A murmur of anticipated expectation surged through the hundreds of thousands of gathered spectators; during the last twenty-four hours TV advertisements had informed them that this historic moment involving the exotic, feared enemy leader would take place at the speedway. “Now, please give a warm welcome to the queen of the She-Huns, her highness, Nitra Khan.”

The crowd fell silent. Khan stood up and approached the microphone, walking as a model does down the catwalk, di-

rectly in front of the television cameras. The eyes of all men in the grandstands were glued to the giant screens mounted all around the speedway.

“First, I would like to say that I sincerely apologize for the attack on your agritube two days ago.” She paused to adjust one of the chitin strips on her dress – the one that passed directly over her left nipple. Smiling, she continued, “It was carried out by a rogue legata and her crew. All of these women have been imprisoned and will have trials before me personally,” she lied. “Next, I want to say that we She-Huns are tired of aggression between our two nations. Today, we acknowledge that the American military is far superior to our own. President Bush is a great commander in chief and we simply want to be left alone to live in peace. Thank you.” Khan looked seductively into the cameras, managing to very naturally wobble her medium-sized, firm breasts.

The audience exploded into applause, the age-old, nationalistic chant of “U-S-A! U-S-A!” rising up into the air and drowning out all other sounds.

Bush looked at Khan, who had taken her seat next to him. “Well done, Nitra. I wasn’t so sure before, but now I think they’ve bought into it.”

Khan smiled at Bush, and then looked at Vera Dan sitting on the other side of him, who was busy ingesting blue ice that she had hidden in her stick of lipstick. Khan stared at the first lady and her full lips, painted bright orange, licking her own suggestively with the tip of her tongue. Vera Dan returned her gaze, curious and inexplicably intrigued.

Bush noticed the two women exchanging glances. *My God! Khan wants Vera Dan. I’m sure she would pay me well for her. Good thinking, Negon!* Bush congratulated himself. He had just figured out how to get rid of his bothersome wife and make some money at the same time.

The presidential party and his invited guests dismounted the stage and got into their vehicles, drove across the infield and parked behind the bleachers. Once again they all got out and entered an elevator, which took them up to the presidential skybox that overlooked the stadium.

Bush entered and began greeting the business leaders that were present awaiting him: board members from McMeatball's, Inc., BushCoke, Inc., Clear Channel Global, Inc., Cheney, Brown and Root Oil Pipelines, Inc., Anheuser-Bush Corporation, Inc., HalliBush & Cheney, Inc., ConAg Rice, Inc., Climate Control Corporation, Inc., the Karlyle Groups, Inc. Mingling freely among the corporate magnates, members of the Secret Service, the CIA, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security also awaited a word with the president. Dozens of the republican Men of Light were also in attendance.

Nitra Khan observed with interest how influential politicians and members of the intelligence and defense communities sat around tables chatting with members of private industry. She overheard bits of conversation that were clearly not superficial ones but rather about how business and government could work together more effectively in the market place to increase profit, circumvent environmental protection laws, reduce competition and lower wages. Khan considered that what she was hearing clearly violated her understanding of capitalism and its revered "free market" economy, but dismissed the thought immediately: *The American economy will be a shambles in a few days anyway. They need to be thinking about the survival tactics used by the peasants during the Dark Ages.* The She-Hun queen chuckled audibly.

As Bush finished saying hello to the most important people in the room, Sam Naish, the owner of the speedway and a famous events promoter, approached the president and handed

him a microphone. “Mr. President, sir, everything is ready to go. We’ve sold out the event, 402,651 tickets. The electric chairs were tested this morning on some Guantanamo Level prisoners, and were adjusted to insure that no one will survive more than two, one-minute jolts.”

“Good job. You’ve outdone yourself today, Sam. I look forward to your highly profitable events in New Vegas.”

“Yes, sir. Now, if you’re ready, why don’t you address the crowd out there?”

“Of course, Sam.” Bush looked into a television camera that broadcast his image on the giant screens around the track, to the American viewers at home, and to what was left of the entire world’s population – two billion people.

“My fellow Americans, we’re gathered here today to recognize one of the greatest red-blooded Americans of all time, Mr. Arnold Schwarzenegger.”

Khan leaned over to Vera Dan Bush sitting next to her and whispered, “I thought he was born in Austria.”

“He was. Half-truths and the truth are one and the same for people like my husband.”

Bush continued, “We honor him as one of the finest governors and actors of all time. He inspired all Americans through his roles as an efficient, patriotic killer both as a man and a machine.”

The crowd cheered and applauded enthusiastically. “Arnie! Arnie!”

The president continued, “In his memory, we will execute here today one hundred and fifty prisoners, all convicted of heinous crimes such as murder, rape, possession of marijuana, homosexual sex and reporting the uncensored truth on the news.”

The crowd was now screaming its approval of the president – and of its society.

“After the executions, the Terminator race will take place.

Please enjoy today's events, which have been sponsored entirely by Anheuser-Bush, the manufacturer of blue ice and the owners of BushCoke. Remember – a BushCoke and a smile. We just want everyone to be happy. And don't forget, the presidential elections will take place just after the race!"

The crowd was now frantic. Vendors walked throughout the stands distributing half-price blue ice and BushCoke.

Sam Naish took the microphone from the president. "Well said, sir." He shook Bush's hand. Bush took Khan's arm and led her and her party over to the catering table, where the best of America's produce harvested from private agritubes had been laid out in a beautiful buffet.

Khan watched Cheney across the room; he was already sat down at the main table, completely engrossed in the government/military/private-business-sector conversations going on there.

Naish continued over the public address system, "And now, let the executions begin!"

Down on the track infield, several dozen Defenders of the Light led the first group of fifty condemned criminals up onto the stage. The prisoners were strapped into the General Electric chairs, each one attended by an individual executioner.

The master of ceremonies for the executions, positioned at the end of the stage, looked up to the skybox, where he could see Bush stood in front of the clear bulletproof glass window, his arm raised. Bush lowered his arm.

The master of ceremonies leaned into his microphone and spoke the still famous words, "You're terminated, mother-fucker!"

The executioners, all dressed as the killer man-robot was in the first movie, simultaneously threw their switches and the fifty bodies twitched and jerked for a full 120 seconds.

The crowd went wild. Screams of "Take that, you mur-

derer!” and “Take that, you liberal LV Times commie!” and “Take that, you butt-pirate!” could be heard throughout the stands.

The dead bodies were cleared and the next round of prisoners was led up onto the stage.

Up in the skybox, Vera Dan looked at her husband with hatred. “Come, come, Vera Dan,” said Cheney, who had joined the president at the window. “Public executions on this day have been a tradition since the government first televised mass executions in 2020. It’s patriotic to watch and enjoy them and understand why these people are being put to death. Reporting the truth about enemy casualties in the newspaper or about the multitude of corporate misdeeds lowers national morale and is simply unpatriotic. Remember, you are either with us, or against us. There’s no room for or point in the debate of Bush dynasty policies.”

Khan listened to Cheney and looked on at the spectacle below with the morbid interest that one passes by a deadly car accident. She leaned into Vera Dan and said, “And you Americans say that we’re barbaric?”

Thirty minutes later, the executions were completed and the stage dismantled. Sam Naish announced over the public address system, “Okay everybody. That was great. Remember, if you need any electrical appliances, buy from GE, our sub-sponsor. They really do bring good things to life! So folks, relax a bit. Have some more of that half-priced blue ice and BushCoke for the kiddies and the Terminator race will start up in about thirty minutes.”

Bush walked over to Khan, who now sat with her legatas at a table reserved for them, speaking amongst themselves in Hunzanian. Other than curious glances, no Americans interacted with them.

“Nitra, are you enjoying yourself so far?”

“Quite an insight into your culture, Negon,” she did not affirm or deny.

Bush’s MFD sounded; it was Sadina Rice. “Excuse me, Nitra, I have to take this call. Please, enjoy the buffet. And Nitra,” he gave her a wink, “why don’t you get to know Vera Dan a little bit better?”

Cloud Base Confirmation

Danton Gore sat at the internet terminal in the dive bar near his military base where he often held his untraceable chat sessions with Cloud Base. He had just finished his duty shift for the day and was looking forward to meeting Nana Pavlov in the evening to watch the election. If Bush lost, Gore and Pavlov’s Wednesday night plans would change dramatically.

Gore logged onto the Playboy website. The Monday protocol to find the website where he could chat with Cloud Base was based on the turn-ons posted there by the playmate of the month.

At nine p.m., sharp, Nidaa, the half-Irish, half-Egyptian playmate posted a message, “My turn-ons are writers, sense of humor, good cologne, coffee, bare-back riding, cunnilingus and red wine by a warm fire.”

Gore watched, as a flurry of responses crowded the screen. He, however, changed to “wshgccbbrcrwwf.com.” After entering the chat room at this website using the Free Vegas passwords for Monday and nine p.m., he typed, “Freedom fighter x158.”

“Freedom fighter x158. How’s your wife?”

Gore typed in the answer: “Fine, I just changed the transmission fluid.”

“Welcome revolutionary number three of the inner circle of five!” began Cloud Base. “After our communication yes-

terday evening I asked my deepest inside mole to look further into the existence of an atomic bomb. He has been unable to confirm the existence of any nuclear devices. It is confirmed that this mole cannot look any further into this issue without bringing great risk onto himself and his other revolutionary cell member. This will be high priority in the future, as even after a successful assassination and revolution on Wednesday night, any bombs could still be used by the Bush dynasty or the Defenders of the Light. However, right now Wednesday night's assassination is still our number one priority. The future is green!"

As always, the communication terminated automatically and the website vanished into cyber-oblivion.

Gore leaned back in his chair, an uneasiness in the pit of his stomach. *If Ella Houston's story is true, America will have the only nuke in the world. God, what Bush could do with that.*

In late 2062, an independent party American president, along with the leaders of almost every other country in the world, signed an international agreement written by the 15th Dalai Lama of Tibetan Buddhism. On the heels of a major global nuclear-war scare, the treaty stipulated the immediate dismantlement of every nuclear stockpile in the world. Since then, nuclear nations had successfully stuck to strict, biannual monitoring and reporting requirements – even nations like China, which then submitted to global public opinion in early 2063 by relinquishing its claim to Tibet. The recently-inaugurated sixth Bush president, George H.W. Bush III, sent his vice president to attend the ceremony marking the return of an ancient, non-oil-producing homeland back to its legal residents. Bush was unable to personally congratulate the Buddhist expatriates, who were returning from exile in north India to live in their own country for the first time in over one hundred

years – he had an important rocket golf engagement that day with some heavy-hitting business and intelligence community colleagues.

Of course, Gore continued to ponder Ella Houston's words, Beem Cheney could have been lying to her all along. Or she could be lying to me now.

He let out a deep breath, got up and went to the bar, paid his tab and headed home, unsettling thoughts of nuclear bombs and an armed revolution filling his head.

Problematic Public Polls

Negon Bush sat in the secure office built into the corner of the skybox at Schwarzenegger Speedway. He spoke into his MFD. “Ok, Sadina, go ahead.” He left the device on “hands free,” Rice's voice ringing out of the high-quality mini-speaker.

“Right, Mr. President, I'm down here at the offices of SkyFox TV and I'm a bit concerned, sir. We've just conducted a survey and you're running at only forty percent approval nationwide. And that's up fifteen percent since we started running the subliminals a few hours ago and another five points since the executions! You're even down in the Sunlight District here in the city. We have to prevent as many people as possible from voting in the lower fifty levels. I think Beem needs to send more people down there.”

Bush caught Cheney's attention outside and motioned him into the office. “Beem, I have Sadina on the line. She says that you need to send more men down to the lower levels. We need to keep more democrats from voting down there.”

“Okay. But not more than one hundred thousand soldiers total. That's the false number that Rice gave Gore and Free Vegas the other day for total troops in the city, right?”

“Right,” confirmed Bush. “I doubt they can keep track of

our forces that accurately, but that's a good precaution. Keep all other troops out of sight until tomorrow night."

Cheney stepped out of the room, silently indicating to Bush that he would be right back.

Bush said, "Okay Sadina, we'll send fifty thousand more men. Have you worked out how we're going to manipulate the media to our biggest advantage?"

"Yes, Mr. President. I'll keep you posted." Rice hung up.

Cheney returned to the room.

"Beem, where do we stand in this election, in broad terms?"

"Well, let's see here, Negon. Based on what my people have told me, despite the low approval rate nationwide, I'm confident that we'll win at least one of the other three cities. Even if we don't, as long as we win Las Vegas, we'll have enough New Electoral College votes to win the presidency. As far as Las Vegas goes, the five million people of voting age that will be going to New Vegas are in the bag, right? The biggest problem is the voting public in the Sunlight District who were denied entry into New Vegas. We can't do anything illegal with them without raising suspicion. So, we really need to hit those lower levels hard. Of the thirty million voters down there, we will prevent about half of them from casting votes."

Cheney paused, considering further for a moment. "My men have already been instructed to be brutal in the lower fifty city levels. Any blacks, women or educated people down there are to be kept from voting. Media coverage of voting points in the lower fifty levels will be completely fabricated. That should take care of it. As long as we win the vote here in Las Vegas, we'll get enough votes in the other cities in the country to win the election. But, I had a great idea to help us tip the scales, my brother."

"What is it?"

“I just told Sam to enter us in the Terminator race!”

Bush stared at Cheney, dumbstruck. “You did what? Are you out of your mind, Beem? I want to win the election but I don’t want to get killed doing it.”

“Just think about it for a minute. The president and his vice president and general of the army win the Terminator race just minutes before the election. What could give the borderline voters more confidence and pride than that? Van Hong will give some lame speech that will only appeal to people who are actually informed about the real issues. The other emotional, mom-and-apple-pie voters will vote us in by a landslide!”

Bush considered Cheney’s reasoning and a smile slowly crept onto his lips. “Beem, you just might have something there, my old friend.” Bush stood up and led them out of the office and back into the main area of the skybox.

Sam Naish spoke to the two men for a few seconds and then clicked his microphone on. “Ladies and gentlemen,” he announced, “I’m pleased to inform you that today we have a very special surprise for you all ...”

The Power of the Media

Sadina Rice sat at the desk in the guest office next to Murdoch’s. She was frantically making phone calls to aides and constituents all across the nation. Twenty minutes had passed since she last spoke with the president. She called Bush on her MFD. “Ok, sir, it seems the subliminals are now having more of an exponential effect. You’re already up another three points since we last spoke. Now, what the hell is going on over there? I can barely hear you over the crowd noise.”

“Language, Sadie.”

“Sorry, sir. So, what’s happening there? Why is it so loud in the skybox?”

"I'm not in the skybox, Sadie. I'm down in the pits."

"Why are you down there, sir?"

"Sadie, you're going to love this. Beem and I are going to do just like in the old days, we're going to take part in the Terminator race!"

"What? With all due respect, Mr. President, are you out of your mind on black ice? Get that damned flask away from Cheney. Those drivers and gunners are professionals and the accuracy, distance and firepower of the air cannons is a hundred times what it was when you raced twenty years ago!"

"No, no, don't worry, Sadina. We have it all worked out with Sam. The fix, of course, is on!"

Rice hesitated a few seconds. Slowly, she began to speak, "Yeah. You know, Negon, this could really be great. It might even get those couch potatoes off their duffs to go out and vote for you after you win the race. Ok, we'll get emergency notices out on every channel informing the public that the president and vice president will be participating in the Terminator race and that patriotic Americans should tune in immediately."

"You're doing great, Sadina. Oh, by the way, make sure you mention in those ads that Van Hong isn't even here at the speedway today, and he's not even watching on television. Get this – he's giving a reading of his book, *Corporate Practices and Their Criminal Effects on the Environment*, instead." Bush laughed derisively.

"It figures," Rice chuckled incredulously, shaking her head. "Ok, sir, I'll be in touch. Good luck, be careful and let's get those last few points in the polls!"

Rice hung up the phone, left her office and walked next door into Murdoch's. "Albert, we need to let your audience know right away that the president and Mr. Cheney will be taking part in the Terminator race."

At the Speedway

Mr. Johnny Cash, a Clear Channel clone, was performing on the infield during the break before the Terminator race. The words “*I shot a man in Reno, just to watch him die ...*” rang out in his emotional, bass baritone voice.

In the pit area, Sam Naish gathered his team of Terminator sports utility vehicle, or TSUV, drivers and gunners together. His race team represented twenty-three of the eighty-four vehicles that were entered in the race. They all stepped into a sound-proofed room just off the pit lane and closed the door.

“Okay, team. We have a very special honor today.”

All present were staring at the two men standing next to Naish, awestruck.

“I present to you all the president of the United States, Mr. Nekon R. Bush, and his vice president, Mr. Beem Cheney.” A round of applause erupted from the gathered Team Naish members.

“Okay. Okay. Silence now. You all have the honor today of racing with these two men and being on the same team as the winners!”

Naish’s people looked around at each other, disappointment written clearly on their faces at being told they had to throw the race. Besides, some of them planned on voting for Van Hong and did not want to help Bush’s image by allowing him to win the event.

After the team strategy had been laid down, everyone walked back out onto the pit lane. Naish escorted Bush and Cheney to a nearby TSUV and began explaining the ins and outs of the modern, twenty-foot long vehicle to them. “Okay, Mr. President, this baby is a Ford Fortress, customized for the Terminator race today.” The model of this SUV sold to the public was smaller and did not come with front and back compressed-air cannons – although gun mounts came stand-

ard. Naish opened the door and continued, "You got your automatic transmission option. Your brake and gas pedals down there. Nitroglycerine turbo boost button over here."

Cheney leaned back from the car and looked into the lower rows of the stands, about fifty yards away from them. He took a few steps away from the vehicle. "Soldier," he called to one of the men on the presidential guard detail, who was standing ten feet away.

"Yes, sir!" the man hurried over to Cheney.

Cheney read the man's name and rank from the tags sewn onto his uniform. "Sergeant Heston, give me your field glasses."

Cheney took the binoculars and raised them to his eyes. "I don't fuckin' believe it." He lowered the glasses and turned, "Sergeant Heston, you are a sharpshooter, correct?"

"Of course, sir. All members of your guard detail are."

"I want you to look through the scope on your pulse rifle over there," Cheney pointed to the stands, "the two men in the tight-fitting, black leather outfits. Tell me what you see."

"I see them – oh my God, sir – they're smoking," he said in disgust. Smoking in public was a felony, punishable by up to ten years in prison. "Oh no, no! They just kissed each other. It looked like tongue!"

"Sergeant, are you aware of the punishment for committing homosexual acts in either public or private?"

"Yes, sir!" Heston still had the rifle raised to his eye, with a good bead on the man to the left.

"Do your duty, soldier!" Cheney raised the binoculars again.

"Gladly, sir!" Heston squeezed off two shots in quick succession.

Cheney watched both men in the stands fly backwards, gaping wounds visible in their chests, and then crumple to the

ground. He watched as the spectators near the felons began to scream and look around in fear, some of them leaving their seats and heading toward a nearby exit.

“... now Mr. Cheney will be sat back here,” Naish continued over at the TSUV a few feet away. Naish’s MFD sounded and a voice screamed out loudly over the mini-speaker. “What is it?” he asked, annoyed. “I’m busy right now!”

“Sir, there is a major disturbance in section A, track level. It seems two men have just been shot in the chest from an unknown source. We’re seconds away from a mad rush to the exits and a serious crowd-crush situation down here.”

Naish looked up and over at the stands, as did Bush. Out of the corner of his eye, the president noticed Cheney laughing and shaking the hand of a soldier who was just putting his weapon back to the ready position, upright, across his chest.

It clicked instantly. “Beem!” Bush yelled. “What the heck have you done now? Get over here!”

Naish looked at Cheney as the general of the army now approached him and the president, laughing, taking a shot of bourbon.

“Sir. I’m waiting for your orders!” the voice on Naish’s MFD implored.

“I’ll take that,” said Cheney, as he lifted Naish’s wrist to his mouth. “Sam, put me through directly to the P.A. system.” Naish pressed a few buttons. Cheney spoke into the MFD, “This is five-star General Beem Cheney. Everyone freeze!” He waited a few seconds. “Stop moving everyone! Now! Everything is fine, there is no danger to anyone.”

“Okay,” came the security guard’s voice from the MFD, “it appears that everyone has stopped moving.”

Cheney continued, “That’s good, people. Don’t move. Everything is fine. No cause for alarm. I just had to have two men in the lower stands executed for committing homosexual

acts. They were shot by a sharpshooter and there was no risk to anyone else around them. Besides which, they were also smoking in public. Such open defiance of any American law cannot be tolerated. That's the whole reason we're all here today to celebrate Arnold Schwarzenegger Day!"

The crowd slowly started to applaud. Slurs such as "fucking faggots deserved it!" and comments like "how can anyone ignore a law passed by their own government?" rippled through the gathered masses.

Bush leaned over and spoke into Naish's MFD, "This is the president speaking. I apologize if anyone is shocked or upset. Please call the nearest Anheuser-Bush vendor over. One dose of blue ice free for all adults. You can even let your kids try a bit if they're agitated." In Bush's world, business outweighed morality and even religion, always. "One free order of fried McMeatball knuckles per family, as well." Bush lowered Naish's arm. Sporadic applause spread through the crowd.

"No harm done," said Cheney.

"You gosh-darned idiot, Beem!" said Bush sternly, and slapped Cheney on the back of the head. Twice. "On election day? On international TV?"

"Negon, why would we start caring now what Europeans and Asians think of us anyway? Besides, I reckon killing those fags just got you a couple of points in the American polls."

"Maybe, Beem. But you just cost us five million dollars in product! Now, let's just focus on winning this race and getting some votes that way."

Within moments the commotion had died down and the Johnny Cash clone started singing again, "*I can shoot as quick and straight as anybody can, but I wouldn't shoot without a cause ...*"

“Excuse me, sirs,” called out Naish. “The race begins in ten minutes and I need to show you a couple of more things.”

“Of course, Sam. Come on, Beem. Now quit screwing around. We need to win this thing and get those darned votes!”

The Cuban Boys Club

Danton Gore and Nana Pavlov lay fully dressed on a king-sized bed. They had taken a room at the Cuban Boys Club on Level XXX to watch the election; the results would determine the direction of their lives in the immediate future.

Pavlov was the manager of this very specialized male brothel, which provided young, dark-haired, dark-skinned Latino men for the pleasure of mostly white, older, wealthy women from the Sunlight District. The décor reflected the feel of mid-20th-century Havana, complete with palm trees, sugar cane plants, wicker furniture and balmy, humid breezes in each room.

The television was on, with the sound barely audible; the couple was not really paying attention to the Schwarzenegger Day festivities. Gore absentmindedly watched another pro-Bush advertisement while conversing with his Free Vegas cell-mate and lover.

“Do you think Van Hong has a chance?” Pavlov asked him.

“Well, he’s certainly the smarter, more qualified, more well-spoken man. So, based on the history of American elections, I would have to say no.”

“You’re probably right.” Pavlov got up to get a glass of water. Gore watched the next commercial, also a pro-Bush advertisement.

“Nana,” he called into the kitchenette area, “have you seen a single advertisement for Van Hong today?”

“Not a single one.”

Gore could not believe it. The Bush administration had already got to the mainstream media, assuring that tens of millions of voting Americans would see only pro-Bush commercials on TV in the hours preceding the election – and blue ice was half-price nationwide today.

Pavlov returned to the bed, kissed Gore and pulled him down to make love. He forgot all about Bush’s tactics and the election.

The Terminator Race

Sam Naish stood on the stage amidst twenty top female super-models and asked of the crowd, “Are you ready to rumble?”

The crowd screamed back in unison, “Yeeeeeeesssss!”

“Ok, Americans! As you can see, there are more than eighty Terminator SUVs positioned around the track. These babies max out at two hundred and twenty miles per hour. I’ll remind you all of the rules in just a few minutes. But first, I would like to direct your attention down to the end of the pit lane,” he paused for a few seconds, “where you see the pride of my fleet, a brand new Ford Fortress TSUV bearing my lucky number three, just about to roll out and take its position on the track.”

The crowd went silent in anticipation. The TSUV rolled to a stop just before driving onto the main track, and a man holding a microphone, followed by a cameraman, stepped out from a pit and leaned into the driver’s side window.

“So, Mr. President,” boomed out over the public address system, just as the image of the president’s face, his upper lip stained with a faint black residue, filled the giant TV screens

all around the stands, “do you have any additional words for our viewers here and at home?”

“Well, yes, Chris, I certainly do,” everyone knew the interviewer, Chris Wiseman, who had won the Terminator race an unequalled eight times. Cheers rose up from the grandstands. “My friend Beem here and I are going to show these folks, and all the folks watching at home, just what we are made of. That’s why the She-Hun queen has come here to sign a peace treaty today.”

The crowd applauded loudly, once again chanting, “U.S.A.! U.S.A.!”

Up in the skybox, Vera Dan was sitting next to Nitra Khan. She looked askance at Khan to try and determine if she was offended by her husband’s belittling remark. Khan’s face remained expressionless.

Down on the track, Bush continued, “That’s right, Chris, there is no doubt that we won’t win!”

“Oh, for Christ’s sake, Negon,” muttered Cheney under his breath in response to the president’s “Bushism.”

The president waved to the camera and gave the thumbs up sign, rolling the TSUV onto the track to take their position. He leaned back and asked his gunner, “Ok, Beem, are you ready? I’m feeling good! Whoo!” He had snorted yet another black ice crystal moments before.

Cheney took a final swig of bourbon. Facing backwards, he was crammed into the gunner’s seat, his flab mashed against various roll-bars built around it. “Ready as I’ll ever be, Negon. This new-fangled technology is a bit overwhelming, but I think I can handle it.” He studied various computer screens and control levers.

Outside, Naish’s voice boomed across the speedway, “Remember folks, any vehicle that reduces speed to below one hundred and seventy miles per hour will have his engine and

compressed-air cannons shut off by remote control. That's it! Last car on the track still running at over one-seventy is the winner! And now, gentlemen," he paused for dramatic effect, "staaaart youuur engines!"

A thunderous roar of internal combustion engines firing on twelve cylinders rose up from the track.

Inside the Ford Fortress, Bush and Cheney repeatedly yelled "Yee-hah!" adrenaline, drugs and alcohol pumping through their veins.

"Ok, sirs, can you hear me?" Naish's voice sounded inside the small speakers inside Bush's and Cheney's helmets.

"Check."

"Check."

"Ok, Mr. Cheney," continued Naish. "Do you understand how to fire both air cannons? Your monitor is showing the front cannon and the racetrack from your seat forward, correct?"

"That's affirmative, Sam," Cheney was nervous, but exhilarated.

"Ok, only fire when I tell you. I don't want you damaging any of my team vehicles. They are expensive as hell. My team members will go out of the race by dropping below the minimum speed. Understood?"

"Ten-four, Sam!"

"Ok, Negon – sorry, sir, I mean Mr. President."

"No problem, Sam. Call me Negon." Bush was truly enjoying himself. "You'll be moving to one of the upper levels of New Vegas with us after this is over!" Naish, as a successful multi-millionaire businessman, had already been accepted to New Vegas, but not in the prestigious top levels of the new city.

"Thank you. So, Negon, I will try and steer you through it all. Good luck to you both. I'm giving the countdown now."

“Five, four,” the crowd counted along with the PA system, “three, two, one, go!”

The noise was deafening as the TSUVs tore into first gear. The spectators in the lower fifty rows of the grandstands felt grain-of-sand-sized pieces of tire rubber hit them in the face as the vehicles sped around the track. All the TSUVs accelerated to 170 miles per hour in only eight seconds, burning four gallons of gasoline for every mile covered.

“Ok, Beem, fire away!” yelled Bush into his headset as he hit 170 miles per hour.

Cheney hit the fire button and the rear air cannon blew out a burst of compressed air with enough force to move a 3,000-pound street car three feet. The cannons’ range was up to fifteen feet and they could swivel 360 degrees.

“Nice shot!” yelled Bush, as he watched the front, right wheel of the McMeatball car behind them lift up and off the track. At 170 seventy miles per hour the target TSUV instantly went into an uncontrollable spin, tires smoking and screeching, having been destabilized only slightly. It slammed into the upper retaining wall.

Cheney gave a battle cry, “Take that, mother-fucker!”

“Beem! Watch your mouth!”

“Negon, the adrenaline is running high, alright? Just give it a rest for a while, buddy.”

“God damn it, Beem!” Sam Naish’s voice screamed into Cheney’s ear. “With all due respect, sir. But that was one of mine! What did I just tell you? Fire on my command only!”

“Oopsy. Sorry, Sam. I’ll pay you for that TSUV. I’ll claim the farmer’s tax break for vehicles that weigh over six thousand pounds!”

“Very clever, Beem. But, please, just stay focused, both of you!” Only seconds later, Naish warned, “Heads up, Negon! Wreckage on the track in front of you. Go hard left!”

“Never!” Bush laughed boyishly in delight, as he steered dexterously to the left around the wreckage.

“Negon, careful! We don’t want you getting in the habit of going to the left like that!” Cheney was highly intoxicated on bourbon, speed and violence.

“Beem,” Cheney heard Naish’s voice in his helmet, “let the blue car coming up pass you. Don’t shoot! I repeat, do not shoot! That’s Jim Beam Blue. He’s one of ours.”

Bush eased off the gas a bit and Jim Beam Blue pulled right to pass them, revealing another opponent just behind it. Cheney saw the air cannon on this third TSUV recoil. He watched as both rear tires of Jim Beam Blue lifted up off the track. It instantly lost control and rolled over, cartwheeling across the track and down into a deserted part of the infield.

The enemy TSUV, advertising “Level XXX – The Adult Experience,” had now entered Cheney’s five-yard firing range. He gave another battle cry as he fired two volleys, expecting to see the black TSUV go flying from the track. “Shit!” he screamed, as nothing happened. A team-Naish car in front of them rolled over to the left.

“The rear cannon, you idiot!” yelled Naish, “Again, with all due respect, sir.”

Just then, Bush and Cheney felt their TSUV lurch to the left, as Level XXX passed them, the driver waving goodbye, smiling. Out of control, Bush’s vehicle sped into the safety zone that surrounded the infield. As it hit the soft, earthen surface, Bush was thrown forward in his seat due to the rapid negative acceleration.

“Negon! You’re about to go below minimum speed,” yelled Naish. “Hit the nitro booster!”

“Got it!” Bush fought to regain control as he pressed the large red button on the dashboard. He was immediately thrown backwards against his seat as the liquid nitroglycerin was in-

jected into the cylinders. Bush sped back up the track and, without any hesitation, pulled directly behind Level XXX, unnoticed, and into firing range. “Hit them, Beem!”

“Kiss my ass, boys!” Cheney fired one blast of compressed air, a direct hit to the center rear; all four wheels of the black TSUV lifted up and off of the track. It landed and instantly spun out, rolled over and crashed into the upper retaining wall.

The crowd cheered Cheney’s shot and all were now standing on their feet, as only four cars remained. Burning wreckage littered the track and the drivers had to maintain maximum concentration to navigate through it. As Bush entered a curve, he saw piles of burning, twisted metal distorted by heat aberrations silhouetted against hundreds of screaming faces, intoxicated by speed and destruction. He put the image to memory so that he could later transfer it to the canvas; he would name it “American Terminator Race – Victory and Honor through Destruction of Others.”

Bush checked his mirrors and saw a yellow car bearing the words “Rough Rider Thinking Condoms” gaining ground on them from behind.

“Ok, guys, four cars left,” informed Naish. “Nekon, pull in behind Eva Guthrie. She’s forty yards in front of you. You have Earnhardt behind you and Gordon behind him.”

“Ok, Sam.” Bush accelerated and fell in behind Guthrie. Behind him, he saw Ronnie ‘lead foot’ Gordon breeze past Earnhardt, shooting him on the broadside and sending him into a rollover down into the safety zone. Gordon was closing in on the president and Cheney fast, and had already closed the gap to only ten yards.

“Ok, everybody” said Naish, “get ready. It looks like team-Naish Operation Self Sacrifice to win it. Execute!”

Just as Gordon entered firing range, Bush veered right as Guthrie hit the brakes hard, slowing down dramatically in

order to avoid a pile of wreckage in front of her. Gordon had been concentrating so much on taking out the president's vehicle that he failed to pay attention to Guthrie, now directly in his path. As she veered left, Gordon, also veering left, caught her rear quarter panel and took them both out of the race, flying by the wreckage inches to their right side.

Sirens sounded all around the speedway, and a huge fireworks display began exploding above the grandstands.

"Wow, what a finish, folks!" Sam Naish's voice resounded throughout the speedway. "The winners of today's Terminator race are President Negon R. Bush and Vice President Beem Cheney!"

As Bush and Cheney took their victory lap, waving their arms to the crowd through the windows, Naish continued, "Incredible. What leadership abilities these two men have just shown to the world. If you can win a Terminator race, surely, you can run a country!"

Bush finished his victory lap amid deafening applause and cheers from the hundreds of thousands of spectators. He turned into the pit lane and came to a stop next to Chris Wiseman, who leaned into the vehicle and began his post-race interview with the winners.

Media Mind Manipulation

Danton Gore and Nana Pavlov lay naked on the bed at the Cuban Boys Club. They had finished making love and were now watching the television with interest as the pre-election coverage began. Chris Wiseman was standing next to Bush and Cheney in the pit lane at Schwarzenegger Speedway.

"Wow, Mr. President. Mr. Cheney," he nodded at both men, who were standing next to their vehicle. "That was truly great! How did you two manage to do that after more than

twenty years without sitting behind the wheel of a Terminator SUV?”

Bush looked directly into the camera, smiling confidently; his eyes glistened demonically. “Well, Chris, just as I’ve always said, with the help of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, anything and everything is possible. So, I ask everyone to pray now for our country. For our safety and continued prosperity. For our peace. Only moments from now, I will sign a historic, permanent peace treaty with the She-Huns – the first ever in our country’s history with them. My fellow Americans, please remember how I can beat any odds when you go and cast your vote for president. Let’s have a big round of applause for all of our drivers and gunners! Remember, our prayers are with the thirty-five injured participants. Thanks, Chris.”

Bush and Cheney shook Wiseman’s hand and walked off without further comment.

“There you have it, people, a truly incredible day here at the Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway. I know who will be getting my vote!” Wiseman’s future flat in New Vegas was worth millions.

Lying on the bed, Gore screamed at the TV, “That race was fixed! My God, Wiseman, you were one of the best. How could you give them credit and sell out like that?”

“Shhh, Danton. Van Hong is coming on.”

“Hello, my fellow Americans. This is Peter Cronkite of SkyFox News, Las Vegas. I have here in the studio with me, Mr. Luther Van Hong, the democratic presidential candidate. He is ready to address you all for his time-allotted, ten-minute speech. After that, President Bush will deliver his speech from the speedway, and then it will be time for you all to go out and cast your votes. Stay tuned, Mr. Van Hong will begin after a word from our sponsors.” The program cut to commercial.

Gore hit the sound mute button on the remote control and

he and Pavlov absentmindedly watched the thirty-second ads for Anheuser-Bush and McMeatball's Restaurants.

"Okay, voters. We're back live in the studio," said Cronkite, "Ladies and Gentleman, I give you Luther Van Hong."

Van Hong sat comfortably on a couch next to the newscaster's desk.

"Does he look different to you?" Pavlov asked Gore. "I was looking forward to his speech, you know, but I've had this growing feeling all day that he looks untrustworthy, you know?"

"Yeah, I know what you mean," answered Gore. "Maybe I read recently that he was involved in a sex scandal with young page boys or that he was accused of taking bribes."

"No, no. I read about that one. That was two republican Men of Light."

"I don't know. I can't remember. Wait a second," Gore closed his eyes, distinctly remembering an article he had read only one week before, praising the multi-millionaire Van Hong for being the most honest, intelligent, philanthropic, family-loving man in all of American government. Suddenly, Gore said, "Subliminals!"

"What do you mean, darling?"

"Subliminal transmissions. Not only has that bastard Bush stopped pro-democrat commercials from being aired, he has got anti-democrat subliminal messages on the airwaves."

"What can we do about it?"

"Nothing, Nana. I think we'll be leading that revolution after all," Gore looked resolutely into her eyes, butterflies suddenly in his stomach. "I feel like General George Washington must have when he was crossing the Delaware to carry out his surprise attack against his far superior, tyrannical enemy."

The Bush Team In Action

Back at Schwarzenegger Speedway, Van Hong's image appeared on the giant screens above the stands. He was saying the final words in his speech, appealing to the social conscience of the voters.

"And so, my fellow Americans, please remember these points as you go to the polls today. Make a statement for change. Vote for me and my party. We will reform Nekon R. Bush's policies that promote corporate America to sleep in the federal government's bed – this is a direct violation of a fundamental tenet of the free market capitalistic theory. We will also get bible-thumping politicians out of the House of Light; after all, our forefathers built a nation founded explicitly on the separation of church and state. Let's take America back into our own hands! We will raise the minimum wage for the first time in fifteen years! We will rebuild the middle class! We will put people to work and rebuild our cities! Thank you for your time."

Boos and whistles emerged from the crowd at the speedway as Van Hong finished his speech broadcast from the Sky-Fox studio. They began to chant, "We want Bush! We want Bush!"

Up in the skybox, the president and Cheney had just rejoined Vera Dan, Nitra Khan and the other guests from the racetrack below. Various businessmen and military men were congratulating the two on their victory. Khan sat at a table with her legatas.

Bush walked over to his wife. "Well, my little meatball, did you see your man fulfill God's will out there on the racetrack?"

"Please! The scary thing is you actually believe that, Nekon. Eva Guthrie clearly blocked Gordon's racing line. Even I

saw her brake lights go on and then fail to get out of the way before that last crash. They edited out the brake lights before they showed the replay on the big screens.”

“I’ll take that as a yes. Now, why don’t you just relax, this day will be over soon enough for you.”

“Not at all. I’ve been chatting with Queen Khan all afternoon. She’s an intriguing woman. And these She-Huns are physically impressive women.” Vera Dan looked over his shoulder at Khan, who sent her a smile.

Cheney approached Bush. “This crowd couldn’t be in a more receptive mood, Nekon. Looks like Sadie and Murdoch have done a good job with their media manipulation magic.” He patted Bush on the shoulder. “Let’s do this! I’ll stand just behind you. Are you ready?”

“You betcha’. Let’s kick some liberal ass!” Bush signalled for Chris Wiseman and his cameraman, who were also up in the skybox, to get the presidential interview started.

*

In the studio at SkyFox TV, Las Vegas, people were rushing around everywhere. More than eighty million Americans were watching this broadcast; everything had to be perfect.

In Albert Murdoch’s office, the media giant sat on his leather couch watching the television, a huge smile on his face.

“Look at that, Sadina! Look at that!” He looked at Rice, who was sitting next to him, “They booed Van Hong, who made a very good speech, in all fairness. It looks like my subliminals have worked perfectly.” He abruptly grabbed both of her breasts and pushed her down onto her back. “It’s time you pay up!”

Rice quickly slapped him hard, pushed him off of her and

stood up. She straightened her minidress and looked him in the eyes. She had no desire to have sex with this man, but she had made a deal. And he had done very well.

“Ok, Albert, but if you want to screw me, you have to clean up this pigsty of an office first – on your knees and in your boxers.” She wanted to at least exercise some power over this man before she gave him any physical gratification. After all, to hold the party line, to do her job well, she had to be a calculating, antipathic, ruthless bitch.

“Yes, M’am.” Murdoch instantly assumed a submissive role. As he undressed silently, he had to admit to himself that he liked being dominated by this woman of power. He had grown tired of everyone in the office submitting to his every wish and command all the time. Now in his underwear, Murdoch began to pick up the trash scattered all around the room, walking on his knees.

Rice stripped off her dress. She stamped her foot several times in front of him. “Hurry up, you fat, McMeatball-eating pig.”

“Yes, my mistress.”

Murdoch continued cleaning for several minutes. When he was on the other side of the room, Rice commanded, “Now, crawl over to me on your elbows and knees!”

Murdoch pulled himself towards her as ordered, getting rug burn as he did so. Once again, he was at her feet. He rolled over. “Scratch me, my cruel mistress. Scratch my stomach!”

Rice fell to her knees. She could see that Murdoch had an erection, his masochistic desires being satisfied. She dug her fingernails into his squishy flesh and dragged them from his belly button up to his neck, breaking a fingernail.

“Ahhhh!” Albert moaned and ejaculated.

Rice kicked him in the ribs. “You made me break a nail, you swine. That pedicure cost me five hundred dollars.” *This*

little job today will pay me back a million times that soon enough!

Rice got dressed, gathered her things and walked to the door. She looked down at Murdoch, who still lay on the floor, motionless, smiling.

“Mr. Bush thanks you, Albert.” Rice opened the door and left the office, heading towards the employee bar to watch the president’s speech.

*

“Good evening, and God bless you, my fellow Americans,” President Bush’s voice was full of confidence. Everyone in the skybox looked at Bush; he was well-dressed and hid the effects of the black ice he had been taking all day very well. The household face of Chris Wiseman stood next to him and held a microphone for the president to speak into. “I stand here before you today, triumphant. As soon as I finish this speech, I’ll be signing a very important document with Nitra Khan, queen of the She-Huns. But before we do that, a few words to think about as you go out to the net points in your neighborhood, and here at the speedway, to cast your vote for president at seven o’clock this evening.

“My opponents, led by Luther Van Hong, are quick to criticize my administration. However, I welcome their criticism. The point is how do we work together to achieve important goals. Our main such goal is attaining a democracy here in the United States.”

Cheney, standing behind the president, lowered his head slightly.

In the SkyFox TV offices’ bar, Rice choked on her drink. “‘Maintaining,’ you idiot,” she spoke at the TV, shaking her head in disbelief.

At the speedway, whispers and muffled laughs rifled through the grandstands. The president and most powerful man in the world pushed on, unaware of having voiced his second Bushism in only forty minutes. "You all know that New Vegas will be a test run for the future public city of Mega Vegas, to be built right here in Las Vegas. Mega Vegas will provide homes and a community for eighty million Americans," the president lied. "All cities in this, the greatest country on Earth, will benefit from the new technology in New Vegas!" The crowd applauded the age-old rhetoric energetically. "Both the She-Huns," Bush turned and indicated Khan standing behind him, "and I want peace, so that our societies can grow without wasting money on large defense budgets. Our quality of life will improve greatly, as it did for the whole world after the Cold War ended one hundred and twenty years ago. Now, please welcome to the podium, Queen Nitra Khan."

Bush stepped to the side as Khan approached him. She shook hands with the president, who tickled the inside of her palm with his index finger. Instantly, she squeezed his hand with all her strength; Bush grimaced slightly and stepped back from her.

"Thank you, Mr. President," she spoke into the microphone, still held by Chris Wiseman, looking at Bush. She then looked into the camera showing no real emotion. "As I said earlier, it's a great honor for me to be here and to witness your great Arnold Schwarzenegger Day." She paused, allowing the spectators to applaud; the men among them were fascinated by her foreign accent. "Both of our cultures need to work together from now on, sharing information and resources to better both of our countries. Our ways may seem strange to you, but in the end we're human beings just like you and we simply want to live in peace, harmony and prosperity. Today's peace treaty

will allow that dream to become a reality. Thank you very much.”

Khan stepped back and stood between Bush and Wiseman in the skybox. Two men carried the podium away and returned with a large, East African ebony table. Bush and Khan sat down at opposite ends of the table. Cheney placed a one-page document in front of the president, which appeared on the TV screens. Bush took the time to read it, and then signed it. He slid the paper across the extinct-wood table to Khan, who also read it, adding her signature.

Still sitting, Bush announced into the microphone held in front of him, “I declare peace with the Queendom of Hunzania.”

Wiseman moved the microphone in his hand across the table to Khan. “I declare peace with the United States of America.”

The spectators in the stands applauded feverishly, whistling and yelling with joy; the government and the media had had them living in terror for thirty years, lying to them about the real strength of the She-Hun threat against America. Bush and Khan stood up and shook hands, posing for photos and the television cameras.

“And there you have it,” Chris Wiseman’s handsome face displayed on TVs all across the nation and the world declared, “a historic non-aggression pact signed by the President of the United States and Queen Nitra Khan of the She-Huns ...”

The 400,000-person-strong crowd at Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway was giving a standing ovation to its president.

A Democratic Election

At seven o’clock sharp, Las Vegas time, computer net points all over the country opened for electronic voting. All citizens

had been given the evening off and had to vote before eight o'clock. The electronically tabulated results would be announced by eight fifteen, Las Vegas time.

Throughout the lower fifty levels of Las Vegas, police-state conditions prevailed. Heavily armed Defenders of the Light wearing gas masks guarded every net point; air pollution on these levels was extremely bad.

The soldiers had been given profiles of the people that were to be prevented from voting. Criteria included age, sex, race, dress, hair length and annual income, which had to be declared before access to the net point was granted. On these levels, a poor, Latin woman did not get to vote. Nor did a long-haired man who wore inexpensive, non-brand clothing. Nor did any blacks, man or woman. The soldiers offered these people free blue ice, if they still refused to return home they met with the butt of a pulse rifle or a nightstick. Soldiers and police erased quantum memory chips in video cameras and MFDs. Special Agent Sadina Rice had instituted a media blackout – supplemented by staged videos showing actor-Latinos, blacks and hippies voting happily.

Cheney's voice sounded out of the speaker on a Defender of the Light's MFD. "General Ventura?"

"Yes, sir?"

"How's everything going down there?"

Ventura, a six-foot-six, burly, blond man, was the field commander of Operation Democratic Election. He was stationed in a temporary command HQ that had been set up in the Climate Control Corporation, Inc., offices located on city level 101. "All my squad leaders report one hundred percent success on restriction of access to net points, sir."

"That is great news. Well done, general. Keep me posted every five minutes. Are we ready to implement Operation Endorphin?"

“Yes, sir.” Ventura looked over to the chair where Danton Gore’s father, Richard Gore, sat bound and gagged.

“Ok. Let me speak to him.” Cheney was referring to Gore, the Director of the Air Circulation Division of Climate Control for levels 101 to 150.

Ventura walked over to Gore, removed his gag and held his MFD up to Gore’s mouth. “General Cheney wants a word with you,” he said.

“You fucking fascist!” screamed Gore into the MFD before Cheney could say anything, “I won’t help you steal an election!”

“Subdue him, soldier!” shouted Cheney. Ventura punched Gore in the stomach with his mammoth fist. Gore lost his breath and was speechless.

“You just listen, Gore,” ordered Cheney. “Commander Ventura is also an engineer and he’ll know if you’re really releasing the endorphin gases into the lower fifty levels. We need those people feeling high after watching their president win the Terminator race, sign a peace treaty and give such an inspirational speech. If you don’t do exactly as he tells you, you bleeding heart liberal, I promise you’ll pay dearly. Those endorphin gases will be circulated in the lower levels for one full hour. Do you understand?”

Fighting nausea, Gore did not respond to the rhetorical question. Ventura hit Gore again. “He understands, sir. I’ll keep you posted.”

*

“I won’t back down, no I won’t back down ...” The Johnny Cash Clear Channel clone was performing once again on the infield at the speedway. The mounted viewing screens showed the time: “7:56 – election results to be posted in 19 minutes.”

In the skybox, tension hung heavy in the air.

Impeached President Nekon Bush nervously chatted with various multi-millionaires.

Vice President Beem Cheney took a shot of Kentucky bourbon from his platinum hip flask.

Vera Dan popped a blue ice crystal into her mouth.

Nitra Khan thought about what would happen to her if Van Hong won the election. *Will I be given an escort out of the country, like the Japanese diplomats after the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the Bin Laden family after the 9/11 attacks? Or will I be taken as a prisoner of war?*

Bush leaned over to Cheney and whispered, "I must confess, Beem, I really don't know if we're going to win this thing or not."

"If not," offered Cheney, "we'll just live as billionaires in New Vegas. No big deal, really. If we get bored, we'll just hit the lecture circuit."

"True enough," agreed Bush. "But if you can't oppress, terrorize and execute people at large, where's the fun in that?"

"Touché," acknowledged Cheney.

Bush called all of his invited guests over to him. "Let us pray," Bush beseeched his friends and business partners. Everyone joined hands and recited together, "Our Father, who first enlightened Prescott Sheldon Bush III in 2050, give us..."

At exactly 8:15 p.m., the lights at the speedway dimmed and the face of Peter Cronkite appeared on all giant screens. "Hello, America! This is Peter Cronkite in the Las Vegas studios of SkyFox TV. The election results are in! It's been an incredibly close race in this very important presidential election. The winner of this election, carrying 50.5 percent of the New Electoral College votes, is Mr. Nekon Rudy Bush! Congratulations ..." Cronkite's voice was drowned out by the crowd

at the speedway, ninety-five percent of whom had voted for Bush.

Bush and Cheney exchanged an awkward bear hug, patting one another on the back. The gathered business men and intelligence agents were jubilant. Bush pulled Vera Dan up out of a chair and hugged her limp, drugged body, letting her fall back down, hiding his disgust with her.

Khan breathed a deep sigh of relief.

Bush now stood at the window of the skybox and waved to the crowd, watching his image on the giant screens. His MFD sounded.

“Congratulations, sir,” said Rice’s voice from the SkyFox employee bar.

“Sadie, you have done one heck of a job! I’ll thank you personally very soon! See you later on at the state dinner.”

Bush ran into the office in the corner of the skybox and inhaled a double dose of black ice. As he rejoined his supporters in the main room, he yelled with joy. “Long live the Bushes! Long live America!”

*

“...and so, what could have been the biggest defeat of President Nekon Rudy Bush’s career has turned into his greatest victory,” Peter Cronkite’s voice sounded on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee.

“Lucky for us,” said Boota Bleeda to Professor Wrjinn as they watched the SkyFox broadcast, “otherwise our plans would have been greatly complicated.”

“Yes,” agreed Wrjinn. “Praise Hunza!”

“Praise Hunza!” answered Bleeda. “Today is the beginning of the end for the paternalistic ‘civilized’ nations that have dominated the world for the last ten thousand years.

Today we begin our journey to that day when matriarchy will finally rule the world, as it did in the tribal societies of the pre-agricultural days!”

“Men, we keep them down!” sang Wrijinn, enthusiastically.

Cronkite continued on the television, “Now, the president and the queen of the She-Huns will attend an informal dinner, and then Ms. Khan will return to her city. This has truly been a historic day for our country. This is Peter Cronkite, signing off. Good night, America and the world.”

An Impromptu Summit

“Beem, will you be so kind as to escort Vera Dan to the state dinner,” Bush asked of his friend, who was standing next to the presidential limousine at Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway.

“Of course, Negon, but aren’t you coming with us?”

“No, I’ll meet you at Military HQ, Las Vegas South, for the dinner shortly.” Bush turned, “Queen Khan!” he called to Nitra Khan just as she was getting into a limousine with her twelve legatas. Bush left Cheney and Vera Dan and walked over to the queen of the She-Huns.

Cheney led the first lady into the limousine. High on blue ice, she got in without a word. Cheney got in after her and the car pulled away.

Standing next to Khan, Bush invited, “Why don’t you ride with me?”

“Thank you. No. I’ll ride with my legatas. I’ve already had about as much as I can stand of you today.”

Negon Bush panicked slightly. He had just been overcome with a very strong urge and it had to be satisfied. The president leaned over and whispered into Nitra Khan’s ear. Khan

hesitated, ducked her head into the limo, spoke to her legatas in Hunzanian and walked with Bush over to a third limousine. The two cars joined the motorcade to make the twenty-minute drive to the state dinner.

Negon Bush and Nitra Khan were now alone in the stretch limousine, which could seat twelve people. The driver was hidden from view behind tinted glass. Gregorian chant music played on the sound system. Cold, twilight-blue, neon light filled the car.

“Thank you for coming. I really need to be with you, my favorite dominatrix, right now. I’ve just stolen an election through bribery, manipulation of the media and good old-fashioned oppression. I’m so excited!”

Khan looked silently at the psychopathic human being that sat across from her. She just wanted this day to be over and to get back to her own country.

Negon Bush handed Khan a small make-up case. She opened it and saw two gold needles.

“You remember those?” Bush nodded at the case. He began to unbutton his shirt.

Immediately, Khan’s mind was flooded with the memory of the night she first met this deeply disturbed specimen of the *Homo sapiens sapiens* species ten years earlier. As a condition of the cease-fire agreement in 2092, when the American army had the She-Huns surrounded at Hunzania, her mother had agreed to allow Negon Bush thirty minutes alone with the then 15-year old Nitra Khan. She remembered how, on that night, Bush had mumbled, almost in tears, something about “murder” and a car “accident” involving someone named “Mary.”

Khan now knelt on the floor of the limo and, as she had done on that night in 2092, slowly pierced each of Bush’s nipples with a needle. He began to moan softly, the warm blood trickling down his chest, joyfully above the pain.

Bush next removed his shirt and lay on his stomach on the bench seat of the limo. He handed Khan a device resembling a pencil. It was a replica of the laser whip used in the seventh film of the *Star Wars* series released in 2022, *Darth's Darkest-side Dominas*. In the movie, Princess Leia's daughter repeatedly whipped a very old, masochistic Han Solo with the electrical implement.

Khan turned the device on and twelve laser beams of different colors shot out of the grip, forming a whip that buzzed like a light saber. She knew what Bush wanted to hear.

"This is for the Bush dynasty's crimes committed over the last one hundred years! This—" she reared her arm back and then lashed his back savagely, "is for spending forty million dollars to investigate a presidential blow job and only ten million dollars to investigate the truth about the attacks on 9/11 and the death of three thousand innocents – which was then never even told to the public anyway! And after all that, not firing or even demoting a single military official!"

Bush moaned in pain-induced pleasure as the laser-whip tails singed his skin.

"This—" she reared her arm back again, and then flogged him with even more strength and mounting condemnation, "is for the Second Iraq War! Started without provocation or any proof of WMDs or an Iraqi connection to the 9-11 attacks. Your ancestors spent nine hundred billion dollars on that effort, destabilizing the entire Middle East and providing motivation to hundreds of millions to hate America!"

Bush continued moaning, louder and louder.

Khan whipped the president one last time. "And that was for the Bush dynasty starting the endless war against 'terrorism' and the perfect enemy that shows up whenever and wherever you need him to, bombing him and lining your pockets at the same time!"

“Ah, yeah! Tehran! Nigeria! Moscow!” screamed Bush, as he ejaculated; he was still wearing his pants.

A Parting Dinner

The presidential couple, Beem Cheney, Sadina Rice, Nitra Khan and her twelve legatas, and other politically and economically influential Americans sat at a large table in the officers’ dining room at Military HQ, Las Vegas South. There were no military or service staff present inside the room; outside, the room was heavily guarded. On the table sat steaming bowls of the highest quality organic vegetables and fruits and antibiotic- and growth-hormone-free meats from the president’s private agritubes. Classical music was being piped in over the stereo system.

Vera Dan, who sat next to Nitra Khan, had already poured herself three glasses of champagne. Bush was smiling broadly. He looked at his wife cheerfully as she poured herself a fourth glass.

“Vera Dan, drink up, my little meatball. This is the last time you’ll eat and drink at my expense.”

“Fuck you,” she slurred lackadaisically. She was very drunk. And tired – both physically tired as well as mentally tired of her whole life with her deranged husband.

Bush raised his glass, “I propose a toast. A toast to everlasting peace between our two nations.” His eye twinkled with deception.

“To peace,” everyone said in unison. Khan looked at Bush with the same twinkle in her eye.

They all ate and talked among themselves for half an hour. When it was time for the She-Huns to load into the royal Hun-Vee and return to Hunzania, Bush tapped on his glass with a knife.

“Nitra Khan, I would like to now offer you the merchandise we spoke of before coming here to dinner.”

The room fell silent.

Nitra Khan looked at Vera Dan sitting next to her.

Bush remained silent a moment longer. “My dear Nitra Khan, I offer you,” he paused to increase the impact of what he was about to say, “my wife, Vera Dan.”

Shocked glances flew around the table. Not even Cheney knew that this was coming.

Vera Dan stared at her husband in absolute disbelief, and then screamed, “You egotistical bastard! You can’t just give me away as property! I’m not yours to trade as a commodity on the open market!” She threw a champagne flute at Bush’s head, which he ducked.

Khan turned to Vera Dan, smiled warmly, and kissed her lightly on the mouth while gently squeezing her thigh under the table. Vera Dan resisted at first, and then allowed it to happen.

Bush and Cheney whistled and cheered the woman-woman kiss briefly.

Khan pulled away and looked to Bush. “Negon, I accept.” She turned to Vera Dan and said softly, “I promise you, Vera Dan, your life will be much better in my house than in his.”

“No!” screamed Vera Dan. “Negon, you twisted-dick boot-licker. My father will have you assassinated!”

“He has already been visited by my elite guard, my little meatball,” said Bush, confidence in his voice. “He doesn’t like the sound of living out his days on the Guantanamo Level.”

“I’ll tell them all of your military secrets. Everything!”

“Do you think I would tell you the truth about anything like that?” Bush laughed. “Nitra, get her out of here.”

Khan looked Vera Dan in the eye, “Come, I will treat you very well. You have my word as a warrior.” Khan nodded to

her legatas, who approached Vera Dan and began to usher her out the door to the royal Hun-Vee waiting outside. Vera Dan tried to fight them off and then simply resigned herself to her fate, allowing the She-Huns to escort her out of the dining room.

“Nice doing business with you, Nitra. I’ll be in touch regarding the delivery of my crude oil. The first shipment will be on Sunday! Two hundred million barrels. Agreed?”

“Agreed.” Khan left the room.

Bush turned to Cheney, “Real peace at last,” he said as he sat down and took a crystal of black ice from his platinum pillbox and inhaled it deeply.

“Yeah. Peace from that nag of a wife of yours and peace from those lesbian warriors. They’ll never know what hit them,” Cheney chuckled.

*

In the Cuban Boys Club, Danton Gore lay on the bed with Nana Pavlov. They had just turned the TV off.

“Well, Nana, it looks like it’s full steam ahead. Tomorrow night at eight thirty, the Free Vegas revolution will begin.”

“Yeah, and in truly original fashion. We’ll have to make sure the history books get it right.”

They both laughed. “Nana?”

“Yes, Danton?”

“Are you afraid? I mean, there’s a decent chance we’ll be killed tomorrow.”

“Let’s not think about that now, lover. Why don’t you show me how incredible life can be right now?” She tore his shirt off him, kicked her own pants off and began to undo his trousers. She grabbed a thinking condom from the bedside table and giggled, “Lay those magic hands on me one more time!”

Gore and Pavlov began to make love. Just above her left buttock, the sex reactive tattoo of a tigress stalking a kill shined brighter and brighter by the second.

Wednesday
September 7, 2101 A.D.

Clone NRB 32

President Negon R. Bush sat in the Office of Divine Enlightenment, known as the “God” Office, at the House of Light. Seated across the large, redwood desk was NRB 32, one of half a dozen healthy, exact-cloned duplicates of the president. His existence was top secret; as far as the public knew, only Clear Channel Global, Inc., possessed the complicated, expensive cloning technology, for which it held the patent, and only musicians and media personalities were cloned.

“Well, NRB 32,” Bush addressed his clone in a friendly tone, “we both look great today! I haven’t seen you in quite some time. I trust they’re taking good care of you over at the military medical housing complex.”

“Oh, yes sir. They take real good care of me over there.”

“I’m glad to hear it,” said the president, offering some black ice to his clone, who gladly accepted it. Bush considered his clone; they were truly two peas in a pod, from their identical appearances right down to their drug addiction and crooked penises. Most of his clones had ended up with mental disease. One had even escaped and joined the democratic party; he was recovered and subsequently lobotomized. All were kept alive as organ donors for the president.

Bush continued, “I’ve asked you here on a very serious matter, 32. As you probably already know, Free Vegas has been hostile towards me for quite some time. They plan to assassinate me tomorrow night, on Level XXX, in a sex club called the Dark Temple. They believe that while I’m having a session with two dominas there, I will be distracted and they’ll

be able to murder me. However, my people will not let that happen. Are you with me so far?"

"Yes, sir," responded NRB 32 with great interest. As a top-secret clone, he was only allowed to have sex with holograms. "Please, go on."

"So, the reason that this attempt on my life is so important, is that they say the leader of the revolution himself will be there tomorrow night," Bush lied, as all successful politicians do. "Therefore, when we apprehend him in the room we'll crush the revolution within days. Now, NRB 32, I can't be at the Dark Temple myself, as there is some slight risk involved. I've always allowed you to live a relatively free life as a clone, but now I'm asking you to fulfill your patriotic duty and take my place in that room tomorrow night. You've always known that you were created to serve duties such as this one."

"Yes, sir," NRB 32 said with some reservation, despite the thought of having sex with an actual female human being.

"Now, first, the sex will be fantastic, I can assure you that from first hand experience with these girls," Bush winked at NRB 32, offering him another black ice crystal. "Second, when it's all over and the leader of the revolution has been arrested, you'll report immediately to the hospital where I've already arranged for the nation's top plastic surgeon to operate on you. You'll be given a new identity, your complete freedom and five million dollars. Of course, you'll be joining us in New Vegas as well. That's it. So, 32, tell me, do you accept this responsibility?" Bush asked the rhetorical question.

NRB 32, a free-thinking individual, had not been enthusiastic about the assignment until Bush had spoken his last few sentences. Like the man from whom he was cloned, financial gain outweighed any other considerations against a given proposition. "Yes, I accept with pleasure, Mr. President." He stood up and shook Bush's hand.

"Excellent. That makes me very happy."

Strategy Session – Operation Smoke Out

“Thank you, thank you all,” Special Agent Sadina Rice addressed the gathered crowd of military, political and intelligence community officials. Breaking protocol, she was wearing an exceptionally short miniskirt as part of her uniform for this briefing; she had their undivided attention.

Rice continued, “At exactly eight p.m. tonight, Operation Smoke Out will begin. The president’s clone will be at the Dark Temple. After he’s murdered, the revolution will be called to the streets. Once the rats come out of their holes, we will hit them hard. We expect a total of between seventy and one hundred thousand revolutionaries. They may be hard to identify because they’ll probably wear civilian clothing. We expect them to go for the four military HQs. After that, we can expect them to go for media centers.

“The Department of Homeland Security will control all media and telecommunications from eight o’clock on. We will fabricate the truth to be circulated throughout the city as we see fit. I anticipate that we’ll identify eighty five percent of the revolution, killing or detaining roughly eighty thousand individuals. Any one caught aiding a revolutionary is also to be arrested and sent directly to the Guantanamo Level without due process. The revolution will be crushed in only twelve hours,” she slammed her fist down on the table. Applause broke out all around the room. “Thank you. Now, here is your general of the army, Beem Cheney.” Rice sat down.

“Thank you, Ms. Rice.” Cheney felt incredibly sober; the anticipation of the approaching battle had cleared his mind of its alcoholic haze. “I’ll have command of four hundred thousand Defenders of the Light this evening. Communication is the key. We must all be informed of one another’s actions because all hell will break loose in the city tonight. The leaders

of the revolution will be arrested and interrogated; however, the foot soldiers will be shot on sight. Try to avoid killing innocent civilians, but as per our administration's official rules of engagement, shoot first and ask questions later." A few chuckles were heard around the room. "We'll all be in New Vegas in a couple of days anyway."

Applause.

Cheney checked his watch, "It's exactly twelve hundred hours right now, let's go through the entire battle plan once again. We'll adjourn at sixteen hundred. Break into your teams."

Men rearranged themselves and sat in small groups, studying various documents and making calls on their MFDs.

The Fifth Assassination of a U.S. President

"I told you, no blood!" Nana Pavlov screamed at the naked man standing in front of her, whip in his hand.

Next to the man, the CEO of ConAg Rice, a Fortune 500 company, one of Pavlov's girls lay on the floor, covered in bruises and bleeding welts.

Danton Gore stood beside Pavlov; like many of her clients, this one wanted other parties watching while he humiliated and dominated his prey. The domination and exploitation that he exercised over his employees and the economy was not enough for him, this man needed to physically and directly experience sadistic power at close hand.

"Now get out of my sight! And they will be charging you an extra two thousand dollars on your way out."

The businessman walked into an en suite dressing room. The submissive woman quietly left to go have her wounds tended and inform the front desk of the man's additional charges.

Gore wore a skin-tight, latex jumpsuit and black, leather

motorcycle boots. A mask held together by shiny rivets covered the upper half of his face. He checked his watch: 7:50 p.m.

Pavlov's client came out of the washroom, politely thanked them both and showed himself out of the room.

"Ok, Nana, are we ready?" Gore looked deeply into her eyes. He knew his whole life was going to change drastically in one way or another only forty minutes from now. Gore tried to remain calm, but with each minute he was growing more and more anxious.

"It's going to be fine, Danton. Bush is due here at eight o'clock. As I told you, his bodyguards will not be a problem. The weapon has been packed with a gram of RDX explosives, which is enough to literally kill an elephant, as they used to say before they were extinct. Do you have the hair analyzer?"

"Yes." Gore patted his MFD. "The engineers have triple-checked it."

"Good. Come on, let's go. This is it." She kissed him passionately. "The future is green."

Gore smiled. "The future is green."

The door to the room opened and Bush's dominatrix and art model, Seeta, entered. She wore a full length dress made of transparent, tinted plastic; her hair hung down in a single, thick braid. "Nana, the president is here," she said in a cool, professional voice. After all, she had been to Bush's private art studio and the thrill of his celebrity status had worn off. He was just another paying client to her.

"Ok, Seeta, let's go show him the time of his life!" Pavlov looked back at Gore and winked.

The door closed behind the two women. Gore fought the urge to contact his parents, with whom he had not spoken since their lunch the previous week. He wanted to speak to them for just a few minutes about anything, as he considered that he

might not have the chance to do so ever again. Gore tried to quiet his mind as he left the room and went to fulfill his fate.

In the lobby of the Dark Temple, Seeta and Nana walked up to NRB 32 shaking their hips from side to side. Two Secret Service men stood silently ten feet behind him, looking this way and that.

“Hello, ladies,” the presidential clone greeted them. “Nice to see you again. You both look amazing tonight.”

“So do you,” the two women responded in unison.

“I like that silver suit,” said Pavlov.

“And that hat,” said Seeta, “is that a real, Texas cowboy hat?”

“Sho’ is, my little filly,” said NRB 32 in an authentic southern accent. He was truly enjoying himself. “Now, Seeta, you’ll have to wear that outfit the next time you come pose for me at my art studio.” The clone had done his homework. “It is simply enchanting.”

“Why thank you, Mr. President, sir.”

“Please, call me Negon. Enough chit chat girls, I think it’s about time we get into that cage and do some serious Abu Ghuraib role playing, don’t you think? I’ll play one of the nine out of ten prisoners who was innocent.”

“Sounds great. Follow me.” Pavlov led Seeta, NRB 32 and the two bodyguards into the elevator. Standing in the elevator, NRB 32 reflected on the fact that he wanted to see first hand what he had read about extensively in the mission file. The Dark Temple had fifteen separate theme rooms, ranging from prehistoric caves to Renaissance Europe to 20th-century Japan, where all kinds of role playing took place. Some men stayed up to two weeks living life without making high pressure decisions, subjecting themselves to submission and humiliation and even to outright torture. Then they paid their huge bills and returned to their lives as CEOs of multi-billion

dollar companies, politicians, professional athletes, and entertainers.

However, NRB 32 knew he could not ask for a tour, as the real president already knew about this place and would never do so; it would blow his cover. He could not let the president down. Besides, sex, money and freedom were on the line.

They got off the elevator and Pavlov led them to a chamber on the third floor. The two Secret Service men entered first, followed by the threesome.

As the two men searched the entire room and the en suite bathroom, NRB 32 looked at the roughly hewn, stone block walls and floor with fascination. In the center of the room stood a black marble platform about four feet high. A metal cage was built onto the platform, six feet long by three feet wide by three feet high. There was nothing inside the cage. Music played in the room; male choirs sang medieval Gregorian chants. The place smelled of latex, sweat and black-ice smoke, burned and inhaled through a glass pipe a la crack cocaine of the old days. One of the bodyguards opened the drawers that were set into the side of the platform under the cage and rifled through their contents. Satisfied that everything was okay, he walked over to the main doorway of the room and stood at attention.

Danton Gore stood in the far corner of the room, diagonally opposite the doorway. Next to him, the other Secret Service agent came out of the washroom next to Gore and searched him. Gore held his hands together behind his back, his head looking down at the floor.

The second bodyguard also returned to the doorway into the room. "All clear, Mr. President."

"That will be all, men. Wait for me outside in Ron Jeremy Square." NRB 32 felt quite secure; he had read in the mission file how all employees at this sex club had maximum security clearance due to the high number of politicians, military, in-

telligence and business leaders that passed through its front doors.

A shiver of expectation shot through NRB 32's body. This was all completely new to him. He had read and re-read the file, but, in reality he had no idea what to expect of these women as they practiced their craft on him.

"Don't look at me or speak," the clone ordered Gore, as Bush would have done. He calmly withdrew a replica of the president's pillbox and inhaled two crystals of black ice in rapid succession.

"Undress, now!" yelled Pavlov.

The clone flinched slightly. "Yes, my mistress." He undressed, leaving his clothes in a heap on the floor.

The two dominas retrieved whips from a drawer set into the base of the marble platform.

"Get into the cage!" ordered Pavlov, as she delivered a lash with the leather whip. "I'm your president now! We are your law!" She whipped him again.

"Yes, my mistress." NRB 32 crawled on all fours up the steps leading into the cage.

Inside the cage, the clone's knees and elbows crushed into the bars that formed the floor. Seeta and Nana began to circle the cage on opposite sides, lashing their whips through the bars and landing direct blows. Bright red welts rose up instantly. NRB 32 lurched sideways in surprise, letting out a howl of pain.

Suddenly, Seeta stepped up to the cage and pressed her breasts through the space between the bars. NRB 32 stared, mesmerized, at the two perfect wonders of nature.

"Negan, don't look at her like an animal. Haven't you ever seen a decent pair of tits before, you ogling leech?" Pavlov flogged him again on his lower back and buttocks.

Damn! That's downright torture! What does Negan see in that? These thoughts were distracted as it fully dawned on

NRB 32 that he was about to have sex with actual human beings. He reached out and gently cupped Seeta's breasts. She retreated a step to deny him.

"Take your dirty hands off her, you good for nothing weakling!" Pavlov pressed a button recessed in a hollow in the side of the platform. Inside the cage, NRB 32 hopped from knee to knee, screaming in pain as electric shocks shot through his body from the bars of the floor. He screamed again. Then, when the shocks stopped, he laughed.

NRB 32 looked at Pavlov and said, "Ok, that's enough torture for now. We're not on the Guantanamo Level. I'm ready to have you both. Let's get on with it."

"Okay. Let's get started with your vibrator. You left it here last week. Like it reads on the side, right next to the picture of your pretty little face, let's make love, not war!" Pavlov retrieved the device from another drawer set into the base of the cage. She stepped up to the bars and commanded, "Show me your ass!"

NRB 32 pressed his buttocks up to the bars. Pavlov lubricated the vibrator with KY jelly, turned it on to low and began to insert it into his rectum, the picture of Bush's face superimposed over a peace sign slowly disappearing there. "Ohhh," he murmured in surprise and pleasure.

"Yeah, you like that, don't you, you psycho-bastard!" she encouraged and degraded him.

NRB 32 had read the file and began to sing, as would Bush, with his eyes closed, "Yankee Doodle went to town, to see his dominatrix, she stuck a dildo in his ass, for him she always turned tricks!" NRB 32 shut his eyes in total, new-found pleasure.

"Seeta, get a thinking condom for the president."

Seeta walked over to a small cabinet next to the door. She searched for several seconds. "I don't see any here."

Pavlov walked over to Seeta and said, “Oh, that’s right. I forgot to restock this room. Go next door and quietly get one. Try not to interrupt their session too much.”

Seeta left the room.

Pavlov walked by NRB 32 and played with the vibrator for a few seconds. “We’ll have your condom in just one minute.”

The clone did not say anything; he was enjoying himself too much to be bothered to respond.

Pavlov calmly walked over to Gore and they both stepped through the washroom door and took shelter behind the wall.

“The future is green!” Pavlov whispered to Gore. “The temperature-pressure detonator was set for thirty seconds.”

A moment later the assassins heard a loud explosion, muffled by the clone’s body. They felt the concussion wave in their bones as drops of blood sprayed through the doorway, landing on the floor and wall.

Gore and Pavlov reentered the room to a grizzly scene. Blood splatters painted all four walls, the floor and the ceiling of the room. The cage had been totally destroyed; the bars were broken and twisted. NRB 32’s head had been blown off its body and lay on the floor fifteen feet from where it had been only seconds before. Apart from his head, hands and feet, there were no recognizable pieces of the presidential clone’s body.

Pavlov arrived first at the head. Gore watched as she tore out a few strands of hair from the head.

“Here,” she said, extending her hand towards Gore.

Gore took the hair from her and put it into a tiny opening in his MFD. This device would compare the hair he had just put in against the parameters gleaned from a control sample collected and analyzed by Cloud Base himself three weeks earlier.

“It should be less than thirty seconds,” Gore told Pavlov.

“Danton, I’m sure it’s him,” she said excitedly. “Did you see his penis? It was all crooked and twisted and scarred.”

“Come on! Come on!” Gore urged his MFD under his breath. Even though the room was soundproofed, he feared that someone would be coming very soon to investigate.

Fifteen seconds later, he said, “Okay, it’s coming up now!”

The MFD emitted a long beeping signal and the holographic screen showed:

BLACK ICE CONTENT:

DAILY USE > 10 DOSES.

SPECIFIC MINERAL ANALYSIS:

HAS CONSUMED LOBSTER IN LAST 180 DAYS.

PERCENT MATCH TO BASE SAMPLE DATA:

100%

“Hot damn, it’s him!” exclaimed Gore. He showed her the results. “Good work, Nana!”

*

“That’s great! Send the message to Cloud Base.” Nana Pavlov’s voice sounded in the ear piece that Sadina Rice wore. Rice was standing in the hallway outside the door of the cage room where NRB 32 had just been killed. Behind her, twenty heavily-armed Defender of the Light stormtroopers waited to detain Danton Gore for questioning and subsequent torture. Seeta had already been taken downstairs for debriefing.

*

Inside the cage room, Danton Gore looked at his MFD and pressed a button to send the pre-written message “The future is green” on a pirate band-width that broadcast directly to

Cloud Base and to the five sub-cells beneath him in his branch of the communication tree of Free Vegas. Each of his sub-cells would notify five additional sub-cells, and so on; thousands of revolutionaries would be notified within minutes. The Free Vegas revolution was on. It was 8:34 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7, 2101.

“Done!” Gore looked up and over at Pavlov, who stood two feet away from him. “Let’s—” Gore’s battle-ready, hyper-alert mind noticed that Pavlov was moving her hand towards his chest. In it, she held the handle of the whip upside down, with her thumb on the side. Gore could see the electric current running through the bottom of the handle; he could hear the slight buzzing sound it emitted. He was not thinking; he was now a fighting machine on autopilot. With his left hand, he caught her wrist as she held the handle of the whip only millimeters from his chest. Gore twisted her arm backward sharply and pushed the stun device into her neck, just above the collar bone, simultaneously wrenching it out of her hand. She shook violently for a second and collapsed, unconscious, to the ground.

Gore recognized the configuration of the buttons on the whip’s handle instantly; this was a customized weapon of cutting edge technology, and could have been produced by only one source – the U.S. military.

*

“Done!” Gore’s voice rang into Sadina Rice’s earpiece. She raised her left hand and then lowered it, giving the signal to the soldiers behind her to move in to the cage room and take Gore. A soldier threw the door open and Rice walked through it, her pulse pistol raised in front of her.

What Special Agent Rice saw is not what she had been

expecting – she was not looking at Danton Gore’s body lying unconscious on the floor, but rather at Nana Pavlov’s body in mid-air, falling to the ground. Rice barely had time to process what was going on before, she, too, fell to the ground, having been stunned by an ionic paralyzer beam.

*

Danton Gore, even in soldier mode, allowed himself to be shocked, albeit only for a millisecond. After firing his weapon, he realized that his target had been Gwen Stephens. He did not dwell on this fact; his mind could figure it out later. Without hesitation, Gore fired his weapon several more times. One of the functions of this customized device created a path of ionized air in front of it and then sent an electric current along the pathway, stunning the target into unconsciousness instantly. He dropped five soldiers to the ground in the doorway as he took cover behind the four-foot high marble base of the cage.

Instantly, Gore spun toward the wall ten feet behind him and fired again, activating the beebie grenade launcher function of Pavlov’s weapon. He covered his head and face with his other arm as the tiny explosive opened a five-foot wide hole in the outside wall of the room, opposite the doorway.

Gore, crouching to benefit from the cover the base of the cage provided him, sprinted towards the hole. He covered the distance in less than two seconds, his mind racing to formulate a plan.

Gore arrived at the hole in the wall and looked out onto a crowded Ron Jeremy Square. In the center of the square, which was lit by hundreds of neon signs of every imaginable color, stood a fifty-foot tall statue of Ron Jeremy with a fifteen-foot long erection. Evenly placed around the square stood ten additional, twenty-foot tall sculptures of his legendary love

muscle, each one bearing an advertisement for corporations producing sex products. Luckily, one of the giant phalluses, advertising “Astroglide – Go Anywhere,” was only five feet below him and about ten feet to the side.

As Gore dove – pulse bullets whizzing past his outstretched body – he heard, “We want that green terrorist alive. Stun only!”

Gore landed hard on the top of the Astroglide penis, scrambled a few feet and slid down the curving shaft on the side opposite the Dark Temple. He heard a beebie grenade explode at the base of the sculpture, as he looked down and noticed more Defenders of the Light making their way through the crowd from the main entrance of the Dark Temple a hundred feet away.

The whole plaster penile statue began to lean to the ground, its steel skeleton slowing its fall. Gravity finally pulled Gore off the falling monument and he free-fell the last eight feet, rolling to the side just as the structure slammed into the ground.

Gore immediately made his way towards a small street about fifty yards away, on the east side of the square. He scurried through the crowd, people near him falling to the ground, stunned by Defender of the Light ionic paralyzer bursts, while others began to panic.

But Gore did not stick around to see what would develop. Within seconds, he was in the thick of the crowd. Hundreds of people wearing outrageous latex outfits of all colors and designs made it impossible for the soldiers to get a good bead on him. The revolutionary slipped into the side street and ran, literally, for his life.

Danton Gore sprinted for a full minute without looking back. He covered 500 yards, turning onto new streets every block. A city passenger elevator appeared around a corner and

he ducked into a dark space between two buildings just across the street from it. Pulse pounding in his carotid, heart pounding in his chest, he leaned back against the wall to gather the thoughts swimming in his head.

What the hell was Gwen Stephens doing in the Dark Temple wearing a military uniform? Think Danton! He took several deep breaths, concentrating on calming himself down. Ok, I just saw Gwen Stephens, who apparently works for the government... Oh shit!

Everything dawned on Gore in one, overwhelming torrent of realization. Gwen Stephens had used him to set up everything tonight. So had Nana Pavlov.

The corpse in the cage in the Dark Temple must have been a clone of Bush after all – Pavlov must have somehow switched the hair sample on him. And he had called out the revolution thinking it was the real president. Danton Gore sank down and now sat with his back against the wall. Until he could explain, Cloud Base would consider him a traitor, possibly putting a death warrant out on him. He felt physically ill and thought he was about to vomit; he had nowhere to go and no one to help him. Either government soldiers or Free Vegas would be watching his car, his apartment and even his parents' house. He had to do something to alert Cloud Base to the situation.

Gore took several more deep breaths, pressed a button and typed a message into the holographic keyboard of his MFD. "The future is black!" He selected the pirate frequency that Cloud Base had set up for this evening, and sent the message. His MFD showed an error message:

SERVICE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED IN THIS AREA.

“Son of a bitch.” He let out a deep sigh and turned off his MFD so his location could not be tracked.

Gore reluctantly stood up and ran over to a public net point, which resembled a phone booth, on a nearby street corner, risking being seen by the authorities. He quickly logged on to one of the several net pages used by Free Vegas. The words

THERE IS NO NET SERVICE AT THIS TIME

appeared on the screen. He felt hysteria starting to rise in him as he contemplated the fact that he would personally be responsible for the death or imprisonment of tens of thousands of good, honorable revolutionaries. Gore hung his head, still standing over the monitor.

Suddenly, the image of a beautiful, young woman with long, black hair and Slavic features appeared in his mind’s eye. The woman wore a full-length garment of a glimmering, transparent material; her areolae and the curve of her breasts visible. She sat floating on a slab of red marble, evidently inside a gigantic, underground cavern. Behind her, several large pyramids stood spaced out all around the massive chamber.

The woman waved to Gore and smiled sweetly. This was no daydream, but rather a vision of reality, he was certain. Inside his head, Gore heard the words, *“Don’t panic, Danton Gore. You are the chosen one. You are the Anti-Bush. Get out of Las Vegas and come to me. I am with you.”*

“How?” he said out loud. “Where are you?” But the vision faded away.

Gore paused and gathered his thoughts. He looked around him and decidedly sprinted towards the nearby elevator, hoping that there would not be any police guarding it.

Gore arrived at the elevator, one policeman was there checking IDs. Dozens of people were trying to get in. He grabbed a woman, standing alone and wearing black latex and

a mask, and began to kiss her. They pushed through the crowd at the door, unnoticed by the policeman.

“Wow!” said the woman. “Can I get your number?” She admired his well-sculpted body up and down.

“Yes, in a minute,” he replied. This was an express elevator, which only stopped every five city levels. He and the woman were the last ones on and it immediately set off, leaving the pushing crowd and the policeman behind.

As the passengers rode upwards, he continued to kiss the woman passionately. He kept his hand on her sacral chakra; he did not want her or anyone else asking any questions. She did not.

Eight minutes and thirty seconds later, Gore left the woman speechless and smiling as he stepped out of the elevator onto city level 29 and Las Vegas Boulevard.

A Pair of Plotters

Sadina Rice woke up in the room next to the cage room; a medieval theme room, it was decorated with iron chains with shackles, a guillotine, an iron maiden and a wooden stocks. Next to her on the large bed, which hung on chains from the ceiling and was covered with black latex, lay Nana Pavlov, who was also just coming to. Two soldiers stood at attention awaiting orders; the others had left in pursuit of Gore fifteen minutes earlier.

Rice felt like she had been in a car accident; her entire body ached from within. Her hair stood out in every direction and the faint smell of singed flesh and hair filled her nostrils.

“Nana,” she said groggily, “where the hell is he? How did he get away?”

“Sadina, I’m so sorry. He caught me by surprise but I did witness him sending the message to Cloud Base.”

“Don’t worry, Nana, you did fine.” Rice turned to one of

the soldiers and said, “Agent Waters, do you have a position on Gore? He needs to be interrogated.”

“Sorry, M’am. He must have turned his MFD off.”

Military HQ, Las Vegas North

Dave Johnson, husband, father, brother, BushCoke employee and Free Vegas revolutionary, approached the main gate of the military base at the northern entrance to Las Vegas. This installation consisted of four square miles on each of ten city levels. He stood among 1,000 other Free Vegas men and women. In all, 10,000 freedom fighters were now attacking this installation from all sides on multiple city levels.

Johnson briefly considered his life. He had kissed his wife and three children goodbye several hours earlier before joining other Free Vegas soldiers in an abandoned building near the military base. Sixty thousand other revolutionaries had gathered near the three other main military bases of the city, the House of Light, television and radio stations, police stations and important transportation facilities.

Dave Johnson had joined Free Vegas six months earlier. Fed up with the corporate greed and domination that completely ran American government, business and society, he had felt so exasperated that he took the decision to lay down his life, if necessary, to directly change the future of his childrens’ Las Vegas.

Johnson’s children had no access to parks – there was not a single green space of any kind on the lower fifty levels of the city. The air they breathed was laden with toxic fumes from factory and automobile exhaust gases, burning the eyes and throat upon contact; the drinking water was frequently at below-regulation standards. He wanted a future free of the

inevitable city pollution that resulted from the burning of fossil fuels.

Additionally, Johnson's children did not have access to quality education or medical care at reasonable prices. All of the public services on city level 122 where he lived – electricity, water, garbage collection, public transportation – were overpriced and service was intermittent, at best.

Like Dave Johnson, his wife also worked fifty hours a week, leaving no time for the couple to personally raise their children the way that they should be raised – receiving love and education directly from their parents all day long. Their robot nanny was incapable of giving such things in any real way.

He did not want his children, when they grew up, to have to work long hours and receive unfair compensation for their efforts while mid-level and upper management took home huge salaries. He himself had not received a raise in five years, while the top fifty employees of his division at Bush-Coke, Inc., had each earned more than fifteen million dollars a year in salary and stock options. Inflation had risen at four percent a year regularly; Johnson's buying power was twenty percent less than it had been five years previously. Food prices were inflated, the products low quality and laden with known cancer-causing pesticides and preservatives.

"Johnson," his commander's voice broke him from his reverie, "keep alert, we're going in."

"Yes, sir," Dave Johnson answered on his MFD, his voice tinged with anxiety. He and his group of revolutionaries entered the main gate of the military base on city level 3.

Two Free Vegas soldiers fired half a dozen rockets from hand-held launchers at the security checkpoints and the group then advanced into the military facility. As they moved forward, they received only small-arms fire from a handful of Defenders of the Light. It really did seem to Johnson that

this base had been left undefended, and his heart lifted at the thought of success.

He and many of his comrades-in-arms shouted “The future is green!” as they now charged full speed ahead, hand guns and conventional rifles in hand; Free Vegas was very poorly armed, without many pulse weapons or major explosives to speak of.

Johnson stood in a large, open operations area; hundreds of vehicles of war were parked everywhere and storage containers of all sizes were sprinkled all around the yard. He saw small units of Defenders of the Light running between buildings one hundred yards away from him. Johnson and his fellow soldiers headed for the tanks and the buildings beyond. Within minutes, all of the revolutionaries were inside the yard – and that was it.

Thousands of Defenders of the Light materialized everywhere at once: dropping down from the ceiling on ropes, appearing from inside the buildings and from hidden bunkers in the ground, coming out of the storage containers. The tanks came to life and began spraying pulse bullets from their mounted automatic guns. The government foot soldiers also opened fire on the doomed revolutionaries.

Just as he realized that the Free Vegas revolution must have been betrayed, Dave Johnson was thrown backward by twenty, high-density pulse bullets that slammed into his chest at 7,000 m.p.h. He died instantly.

A Revolution in the Quashing

“Mr. Cheney?”

“Yes, Rice, go ahead.” Cheney spoke from the War Room, located underneath the House of Light.

“Has the revolution been called?”

“Yes. We estimate that as of now, in the first twenty min-

utes, Free Vegas has already lost about thirty thousand fighters. We don't know how many answered the call to fight, but I estimate they have lost half of their initial force."

"Those numbers sound great. I do, however, have some bad news, sir."

"What's that, Sadina?"

"Danton Gore escaped us here at the Dark Temple. I don't know where he went. It's been about twenty minutes since we lost him. I have no idea what his intentions are. We need to put an APB out on him. As you know, he's one of the closest ones to Cloud Base that we've ever had contact with." Rice described Gore's outfit to Cheney. "Sorry again, sir."

"Don't worry about it right now. The president will deal with that later. All in all, everything is going pretty well. I'll notify all military commanders and police officers that Gore is a wanted fugitive. If he tries to access any official communications or facilities, we'll get him."

"Yes, sir. I'll come down there right now."

"Ok, see you down here." Cheney ended the communication.

In the medieval theme room at the Dark Temple, Rice turned to Pavlov. Pavlov spoke first, "Sorry again, Sadina. But surely Bush would have tortured him to death in his personal torture chamber, no? Is it such a bad thing that the fuck of the century is still alive?"

Rice said nothing as images of her night with Gore in the love hotel Desire flashed through her mind. A faint smile crept onto her lips.

Danton Gore – Fugitive

Danton Gore stepped out of the passenger elevator on city level 29 to be greeted by a six-foot tall hologram of Donald

Duck. “Welcome to the Las Vegas Strip! Enjoy our casinos, there are millions upon millions of dollars to take home without working a whit!” it promised cheerfully.

The image of a night sky was projected onto the ceiling here, complete with twinkling stars. A warm, dry breeze blew on Gore’s face; the air smelled of flowers and freshly cut grass. He could still detect, however, the underlying stink of car exhaust fumes, a perpetual nuisance anywhere in the city. Las Vegas Boulevard stretched away in front of him, lined with huge hotel-casinos that reached upward ten city levels. Gore could see Schwarzenegger Speedway a mile away in the distance, and the huge spires of two major churches in Las Vegas – the Church of Elvis and the Church of Ozz. Blue, purple and pink neon lights reflected on building fronts everywhere.

Gore looked around him for signs of the revolution being fought in the streets. However, on this level, primarily populated by tourists and religious fanatics, he saw none. *I have to get a message to Cloud Base to let him know what happened.* Gore checked the time. 8:51. *Shit! The second wave of freedom fighters will be called out in three minutes.*

Gore ran over to the first casino on his left, Caesar’s Palace V, amidst cat calls from women and stares of bewilderment from men; his outfit called much more attention on this level than on Level XXX. He headed directly into the clothing boutique; the fugitive needed more functional clothing to carry out the plan he had finished formulating while kissing the woman in the elevator, multi-tasking under pressure.

Gore entered the men’s boutique and glanced at the merchandise as he walked up to the sales girl at the counter: Versani, Jean Paul Gaultier, Kenzo, Tommi Hilfiger, Montana and, of course, Arnie Wear. These corporate entities had not only survived but had thrived during the previous one hundred years. The Schwarzenegger line was called “Terminal Style,”

which used the advertising slogan “It’ll knock ’em dead!” It blended the costumes of the rock band Kiss, the casual killing garb of the Terminator and the flamboyant styles of Evel and Robbie Knievel. These garments provided multiple, hidden holsters for pistols and sawed-off shotguns, and had bullet proof material sewn into them.

“Hello. I’m Moil. Can I help you, sir?” asked the sales girl, who was busy entering information into the cash register. She wore a see-through, silk blouse, a miniskirt and knee-high, “throw-me-down” meatball-leather boots.

“Uh,” he hesitated, this girl was a stunner, “yes. Please.”

“I see you like the vintage S&M stuff. What’s this?” she ran her fingers over his latex jumpsuit, admiring both the attire and the man who wore it. “Original, early-21st-century Jean Paul Gaultier, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is. You have a good eye.”

“That’s what they pay me for. So, what are you looking for today?” she asked, looking him in the eye, now gently running her fingertips along his arm.

“Unfortunately, I’m in quite a hurry, Miss,” he returned her gaze. “I need to use your business net immediately. Then I’ll buy something.”

“Certainly, sir. Here you go.” Moil handed him a keyboard and turned the floating, quantum-drive monitor/computer so he could see it.

Gore typed, “The future is black!” and sent his message to a secure Free Vegas website. He held his breath in anticipation.

MESSAGE SUCCESSFULLY SENT

Gore exhaled a sigh of relief, and then immediately said, “Shit!” out loud; he noticed that the time was 8:55 p.m. – he

had sent the message to Cloud Base one minute too late. The next 10,000 revolutionaries had already been called out – at 8:54 p.m.

“Are you okay, sir?” asked Moil.

Gore did not respond. He slowly walked over to a chair and sat down, hanging his head in grief. Another 10,000 men and women had just hit the streets to fight a futile battle against a far superior enemy.

Moil approached him. “Sir?”

“Uh, it’s something I just read on the net.” Gore pulled himself together, stood up and walked over to the window displays. “I’d like that Arnie Wear trench coat,” he pointed to the mannequin in the window, “forty-four long. Also, a pair of combat pants and a long sleeved, cotton jersey. Oh yeah, and a Terminal Style field backpack. Thank you.”

Moil walked back behind the counter and looked for Gore’s sizes in the clothing stored there on some shelves.

Gore absentmindedly looked out into the lobby of the casino through the front display window of the boutique. Twenty feet away, a police officer stared back at him, his partner looking down at the video display of his MFD.

Gore’s heart started beating more quickly; he did not like the look of these two men. They began to walk toward the boutique.

Ok, Danton. Just stay calm. He opened a pouch on his belt.

Seconds later, the two officers entered the store. Moil was still behind the register looking for Gore’s clothes.

“Good evening, sir,” said the first officer.

“Good evening, officer.”

“Nice get up. A bit far from Level XXX, aren’t you?”

“Actually, I work in a production here in the casino. I go on stage in ten minutes.”

Moil was now watching the three men.

The officer who had been looking at his MFD asked, “Would you mind taking off your mask, sir? We—”

Both men fell to the floor, electrically stunned by Gore’s ionic paralyzer.

Moil screamed, frozen in fear. Gore dashed over to her. She heard him say “Sorry” as she felt her muscles tighten and consciousness slip away from her.

Gore caught the girl and gently lowered her to the ground behind the counter. He then rifled through the Arnie Wear trench coats stored on the shelves and found his size. Hurrying back over to the unconscious policemen, Gore grabbed their pulse pistols and ran out of the store and onto the street. He removed his leather mask and put it into a pocket, pulling the coat tight around him to cover the latex suit. Breaking into a slow run, Danton Gore headed for the Church of Elvis.

The Presidential Pentecostal Chapel

Negon R. Bush and Beem Cheney sat in the War Room, 200 feet beneath the House of Light in Las Vegas. Military and intelligence officials clumped together in small groups all around the room, leaning over maps and discussing strategies. There were over one hundred people in all.

Seven city levels above, on the streets in the vicinity of the House of Light, the fighting was heavy. Ten thousand Defenders of the Light swarmed the neighborhood, and although the revolutionaries were fighting with all their hearts and souls, they were simply outgunned and outmanned. They did inflict some casualties on the government soldiers with captured weapons and tanks, but there was no way Free Vegas could take the House of Light.

“It’s been twenty-eight minutes since the assassination,

sir,” a lieutenant informed the president in the War Room. “We have confirmed that a secondary wave of Free Vegas fighters took to the streets approximately twenty minutes after the original call to battle.”

Cheney sat next to Bush at a large conference table. “Let’s see what happens in the next thirty minutes. They might call it off as they realize they’ll be crushed for sure. We need to find Gore and get information out of him. Rice confirmed that he has had direct communication with Cloud Base many times in the past. Apart from the Free Vegas traitor, he’s the only one we know by name who has done so.”

“Ok,” agreed Bush. “Beem, where is the fighting heaviest?”

“Well, sir, I would say that they’re concentrating on the military HQs and upstairs, on the House of Light.”

“Any chance they’ll actually take any of their objectives.”

“Not a snowball’s chance in hell, Negon.”

“‘Heck,’ Beem. A snowball’s chance in *heck*. That’s great.” Bush stood up and patted Cheney on the back of the shoulder. “Everything seems to be going just swell. Except for the Gore screw up, it looks like Rice has done pretty well for herself running her first major operation. I’m going to the chapel to pray. I’ll be back shortly.”

Bush left the War Room and walked across the hall, where he had had a lavish Pentecostal chapel built for himself at taxpayer expense. He typed in the security code, entered the chapel, kneeled in front of the solid-gold crucifix and Christ figure and crossed himself.

Still kneeling, Bush withdrew his black ice pillbox from a pocket, opened it and calmly snorted three crystals of black ice in rapid succession.

“Thank you, Jesus, my savior,” he began to pray with eyes

closed, the faint black-ice residue line visible above his upper lip. “You have handed me the election, again, as well as the peace treaty and all of its oil and the defeat of the revolution. Just as my ancestors led a crusade against oil-rich Muslim terrorists in the Middle East, so, too, I have led the crusade against Free Vegas and its non-god-fearing, socialist, intellectual terrorists. These green terrorists believe in nature’s right to exist independent of man, fair distribution of wealth and freedom of speech against government and you. Give me your strength and together we will crush these dangerous naysayers. Amen.”

The Church of Elvis

Danton Gore stepped off of Las Vegas Boulevard and walked through the main entrance into the Church of Elvis. More than 200 yards in front of him, on the raised altar platform, a band of androids played “Jailhouse Rock.” A very life-like robotic rendition of Elvis Presley, complete with incredible dance moves, led the band of twenty-foot tall metallic musicians. Mounted TV screens displayed their performance all around the building. The church was almost empty; the rock and roll midnight mass did not start for several hours.

The structure provided space for 60,000 worshippers to comfortably congregate at once. Several million members of the Church of Elvis lived in Las Vegas alone. The Church of Ozz, about half a mile away, boasted a local congregation of one million.

Most of the 5,000 parishioners present, who wore glittering, white suits and black wigs, milled about the expansive, expensive gift shops located near the three main doorways into the sanctuary, buying COE paraphernalia.

Meet Elvis in Graceland, Las Vegas!

scrolled by in bright, multi-colored lights on a huge sign that hung above the center doorway.

Shuttle bus stop located just in front of the church, buses leave every 20 minutes.

Gore smiled to himself, considering the fact that the institution of Elvis was going as strong as ever 120 years after the king had died. He walked towards the altar-stage and took a seat about thirty rows back. The fugitive needed to collect his thoughts and to find what was essential to the plan he had concocted since seeing the vision of the Slavic woman outside the elevator on Level XXX – an entrance directly into a main duct of the city’s air circulation system. He remembered that his father had once said there were only two locations in the entire city where an everyday citizen could gain access to the main air circulation system – Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway and the Church of Elvis. These two locations needed direct connections to the system due to the huge crowds that regularly assembled there.

Gore looked around, despair beginning to overtake him. It would take hours to find what he was looking for here. A look of apprehension came onto Gore’s face as he looked back toward the main entrances; five police officers and four Defenders of the Light had just entered and began to execute a systematic sweep of all the pews. They were about a hundred yards away and advancing fast; most of the pews were empty. Gore crouched down below the level of the pew and feverishly searched the gigantic space visually for a clue as to the entrance into the air system.

“It’s just over there.” Gore heard a voice in his mind. He could not identify it. *“That column houses an elevator shaft.*

The password is 'satin,' like Elvis used to call his mother." Gore now realized that the voice was the same as that of the woman he had seen in his vision earlier on Level XXX. *"Go! Flee southeast of the city."*

Gore looked up once again to see the soldiers now only fifteen yards away. He drew his weapon to shoot his way over to the column fifty feet away. Just then, all of the lights went out; it was pitch black. Gore whispered, "Thank you," directing his words to the unknown Slavic-blooded woman who had entered his life only twenty minutes earlier.

Gore carefully made his way to the elevator-shaft column, lit with a small security light, the yells of the soldiers receding behind him. He got to the door and spoke the word "satin." The door slid quietly open and he stepped in and turned around to face the control panel. Soldiers were shining flashlights all around the place; one beam of light found Gore standing inside the elevator. He pushed the button for the climate control level of the church. As the elevator descended, he heard yells outside the door, "Over there! In the elevator!" Then he heard pulse bullets blasting against the marble walls of the column outside and inside the elevator shaft above him.

The elevator continued down. Gore leaned back against the wall, his heart thumping against his ribcage.

A Petulant President

Negon R. Bush reentered the War Room from the presidential chapel at 9:12 p.m. The military men were still hard at work in their small groups.

Bush was refreshed. He was invigorated after his prayer session, ready to carry out God's work against the pagan She-Huns and what was left of working- and middle-class Las Vegas.

Cheney addressed Bush. “Everything okay, Negon?”

“Couldn’t be better, General Cheney. Let’s see what’s happening with that next support wave of terrorists.”

Bush and Cheney sat and watched ten different video feeds of fighting taking place at the four military HQs in the city and around the House of Light above them.

“Hello, Mr. President. General Cheney.” It was Special Agent Rice.

“In a minute, Sadina,” said Bush brusquely. “Pull up a chair and be quiet.”

Rice did not respond. She was very nervous; she knew why they were watching so intently – the second support wave of Free Vegas soldiers was now expected to hit the street in two minutes, twenty minutes after the first support wave.

They all sat in total silence for another two minutes. Rice was feeling queasy with anxiety about having let Gore escape; she knew Bush was completely unpredictable when it came to praise or punishment in military or any other matters.

“What the heck is going on here?” said Bush. “Beem?” Anger was rising in his voice. “Why am I not seeing more revolutionaries coming out to support their comrades?”

“I don’t know, sir. If my hunch was right, there should have been a noticeable increase in the number of freedom fighters on the streets as of 9:14 p.m.”

Bush looked at Cheney. “Is that it? Is the revolution done with us? Surely we have not smoked all of them out yet.” He turned abruptly to Rice, shot her a castigatory stare and demanded, “Why didn’t you tell us that they weren’t sending everyone at once? Now, we have no way of knowing how many of those bastards are still left to fight another day.” Bush paused, staring Rice down. “You slept with the guy fifty times, didn’t you?” Bush paused again to hurt Rice on a personal level even more. Others were now listening to the conversa-

tion. "I would think you could get that out of him. And you let him get away—"

"Come on, Negon," Cheney put his hand on the president's shoulder. "I would say Sadina has done a pretty bang-up job."

Rice looked at Cheney, gratitude in her eyes.

"She could never have extracted such information from Gore without having blown her cover. Come on now, Mr. President, take a deep breath." He addressed Bush formally and gave him a brotherly pat on the shoulder to instill confidence, looking at Rice reassuringly. "Surely Cloud Base realizes by now anyway that Free Vegas is doomed. It appears that we got a good seventy-five percent of those greenos out of the closet, and most of them will be killed. We'll have plenty of prisoners of war to interrogate within a few hours. Besides, we'll all be in New Vegas in only two days, regardless of what happens tonight."

Cloud Base Calls It Off

Cloud Base sat in front of a computer terminal in the Free Vegas War Room: the study of a posh, family-owned apartment in which *she* sometimes lived, located near the House of Light. Latifah Parsons was the descendent of an early 20th-century multi-millionaire and the daughter of a 21st-century multi-billionaire. At eighteen, extremely intelligent and well-educated, she had founded Free Vegas with some college friends. Now, six years later, she commanded a revolutionary force of 90,000 soldiers who fought for respect for the ecosystem and for social equality in Las Vegas, and eventually in the other three American cities.

Latifah was an attractive girl, although not a show-stopper. She always meant to do more exercise but never seemed

to find the time, as she spent virtually all of her waking hours behind a desk communicating with and maintaining her organization.

After funding Free Vegas for six years with money taken from her family's inexhaustible bank accounts, she had recently decided that it was time to take the immoral and unforgivable decision to kill another human being and start a revolution that would surely get tens of thousands of others killed as well. She had been losing her fight against corporate entities and their now-complete control of the entire global market economy, not to mention their virtual running of dozens of national governments – she felt she had had no other option.

Now, only fifty minutes after the culmination of her efforts and the murder of the presidential clone, she was overcome by emptiness. She had received Gore's message to call off the revolution, but it had been too late – 70,000 men and women had already been lured to the slaughter at the hands of the waiting Defenders of the Light by the traitorous Pavlov.

Latifah Parsons reflected: at least she had had the foresight not to send all of her soldiers out at once. Five minutes earlier, she had ended the revolution by not calling on any additional revolutionaries to join the battle on the streets. Weeping for the tens of thousands of dead, she hoped that she would lead the 20,000 remaining anonymous Free Vegas fighters to fight another day.

Cloud Base glanced up and out the window and noticed a convoy of black TSUVs parking in front of her house. Dozens of heavily armed Defenders of the Light began piling out and filing up the stairs to her front door.

"It's happened," Cloud Base muttered under her breath matter-of-factly. "One of the inner circle of five has finally taken the fifty-million-dollar Homeland Security bounty on

my head. They must have been tracking me through my digital labyrinth with his help for months.”

With the calm of someone who has been expecting the inevitable passing of a catastrophic event for a very long time, she pressed a button on the keyboard and the computer’s quantum drive erased itself in less than a second.

Latifah Parsons then picked up a pulse rifle-grenade launcher she kept at the ready next to her desk. She turned her chair to face the door leading into the study, sat back and began praying for divine forgiveness – the muzzle of her weapon aimed at the door.

Military HQ, Las Vegas South

Danton Gore opened the door to the “air duct crawler” and stepped out into the three-foot diameter air duct. He had come up to city level 9, the lower level of Military HQ, Las Vegas South, directly from the Church of Elvis without incident. The machine, which resembled an oversized, covered lounge on rubber wheels, had served him well in the air circulation system. The on-board computer had brought him straight to where he had wanted to be, something he could never have done on his own.

Gore pressed “automatic return,” and the duct crawler headed off to the closest parking area, where Climate Control maintenance personnel would use it to navigate the huge maze of the city’s air circulation system ducts to perform repairs.

Gore stepped into a branching air tube and read the identifying name, “HQ, South, lower level (9) – Tank Maintenance.” He heard explosions in the distance and considered that thousands of revolutionaries were present, alive or dead, in the ten levels above him. *At least we haven’t lost the fight yet.*

Gore walked slowly through the wide air duct until he

arrived at a grate in a bathroom wall. He looked through and saw fifteen shower stalls, a steam room and sauna, sinks and toilets. Pushing a button on his MFD, he quickly cut through the grate with a high-powered micro laser, pulled the grate into the air duct and lowered himself out and down the wall, jumping the final few feet to the floor. Inside his latex outfit, Gore was sweating profusely, his face streaked with dirt.

Gore's heart once again began to race as he sensed the raging battle somewhere outside this building getting closer. His escape had gone unbelievably smoothly so far, but now was the time to execute his plan: commandeer a U.S. tank and flee the city to the southeast. He did not know to where he was headed, but he had complete faith in the woman from his visions.

Gore worked in this military base and, even though the revolution raged all over the expansive installation, he knew more or less where to find a tank and how to get out and into the open desert.

Gore walked over to a sink, grabbed a clean, folded towel from a shelf and quickly washed his face and threw some water on his head. As he was drying off, a voice startled him from behind.

"Halt! Who goes there?" snapped a large captain wearing the uniform of a tank commander; standing in the doorway to the room, he pointed a pulse pistol at Gore. "Turn around."

Gore, standing fifteen feet away, slowly turned around, still holding the towel.

"Open that trench coat so I can see your uniform."

Gore opened the Arnie Wear trench coat of baby meatball leather and revealed the black latex S&M outfit he wore underneath.

"What are you doing in that perverted outfit?" Winston demanded, "Name and rank!" as he extended his arm toward

Gore to initiate a voice recognition identification check on his MFD.

“Listen to me carefully, Captain—” Gore looked at the man’s name tag, “Winston. I’m a captain in the Tunnels Protection Division. I serve out of this base. Stop your identification protocol! Do not do a voice recognition on me or you will have to deal with four-star General Houston.”

Gore watched as Winston’s face visibly tensed up; the man slowly lowered his MFD before the ID verification could be confirmed against the database. “General Houston?” He still pointed the gun at Gore.

“Yes, General Houston. You’ve heard of him, I take it?” Gore said with a homo-erotic affectation to his voice.

“Yes, captain.” Winston knew about Houston and his bizarre tendencies. Everyone knew that the man applied black lipstick and eye liner before battle and wore black fishnet stockings and garter belts under his combat fatigues. Rumor had it that he knew about some major skeletons in Negon R. Bush’s closet and was thus an untouchable bisexual.

“Well, captain, as you know General Houston is officially running this base right now and fighting against Free Vegas. But, the fact is, he’s actually right over there, naked, in the sauna with a big smile on his face. He needed a break from all this nasty fighting. I’ll give him a call and let him know that you’ll be joining us. We were just about to finish up.”

Winston hesitated, confused, looking at Gore’s skin-tight latex suit and glossy black motorcycle boots. *If this fag is telling the truth and I report it and it comes back to embarrass the general, then I’ll be in some deep shit.*

“Well?” said Gore, effeminately.

“No, captain,” Winston heard himself saying slowly, “Carry on, sir.” he lowered his gun and turned on his heel to leave.

Gore waited half a second, drew his pulse weapon from inside his trench coat and fired it on ionic electric stun.

Two minutes later, Danton Gore, dressed as a captain in the Tank Division of the Defenders of the Light, exited the building and entered a large maintenance parking area for tanks. Wreckage burned everywhere around him. The corpses of hundreds of Free Vegas freedom fighters, dressed in street clothes, littered the ground. Gore noticed that some Defenders of the Light had also been killed, but for every dead government soldier there were many, many more dead revolutionaries.

This four-square-mile level of the base housed more than 2,000 battle tanks, all of them made under noncompetitive Department of Defense contracts to either Abrams or General Dynamics. Free Vegas was concentrating on the tank operations levels at all four military HQs. Their only chance to inflict any serious damage in the military bases and overthrow the plutocratic American “democracy” was to commandeer thousands of tanks.

Gore spotted a General Dynamics, M12 T-Rex tank ten yards away, a soldier standing next to it, about to climb in through a door on the side.

“Soldier! Wait for me!”

The man hesitated and waited for Gore to approach.

As Gore neared the tank, he explained, “I just lost my tank to the greeno bastards.” Gore pointed at a tank one hundred feet away; it was firing on Defender of the Light tanks in the yard. After scoring two kills, five tanks fired on the Free-Vegas-commandeered vehicle simultaneously, and it went up in a huge ball of Bushfire-missile flame.

Gore now stood next to the man and his tank. The T-Rex measured twenty feet long, ten feet wide and seven feet high; it had plenty of ground clearance for off-road maneuvers.

The soldier, Second Lieutenant Riley, saluted Gore.

"I'm Captain Derek Winston," Gore hoped this man did not know Winston personally, "ID X1589654789." Gore gave his own serial number; like all serial numbers in the military it consisted of a letter followed by ten numerals.

Just then, several bursts of pulse bullets sprayed the ground around their feet and the base of the tank.

"Listen, Riley," Gore read the name off the man's name tag, "I need this tank. Under battle protocol VZ-32, I order you to relinquish control to a senior officer. What is the password for computer control?" Gore said with authority.

Riley was a well-trained Defender of the Light and given the chaos all around him, upon hearing the correct protocol number for their situation he answered Gore without hesitation, "Battle Vixen, sir."

"Thank you. As per protocol, report to your commanding officer in person for assignment of a temporary replacement tank."

"Yes, sir." Riley saluted and trotted off.

Gore entered the tank, took a seat and typed "Battle Vixen" into the main computer keyboard. Humming sounds erupted from all over the tank as various systems came on line.

"Welcome, big boy," a deep southern accent addressed Gore from the seat next to him. He turned and looked at the hologram of a beautiful, blond girl sitting next to him; a morph of Daisy Duke, Jessica Simpson and Las Vegas's own Jenna Jameson. Giddy with laughter, her large breasts shook in her camouflage bikini top. "What is your command?" She ran her weighty, three-dimensional fingers along his thigh; the fragrance of her perfume wafted into his nostrils.

Gore had heard of this holographic technology but had never had access to an extended desert-mission tank like this one before, the only type of vehicle in the military that

employed such software. Annoyed at the distraction in this combat situation, he ordered, “Computer, run voice interaction programs without generating this hologram. I need to concentrate!”

Battle Vixen stood up, the words “Join the Army” printed across the front of her bikini bottoms. She pouted, “Do you *really* want to send me away? I’m here to keep your morale as high as possible during battle.” She leaned into him and pressed her bust against his face; he felt her body heat.

“All right, Vixen. We can get to know each other later. But for now, back onto the quantum-disk, okay? That’s an order. We gotta’ get out of here, pronto!”

Battle Vixen followed her program and disappeared.

Gore focused and studied the controls for a few seconds, as he had not been in this model of tank since his training days many years earlier. He grabbed the steering column and handlebars, which resembled those of a motorcycle – gas with the right hand, brake with the left. Cameras and microphones mounted in the tank’s exterior armor provided views and sounds outside of the vehicle. He watched the main viewing screen and steered the tank towards a row of vehicle elevators.

Gore drove into the huge, vehicle express elevator, which automatically went up to the surface, ten levels and 300 feet above him, every three minutes. The elevator was half-full with fifteen other tanks waiting to ascend. Gore found himself wondering anxiously if anyone had yet found Captain Winston, who was propped up on a toilet in a booth in the bathroom; he would be unconscious for another forty-five minutes. A moment later, the elevator sped its cargo of battle tanks to the surface in only thirty seconds.

On the surface, under the gigantic clam-shell roof of the southern gate to the city, the tanks rolled out of the vehicle el-

evator and sped off in all directions. Gore saw heavy fighting on the monitors inside the cockpit. His spirit was instantly deflated; as he had seen below, dead soldiers, mostly Free Vegas fighters, lay everywhere.

Gore checked the time; the Free Vegas revolution had only been underway for seventy-five minutes, but it was clear to him that it could not last more than another fifteen minutes in this military base. The revolutionaries still had a fighting presence up here at the main gate, south, to the city, but the government troops outnumbered them badly.

“Battle Vixen, get the biggest Bushfire missile we have ready to shoot.”

“Oooh, you gonna’ shoot a big missile. You know what that makes me think of, big boy,” sounded the southern drawl.

“Just do it!” Gore was annoyed at Riley’s programming tastes.

The exterior microphones were picking up loud explosions all around the vehicle. As shrapnel hit the hull of his T-Rex tank, Gore fired his pulse cannon at an armored personnel carrier that was transporting ununiformed revolutionaries. He purposely fired a near-miss; he wanted it to appear that he was fighting with the Defenders of the Light.

Gore searched the wall of the military base for the best place to launch his Bushfire missile – but he would not need to do so. He spotted a large hole in the wall of the covering structure, 200 yards away from him – a result of the night’s heavy fighting.

In the hectic events taking place all around him, no one noticed Gore’s M12 T-Rex tank slip through the hole and depart the city. He felt a pang of guilt as he left his brother and sister revolutionaries behind to fight a hopeless battle, but he intuited that he would return to fight another day, with the help

of an as yet unknown nature provided by the beautiful woman from his visions.

Gore instantly heard desert debris slamming against the outside of his tank, as he now entered the storm from the protected battle ground behind him. His pulse was racing.

“Computer, get us southeast through the minefields and onto the old Interstate 40 highway.”

“Call me Battle Vixen,” came the southern accent.

Ten tension-filled minutes later, Gore cleared the minefield; to his amazement, no other vehicles were following him.

Free Vegas revolutionary and Defender of the Light Danton Gore now dismissed all thoughts of revolution and battle, allowing himself some degree of joy to engulf him; he had beaten the odds and was still alive and free.

“Battle Vixen, speed one hundred miles per hour.”

The tank accelerated and headed into the desolate desert. Gore had no concrete idea of where, exactly, he was going, but continued on southeast, faithfully waiting for the next vision of the woman with the Eastern European countenance.

Same-Sex Sex

Vera Dan Bush looked over at Nitra Khan lying beside her. They lay on the huge bed in Khan’s private quarters on the royal Hun-Vee, located next to the battle bridge. It consisted of a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen and sitting room areas separated by dried desert grass and silk folding screens. Its ambiance was totally distinct from that of the busy workings of the 900 crew-member battle Hun-Vee that existed only just outside the door. The walls of the large room were decorated with brightly colored, hand-woven silk tapestries depicting all aspects of Hunzanian life: education, athletics, govern-

ment, clan heritage, war and warriors, and religion. Flowering avocactus plants in huge pots gave the room a predominantly pink cast. Avocactus incense, smelling of cinnamon and citrus, burned in small, ornate, metallic pots spread around the room. Hunzanian music, with its distinctive metallic sounds, played softly through the speakers.

Vera Dan tenderly put her hand on Khan's flat, hard stomach. Khan looked over and the women exchanged smiles. Vera Dan was completely relaxed. And, she was completely satisfied sexually – a rare thing for her over the last few years.

"So," Khan said, "you look like maybe you feel better than you would have guessed beforehand, no?"

"Well, I have to admit it Nitra, yes I do!" she smiled again. "I mean, I was with a woman once in college but that was really just experimenting with the physical mechanics of it all. It was just two girls making each other orgasm, there was no emotional connection or real empathy," she paused, looking into Khan's eyes. "But, this time was totally different. We actually *made love* to each other – with reverence and respect, sharing a real emotional and spiritual connection."

"Not to mention a pretty good physical connection, my dear Vera Dan."

"Oh yes, Nitra. Incredible physical connection," she said, moving her hand up onto Khan's firm breasts, above the tattoos of several ancient Hunzanian runes. Vera Dan reflected: only two hours before, she had been engaged with Khan in an intense discussion regarding lesbian sex together and now she was trading pillow talk with the woman. The queen had not threatened rape, but had simply said that because Vera Dan would be with the She-Huns for the foreseeable future, why not give it a try? Vera Dan had had to admit to herself that she was curious about what it would be like to physically be with these warrior women who had immense respect for

one another and for the planet and its nature. She had not had any remotely meaningful or enjoyable sex with her husband in years, and love trysts had been few and far between. So, she had told herself *what the hell?* and had proceeded to dive whole-heartedly into having same-sex sex for the first time in more than ten years. And she loved it!

Someone knocked on the door and Khan gave permission to enter. Boota Bleeda entered and the door slid shut behind her. She walked over to the bed and sat down on Khan's side. She looked at both women calmly. "Hello, sisters. And how are we feeling just now?" she reached out and lightly touched Khan's cheek, without a trace of jealousy. Vera Dan continued caressing Khan's breasts.

"I think," responded Khan, "that I speak for both of us when I say, 'wonderful!'" Bleeda looked over at Vera Dan, who nodded in agreement.

"Well, my queen," continued Bleeda, "your new friend certainly is a beautiful woman with one Hunza of a good body. May I?" she looked at Vera Dan and then at Khan. Khan also looked at Vera Dan, waiting for her to give her approval.

"Yes, Boota," said Vera Dan, "you may."

As Bleeda finished undressing and climbed onto the bed, Vera Dan focused her gaze on a scene on one of the tapestries. It represented communal, tender love making among the female She-Huns. Surrounding the embroidered scene, symbols representing peace, harmony and sisterly solidarity called out their message in large, silken runes. Just then, Vera Dan felt the soft touch of a tongue gently exploring her clitoris. She closed her eyes and allowed her mind to slip completely into what would surely be an incredible *ménage a trois*, her first ever with two other women.

Leaving Las Vegas

Danton Gore was finally relaxing after his harrowing escape. The M12 T-Rex had put twenty miles behind it. He was looking forward to getting a bit of sleep, when Battle Vixen's voice ripped him from his rest.

"I detect twenty-five hoverdrones launched from Las Vegas. Their target access signal has locked onto us!"

"Oh, shit," Gore said out loud. These three-foot diameter discs flew at a top speed of 200 miles per hour on a cushion of air and detonated on contact with a target.

"Impact in fifteen minutes!"

"Engage cloaking program."

"Sir, that will draw down our secondary hydrocarbon fuel source, significantly compromising the life of our backup engine."

"Thank you, Vixen. Do it anyway."

"Cloaking status, full. Ninety eight percent invisible to hoverdrone radar."

Gore hoped this would give him enough of an edge to destroy the killer discs that were skipping along the desert floor in pursuit of his tank before taking an escape-ending hit himself. On the radar, he watched for several tense minutes until the hoverdrones were in range of his defensive weapons. "Vixen, prepare to fire on incoming hovercrafts."

"Order belayed, captain," drawled Battle Vixen's voice. "This tank cannot currently fire on American military hardware or personnel. You must give me a protocol number to override. Do you have one?"

"Protocol number XJ-85, manual friendly fire in extenuating combat circumstances," Gore gave the protocol number for his own tank's command program.

"I'm sorry, that protocol number is not valid in this vehicle." After a pause of only two seconds, Vixen informed

Gore, “Sir, I detect the presence of twenty small vehicles five miles ahead, dug in on both sides of the roadway. They are not American. I now identify them as She-Hun armored personnel carriers and Hun-Vees. We should be invisible to them.”

“You know, Vixen, that’s great. Really great!” The computer did not respond. “Those She-Huns are going to help me fight those drones.”

“I sense a battle shortly,” said Vixen. “Shall I put on the music?”

“What music?”

“Second Lieutenant Riley usually listens to Clear Channel Metallica song number 112, *Seek and Destroy*, at full volume during combat.”

“No music. Just get us quietly through those She-Hun vehicles. The hoverdrones are closing in. Take evasive action.”

Suddenly, the tank veered hard right. Then hard left. Then hard right again. Gore nervously watched the radar: to his relief, the hoverdrones did not follow his tank on its zigzagging course, but seemed to have relocked onto new enemy targets – the She-Hun vehicles ahead of him.

“Slow down to sixty miles an hour!”

As the T-Rex slowed, Gore held his breath, hoping they were truly cloaked. All the hoverdrone discs sped past them on the left, flying into She-Hun defensive fire. Thirty seconds later, he watched twenty-five explosions rise high up into the windy skies.

“That was a close one, Vixen.” Gore breathed out slowly. “I think we’re going to make it.”

“Is the American ready for his conquered woman of war?” Vixen suddenly appeared next to him, dressed in full She-Hun battle regalia – modified for the bedroom.

Gore allowed this hologram to break his train of thought,

and silently chastised himself. “No, Battle Vixen! Not now. Does Riley just hope to die fucking, or what?”

“Of course,” she said, “don’t you?” And then she disappeared onto the quantum drive again.

The M12 tank crossed the She-Hun line, passing the burning wreckage of fifteen She-Hun vehicles; the women warriors had destroyed ten of the hoverdrones with defensive fire. One disabled Hun-Vee now sat on the old, disintegrated highway. Gore passed the enemy vehicle at sixty m.p.h., narrowly missing it in the next lane. He did not fire as he did not want to draw attention from the other surviving Hun-Vees.

As the T-Rex passed the She-Hun vehicle, a female warrior stood in the hatch on the turret. She could not see the American tank clearly, but she could hear it and see what looked like a shimmering mass speeding past her. Holding her right hand up, the She-Hun looked at the front of the approaching cloaked vehicle, where she thought the camera would be, and made a cutting scissors motion with her index and middle fingers.

Inside the tank, Gore imagined briefly what the She-Hun wanted to do to him. He shuddered and sighed with relief that, for now, he had escaped from Las Vegas, a fugitive from the military, the government, and the intelligence agencies.

“Battle Vixen, autopilot on east-southeasterly course.” Gore took in a deep breath and let it out. He then took in another one and let it out more slowly, sat back in his chair, closed his eyes and began to fall asleep.

As Gore was drifting off, he felt a heavy weight on his pelvis and crotch. Opening his eyes, he looked at the face of Battle Vixen only inches from his own.

“Howdy, pardner. Whatchya’ doin’?” Gore had to admit that this southern accent was very alluring. Especially coming from a girl that looked like this one did.

“Uh, this is part of the autopilot programming?” he stammered.

“Ah hah,” she responded. “Welcome to Second Lieutenant Riley’s personalized autopilot software currently installed in this military vehicle.” She slowly moved her hips in circles on top of him.

“But, you’re a hologram.”

“That’s right, sugar, a psycho-cybernetic, three-dimensionally endowed hologram, if you know what I mean?” agreed Vixen.

“But what is the difference between this and masturbation?” asked Gore, who had never made love to a hologram before.

“Take your clothes off and I’ll show you.” Vixen dismounted.

Although he was absolutely drained and dead tired, Gore felt compelled by unexplainable urges to oblige her. He slowly undressed and sat down again, reclining the seat all the way back.

Battle Vixen climbed back onto Gore. “As I was saying, cowboy, this,” she gently slid his penis inside her, “is the difference. Ain’t no wet palm no’ no blow-up doll nowhere that feels that good!” She gave him a quick grind.

Gore was speechless. This felt exactly, one hundred percent, like a real woman.

As they finished making love twenty minutes later, thoughts of the final scene of the film “Blade Runner” entered Gore’s mind. The Free Vegas fugitive suddenly empathized with Harrison Ford’s character, as he is driving away from the city to go live out his life with the android lover seated beside him. *Is that so crazy?* thought Gore. *Is this?*

Thursday
September 8, 2101 A.D.

A Revolution Dies in the Streets

President Negon R. Bush sat with Sadina Rice in the War Room; his MFD read 2:15 a.m.

“Sadina, what are your latest polls on public perception of tonight’s events?”

“Well, Mr. President, all TV and radio channels that broadcast legally are owned by Murdoch’s Foxy Media Group. Obviously, they didn’t broadcast any footage of the fighting. Like the police, they received calls about heavy fighting in some areas of the city. Callers were told that it was simply gang fights and that there was nothing to worry about because the Defenders of the Light were out in force to maintain civil peace. We located and arrested about two hundred ham radio operators broadcasting news from their homes on amateur radio systems and soliciting phone calls to share information. So, sir, I think there is a lot of ignorance, guessing and half-truths floating around out there among the public. I think we can paint any picture we like in the press tomorrow. We can always change it several times in the first few days so people won’t even remember the specifics of what they’re arguing about. As per 9/11.”

“As per 9/11. True enough,” confirmed the president. He took a deep breath and slowly let it out. “Well, Sadie, I must admit I was a bit upset with you earlier for letting Gore get away. However, I feel much better now knowing that Cloud Base was located and terminated by Homeland Security – even though that bitch did take fifty good men down with her. It seems your operation has turned out to be highly successful.”

Just then, Bush received a call on his MFD from Cheney, who was out in the field investigating the status of the Free Vegas revolution. “Negon, the revolution has been effectively crushed. There are a few isolated pockets of resistance in Military HQs North and East. Very heavy casualties for Free Vegas. Defender of the Light losses are well within acceptable range. We can easily replace our lost soldiers within a few weeks through a heavy recruiting program in the poorest city neighborhoods nationwide.”

Just Find a Place to Make Your Stand

“Approaching Winslow, Arizona, Dani,” Battle Vixen’s voice woke Gore from a light sleep. After Gore had made love with the hologram for the first time, he had input his name for a more personal relationship with the computer, i.e., with Battle Vixen.

Gore had ordered the computer to take the five-minute diversion off of the interstate to get a quick look at the legendary city. He opened his eyes and checked the time. It was 2:30 a.m., early Thursday morning.

The words of the refrain of the Eagles’ song *Take It Easy* came to his mind: *I was standing on a corner in Winslow, Arizona/And such a fine sight to see.*” Gore looked at the monitors; Winslow was now a ghost town, uninhabited for the last fifty years, as its citizens had moved to the huge, surviving underground cities due to the increasing intensity of the world-wide storms. But up ahead, in the town square, he saw what he had come to see: a huge, granite statue of the rock band, The Eagles. The corporate entity, Clear Channel Global, Inc., had erected the statue in 2035 in celebration of the purchase of the copyrights to all Eagles songs. The acquisition meant that Clear Channel then owned the rights to the songs of every

English-speaking band in the world, past and present. This company also owned every advertising billboard in American cities, as well as owning every live music venue in the country. It shared, of course, corporate officers with companies like SkyFox TV Corporation, Foxy Media Group, Inc., BushCoke, Inc. and HalliBush & Cheney, Inc. – all of whom enjoyed the same legal fiscal rights and protections as a private individual and whose names appeared at the top of the Fortune 500 list. At the unveiling ceremony for the statue, the consumers that praised “free market” economy cheered Clear Channel wholeheartedly. After that, not one of them ever saw an independent rock band perform again or heard independently recorded music played on the corporation-owned radio stations.

The M12 T-Rex tank stopped in front of the statue and Gore stood in the hatch, hearing only the sound of the strong wind whipping through the streets and through the windowless and doorless ruins of storefronts. He breathed in the fresh air, even though it sandblasted his face, and looked up at the giant faces of Frey, Walsh, and Schmidt. The giant head of Don Henley lay on the ground, broken off by the storm.

Battle Vixen played the lyrics to the famous Eagles’ song on the tank’s sound system; they drifted up and out into the world. Gore sang along at the top of his lungs: *“So lighten up, while you still can/Don’t even try to understand/ Just find a place to make your stand/And take it easy.”* The song finished playing and just as he was about to reenter the tank, the image of the woman he had seen and heard during his flight from Las Vegas appeared once again. She wore long, flowing, white linen garments; her Slavic features, not too angular, looked relaxed and content. She sat on an ornate pillow, floating in front of a double pyramid – one pyramid inverted on top of the other, their two points touching.

“Danton Gore, I feel you’re safe after a life-threatening

night. Come! Come to me. I am Cara Lee, queen of the New Kingdom of Caral. We await you here in Carlsbad Caverns. You should be here within four or five hours. Be careful! You will return to Las Vegas and you *will* make your stand!” The image faded away.

Gore dropped back down into the T-Rex; he felt invigorated. This woman, who he had never seen or spoken to in the flesh, had repeatedly given him the strength that he had needed recently. Battle Vixen gave him physical pleasure, but there was no strength transferred from one living entity to another. Cara Lee had just given him the spiritual boost that would guide him all the way to her without any feeling of desperation. “I will make my stand!” he yelled to the rooftops. “I will go back to Las Vegas, and I will make my stand!” He dropped back into the tank and closed the hatch.

She-Hun Parthenogenesis

Vera Dan woke up and stretched her arms above her head, breathing in deeply, and then slowly exhaling loudly. Early morning light, bearing a little bit of sunshine, entered through the small windows of the royal Hun-Vee. She reflected briefly: *for just having been exchanged as a piece of property, I'm better off right now with Nitra and the She-Huns than I would be in Las Vegas.* Nekon Bush had become her nemesis and the last year of her life had been a blue-ice-induced blur – *he might even have had me killed one day soon.* During her first few days with the women warriors, Vera Dan would have expected to feel downright afraid for her life, or at the very least, panicky – but she did not. A knock at the door broke into her mind.

“Yes? Come in.”

Nitra Khan entered Vera Dan's private quarters, which

was on the officers' deck, Deck 8. Khan wore civilian clothing; earth-tone colored patches of material woven from insect-hair yarns sewn together with twine made of darkly-hued battle boar hide.

"Hello, Vera Dan. How are you feeling this morning?" Khan asked, sitting down on the side of the bed.

"I'm okay," she smiled at Khan. They held hands lightly. "What time is it?"

"It's eight thirty. We've just arrived to the outer defensive ring of 30,000 battle Hun-Vees that protect our capital underground city of Hunzania. You'll stay in my palace as an official guest of the queen of the She-Huns, while I oversee some field operations during the next few days."

Vera Dan stood up, naked, and gazed out the window; the battle Hun-Vees protecting the underground city stretched as far as the eye could see. She noted the presence of thousands of high-speed, vertical axis wind turbines, used by the She-Huns for domestic electricity and to extract hydrogen from water to power Hun-Vees. These machines were vertically retractable and could be lowered into the ground to avoid storm damage. She took in the impressive scene for a moment, and then slowly turned toward Khan. "Nitra," Vera Dan looked sincerely into her eyes, "what will you do with me?"

"Come. Sit." Vera Dan sat down next to Khan on the bed. "Listen, Vera, don't you worry about that. We'll talk about it more when I return early next week. Until then, enjoy my home as if it were your own. You will have access to all of my male servants – beauticians, masseuses, nurses and trainers. Take your pick of my male concubinos and enjoy yourself sexually with them, if you still like men. My women chefs will prepare any food you like. If anything happens to me in the meantime, you'll be free to do as you wish. Okay?"

The ex-first lady slowly nodded approval. Khan did not move from the bed. "Is there something else, Nitra?"

"Yes, my dear. You don't have any children with Negon or with any other man, do you?"

"No. Why do you ask?" she answered, now lying languidly on the bed.

"Well, Vera, you may not know it but I'm quite taken by you," Khan smiled down at her. "You have many good qualities, like intelligence, beauty, inner strength and resilience. Before I leave today, I would like us to make a baby," she maintained a tender gaze on the American woman.

"A baby? With you? What do you mean?" Vera Dan tripped over her words. "I mean how can you and I make a baby?"

"First, let me ask you, would you like to be a mother, Mrs. Bush?"

"Ugh! Don't call me that." Both women laughed. "Well, I don't know Nitra. It wasn't exactly at the front of my mind just now." She looked up at the She-Hun. She saw a strong, sensitive, principled woman, who was, undeniably, a babe in anybody's book, man or woman. Khan waited calmly. Finally, Vera Dan said, "Why not? Why not, Nitra? Today is the first day of the rest of my life!"

Khan smiled.

"But whose sperm are we going to use?"

"Vera, we don't need any male's sperm or DNA. We have perfected the science of parthenogenesis!"

Vera Dan looked at her, total confusion written on her face.

"You know, the joining of two X chromosomes, each one harvested from a different female ovum. One chromosome is taken from one of the eggs and planted into the second egg. The second egg is then placed into a healthy uterus to divide

and grow as a normally fertilized, X-X chromosome-containing fetus.”

“Incredible,” said Vera Dan.

“We do this to honor Hunza, our Earth Mother, who is female after all. Let’s go to my quarters, Vera. I should be closer to my battle station.”

Vera Dan got off the bed, put on a day cloak made of woven avocactus plant fibers and followed Khan out of her quarters and into the hallway.

A few minutes later, the two women sat, naked, on the queen’s bed. “I want to show you something,” she said to the former first lady of the United States of America. Khan reached into a cabinet drawer under the bed and took out a twenty-four inch long tube-like object, holding it up for Vera Dan to inspect.

Vera Dan noted that both ends of the thing were actually nine-inch long dildos; the center piece of six inches was smooth, durable, flexible and cylindrical. “What is that?”

“This is how we reproduce,” answered Khan. “Look, we will make love using this device, called a ‘vibro-parthenogenoscope.’ I’m ovulating right now, as are you. The vibroscope will collect one egg from each of us and carry out the genetic splicing in this central chamber,” Khan pointed to the middle section of the two-headed, nano-technological genetics laboratory. “Then, it will implant the double-X-chromosome egg back in your uterus to carry to term.”

Vera Dan looked from the vibro-scope up to Khan’s face and said, “Amazing. Truly amazing. No wonder you have no real need for men in your society.”

“No, not really,” agreed Khan. “We satisfy natural biological urges by having sex with our male concubinos. History has demonstrated again and again that since the beginning of agriculture, some eleven thousand years ago, every patriarchal society or culture has, without exception, led itself

down a path to destruction due to greed, violence, domination and complete exploitation and disregard for the ecosystem of which it was itself an integral part.”

“And your society won’t do that, just because there are no men in power?”

“We She-Huns have enjoyed a self-sustainable, educated, virtually crime-free society for more than sixty years.”

“Interesting. Nitra?”

“Yes, Vera Dan?”

“How do you know that I’m ovulating?”

“Ah! You American women. So out of touch with your own bodies, your own sacred flesh and blood,” she shook her head, genuinely amazed at such ignorance. “I could feel the vibrational energy while we made love last night. Now, will you carry our child while you live here as my guest for the next nine months? Then we will see what happens.”

Vera Dan looked deeply into Khan’s eyes for three or four seconds. She would much rather have this beautiful, strong, motivated, fair woman as the parent of her child than the weak, insensitive, power-hungry, profit-driven excuse of a human being whom she had called her husband only twelve hours earlier. “Yes, Nitra, I will.”

Khan smiled and said, “Thank you.” She leaned forward and the two women kissed passionately. They took their time, massaging avocatus oil onto one another’s entire body for thirty minutes before finally making love, slowly, with the vibro-scope and with each other. They came to orgasm together, wailing in high-pitched screams of pleasure.

They lay on the bed in ecstasy for several minutes. Khan carefully removed the vibro-scope from herself and from Vera Dan and took it into the bathroom. She returned and lay back on the bed next to Vera Dan, “I’ll make you an appointment with Professor Wrjinn for next week. She’s a great gynecolo-

gist.” Khan gently placed her hand onto the American’s abdomen and said softly, “*She* will be perfect, Vera Dan.”

The couple drifted off to sleep, hand in hand, mothers-to-be.

From Visions to Reality

Danton Gore rolled onto his side yet again on the small, pull-out cot inside the T-Rex tank; he had slept only fitfully during the trip from Winslow.

He heard the sexy southern drawl inform him, “Dani, according to my GIS data, we’ll arrive at the Carlsbad Caverns/El Paso area in just a few minutes.”

Gore got up and got dressed.

“What took us so long, Vixen?” Gore realized it was 9:00 a.m.

“The travelling condition of the highway was horrendous. We even had to cover almost one hundred miles off-road, which was slow going.”

Gore walked over to the small sink in the extended desert-mission T-Rex and washed his face; he wanted to make a good impression on the lovely lady from his visions.

“Dani, we’re being hailed on the short range radio.”

“Patch it through,” Gore returned to the driver’s seat and sat down, mustering all of his confidence for the imminent conversation.

“Welcome, Danton Gore. I greet you with open arms and an open heart after your turbulent last twelve hours. I’m Queen Cara Lee of the New Kingdom of Caral. We invite you to come and rest and recover,” the voice carried many qualities – grace, intelligence, empathy, unconditional love.

Gore instantly felt like he had come home. This voice soothed his aching body and spirit like silky blue ocean waters. “Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, Queen Cara

Lee. I need rest. I need to recuperate. And I need another favor, as well.”

“In good time, Danton. We have sent an escort vehicle out to meet you.”

“Thank you, again. I’m looking forward very much to seeing you in the flesh, so to speak.”

“Ah, yes, so to speak. I think you will see it in the literal sense as well, Captain Gore.”

“Vehicle approaching, Danton,” said Battle Vixen in a matter-of-fact voice. Luckily, Second Lieutenant Riley had not programmed jealousy into her software.

The Day After

“Did you get some sleep, Beem?” Bush asked his general of the army, as they sat in the God Office of the House of Light.

“I managed a few hours,” he said in a gravelly voice. Both men had been awake in the War Room until 5:00 a.m., by which time the revolution had been soundly defeated and Cheney had left the mopping up to his underlings. He and Bush had then gone directly to Level XXX to celebrate their victory, eventually parting company and heading home at 9:00 a.m., only five hours earlier.

“Good.” Bush looked over Cheney’s shoulder into the hallway. “Sadina. Please, come in and have a seat.”

Rice entered the room and sat down next to Cheney, across the large, redwood desk from the president. She studied the marble bust of Donald Rumsfeld, displayed in a glass cabinet behind and to the left of the president. Bush had sculpted it himself, meaning that it bore little semblance to the man it was supposed to represent. “Rummie” was a constant inspiration for Nekon Bush and his administration; the president had

inscribed the words “Truth through 10 torture techniques” on the base of the bust.

“Nice piece behind you, sir,” she lied. She figured she would start off today with a compliment, unsure if the president was still satisfied with her command of Operation Smoke Out.

“First,” Bush said to both advisors, as he outstretched his arms to them, “let us join hands and pray.” All three of them held hands and bowed their heads, “Let us thank you, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our sins two thousand years ago. Thank you for defeating the soulless American terrorists who rose up against us last night. In the name of your father, we struck them down without mercy. As my family has said for generations, ‘you are either with us, or you are against us.’ Amen.”

“Amen,” chimed in Rice and Cheney, genuinely moved by the president’s words.

“Ok,” Bush looked at Rice. “Sadina, it seems that seventy thousand revolutionaries hit the streets last night. Beem, what is the final tally?”

“Well, sir, estimates are fifty-five thousand kills, five thousand detainees sent to Guantanamo Level for information extraction and military tribunal and ten thousand survivors, many of whom were seriously wounded. That means that roughly twenty thousand revolutionaries never joined the battle. That’s a success rate of almost seventy percent for Operation Smoke Out, not to mention the execution of Cloud Base and the end of her financial support to Free Vegas. Not bad for a rookie.” He looked over at Rice and gave her a quick smile of support, and then gulped a shot of bourbon from his platinum hip flask.

“Yes,” Bush agreed softly, still considering everything

that had happened. “How many Defenders of the Light were killed?”

“Ten thousand killed and five thousand injured.”

“I see,” Bush contemplated the information. “And Beem, do you know how many of the Free Vegas terrorists were wealthy enough to end up in New Vegas?”

“Well, interrogations will take at least until tomorrow, but of the confirmed dead it looks like two or three hundred, max.”

“And of the surviving twenty thousand, how many of *them* will go to New Vegas?”

Rice cut Cheney off; she wanted to put any doubts the president had about her performance to rest immediately. “Sir, with all due respect, even if Cloud Base held the wealthy revolutionaries back until the last support wave, there is no way that more than a few thousand will end up in New Vegas. Among a population of six million in the new city, they will have no effect over there. Besides, we will have many more police per capita in New Vegas and *any* subversive group will be easily weeded out of society and sent to the organ banks or to the agritubes as forced laborers.”

“Well, you certainly are speaking freely, Sadina,” commented Bush. After several tense seconds, the president made a decision and said, “I appreciate that. You have done very well and I still look forward to initiating you as the secretary of defense very soon.”

The tension in the room deflated instantly and Rice smiled, thrusting her chest forward slightly, “And I look forward to serving you, sir.” She looked over at Cheney, who winked at her, giving her the once over.

The president continued, “The next item on the agenda is the move to New Vegas. As you know, the official move date is three weeks from tomorrow. So, any protests probably will

not surface until a week or so before that day, by which time we'll be well installed in New Vegas. Beem, are your men prepared for all possibilities?"

"Nekon, don't you ever read your e-mails? I sent you an hour by hour schedule, complete with troop locations and numbers. Did you take a look at it?"

"No comment, Beem." Bush calmly put a black ice crystal on his upper lip and inhaled deeply. "Well?" he opened his hands towards Cheney.

"Yes, sir. Operation Exodus of the Elite. Starting tomorrow at 8:00 a.m., overland military transport vehicles will begin to ferry six million passengers across the desert. Large vessels hold five thousand individuals. Total boarding time should be a maximum of eight hours, with all six million arriving in New Vegas by eight o'clock tomorrow evening. Residents coming from elsewhere in the U.S. and from the other G12 countries will all have arrived by Monday."

"Excellent. What about high security transfers?" asked Bush.

Cheney sighed to himself and patiently explained the operation that his president had signed off on only two days earlier, obviously without having read it. "High security transfers via the underground tunnel, sir, under maximum security escort protocols. In total, five hundred thousand well-armed Defenders of the Light, including eighty thousand Abrams M10-A10 tanks, will be on active duty tomorrow. After the completion of the relocation, these forces will reside permanently on the two military bases – at Marble Canyon, five miles from the New Vegas city limit, and at Jacob Lake, twenty-five miles from the city limit. The express tunnels connecting the bases to each other and to the city have been completed. Any remnants of Free Vegas will have no chance against this force." Cheney added in a too-knowing tone, "Nor will the She-Huns."

“You’re right, Beem.” Bush sat back in his chair and sighed, his elbows on the armrests and his hands pointed upwards, his index fingers on his chin. The president looked at Cheney; he knew what the vice president was getting at. Then both he and Cheney looked over at Rice.

“What? Why are you looking at me like that?” she asked them, nervously.

“Well, Mr. Cheney,” Bush began, “she’s not officially yet the secretary of defense, nevertheless, I think it’s time we let Sexy Sadie in on our dark little secret, don’t you?”

Don’t Piss off the President

Richard Gore, Danton Gore’s father, sat down, slowly, at the dining room table, which was set for a late lunch. He let out a small grunt of pain as he let his weight fall the last few inches onto the seat of the chair.

“Are you feeling better today, sweetheart?” Bridget Gore asked her husband tenderly. It hurt her to see the bruises on his face, knowing that his whole body was covered in them.

“Yeah, those bastards would have to kill me to really hurt me.” They laughed together lightly; he had been beaten badly on Tuesday night at the Climate Control facility on city level 101. After the election results were announced, a black, Secret Service TSUV had stopped in front of their house, thrown him onto the front lawn and sped off into the dark streets.

“Well, Richard, have you managed to get a hold of Danton yet?” asked Bridget, concern for her son evident in her voice. The Gores obviously did not believe the story that the media was broadcasting to the public about the previous night’s events.

“No, sweetheart, his MFD is still turned off. I’m sure he’s fine. He must be under military orders to maintain silence.

He'll get in touch with us soon." Gore reached across the table and gently held his wife's hand.

As Richard Gore reached for the small box on the table and was taking out a crystal of blue ice, the front door flew open among the sounds of splintering potato-tree wood and shouting. Before he could even get up from his chair, he was on the floor with a knee in his back and his hands pulled behind him, handcuffs in place. He looked over and saw his wife in the same predicament. Yells of "clear" resounded around their abode.

"If you hurt her, I'll kill you all!" Gore shrieked at the half a dozen soldiers standing around in his dining room. "You never know what kind of poisoned air can end up inside your house!"

"Shut up, you greeno-socialist bastard! You have both won a trip," yelled the sergeant in charge, standing over the two Gores on the floor.

"Where's that to, Sarge?" the corporal holding Richard Gore down asked sadistically.

The sergeant answered, "Why, the Guantanamo Level, of course!" He laughed and broke immediately into song.

Holidays in Guantanamo
Wellness treatments by a G.I. Joe

The corporal joined in and the two Defenders of the Light continued singing the ninety-year-old, now-illegal protest song.

Holidays in Guantanamo
All the orange people
Where will they go?
— And where did they come from anyway?

Both soldiers belly-laughed upon singing the final incisive line of lyrics.

“Why are you taking us there?” screamed Bridget Gore, on the verge of hysteria. “What have we done?”

She and her husband were manhandled onto their feet. The sergeant in charge, wearing all black, military S.W.A.T. gear sprayed spit into Richard Gore’s face as he screamed, veins popping out in his neck, “Your son is way high up in the Free Vegas movement. Last night he called a revolution that killed thousands of my comrades in arms. That makes him a traitor in my book!”

Both Gores stopped resisting their attackers, looks of surprise on their faces.

“Don’t play stupid with me,” continued the sergeant. “I’m already pissed off enough to waste you two right here, right now. But you’re worth more to us alive. With your family history of subversives, surely you knew about his activities. Regardless, he escaped and you’re now officially considered by the president to be ‘leverage.’”

The men pushed them roughly out the door and across the lawn, where they were loaded into a TSUV. The neighbors watched from behind drawn curtains and did nothing, Bush’s reign of fear-inspiring terror governing their lack of action perfectly.

The New Kingdom of Caral

Danton Gore woke up on a large bed; he had never slept so well as he had on this mattress made of thick, warm moss. It allowed the human body to rest completely, not a single muscle in tension.

Gore breathed in deeply, appreciating the unfamiliar yet pleasant aroma of burning incense, as he looked out the win-

dow next to the bed. It took him a second to recall exactly where he was; he had arrived at the New Kingdom of Caral six hours earlier and had finally met the woman from his visions in person. Queen Cara Lee had taken him directly to these quarters in her royal pyramid and had left him to rest his weary body and mind, saying she would be back to check in on him in the early afternoon.

Gore stood up, naked, and put on light-weight trousers and a long-sleeved shirt that had been laid out for him. The garments were of a silky-smooth, comfortably fitting, bright green material. He looked around for shoes but saw none.

The stranger in a strange land looked out the panoramic window, which occupied the entire slanted wall of the room, and was amazed by the town center that lay spread out below him. Built in a gigantic, one-square mile cavern 600 feet high, seven pyramids stood well spaced out. The central and largest pyramid had a second, inverted pyramid resting on top of it, point on point; this was the double pyramid he had seen in his vision of Cara Lee the night before in Winslow.

Gore looked down at his left wrist curiously, at the thin band of skin-lichen that encircled it. As Cara Lee had explained before he went to bed, he touched it with the fingers of his right hand and sent her a mental message. Seconds later, a thought entered his mind – he heard her voice saying, “I’ll be there in a few minutes.” He was glad she could come so soon, as he was very anxious to meet this beautiful woman once again; they had spent only a few minutes together upon his arrival earlier in the day. She had insisted on getting him fed and rested in his private room and then had left him to attend to her own affairs.

Gore suddenly sat down, overwhelmed, as he recalled exactly why he was here and what had happened the night before. He considered using his MFD to call his parents, but

he still did not want his location to be tracked and he did not even know if it was capable of broadcasting 700 miles through storm-ridden airwaves.

Suddenly, Gore reflected painfully, *Oh my God! Tens of thousands of my comrades-in-arms surely perished last night. I hope this woman can help me avenge their deaths and bring the change to Las Vegas for which they died.*

A knock on the door brought Gore back to the present.

Cara Lee entered the room. "I trust you're feeling better after your rest?"

"Yes—"

"Ah! You men," Cara Lee cut him off, "you're always thinking of the same thing!"

Gore gazed at the woman, entranced. Long, dark hair hung down well past her shoulders, framing her noble, Eastern European features and contrasting against her bright green eyes. She wore a long, bright yellow dress of material similar to that of his own clothing, tied at the waist with a cloth belt, accentuating both her breasts and her hips. She was barefoot. A positive energy and sense of well-being filled the room. Gore could not help himself; he wanted to make love to this woman.

Gore visibly blushed, "Sorry, M'am."

"No, it's nothing. Thank you for the sentiment. All in good time, my dear. I really think you're going to like it here."

"Here? What is 'here'? I have a lot of questions for you, Queen Cara Lee."

"Of course you do. You can ask me on our tour. Are you ready to have a walk around?"

"Yes. I'd like that very much. But first, I need to make sure we're on the same page. You summoned me here with an offer of help, didn't you? That's why I came here. I need to get back

and finish what Free Vegas started last night, even though it doesn't look very good for us."

"Yes, yes, Danton. We'll discuss that in due time. Let's get going."

Cara Lee led Danton Gore out the door, down to street level and out into the city of Caral and his uncertain future. They walked into the central meeting point of the city. Thousands of people populated the cavern, the bright oranges, greens, turquoises, indigos and yellows of their clothing filled the space with a feast for the eyes. The entire floor of the cavern was covered in soft, moss-like cave grass; hundreds of species of plants that Gore had never seen before grew everywhere. Market stalls stood in long lines, criss-crossing the open spaces between the pyramids. A soft, green-tinted light filled the cave and a pleasant floral scent filled Gore's nostrils.

"Where does the light come from?"

Cara Lee pointed to the ceiling. "You see those holes cut into the ceiling? They allow some daylight and air to pass through into this cavern and can be covered if a mega-tornado passes directly over us. The main light source comes from the millions of glow-morel mushrooms that you see blanketing the ceiling. They can grow up to six inches tall and emit that green-tinged white light you see as well as a pleasant aroma. We also use a limited amount of electric lighting."

"I see." Gore felt like a four-year old who needed to know everything about the wondrous world around him. "What's that?" he pointed to a large pyramid, 200 feet tall and 400 feet long at the base, just in front of Cara Lee's royal pyramid.

"That's the Congregation Pyramid, where we hold public meetings. That's where you'll address the citizens of Caral tomorrow."

Gore pointed to another large pyramid in the distance. "And that one?"

“That’s the Performing Arts Pyramid. The Grateful Dead Clear Channel clones are playing tonight.”

“Are you kidding me? The media reported that they were killed in a bus accident. How did they end up here?”

“The media must have lied about that. They escaped from their dressing room, where they were kept under watch by Clear Channel security staff, following a concert in Phoenix seven years ago. I called them here because most of what they stand for jives very well with our way of life, as you’ll soon see. They were allowed to stay on the condition that they never contact anyone in the United States ever again.”

“Amazing. Why did they escape anyway?”

“They fled after having been forced to compose and play only pro-neocon songs for more than a year. Plus, it killed them that people could not dance at their shows.”

“Good for them.”

The couple walked on and Gore pointed to a third pyramid in the huge cavern. “And that one?”

“That’s the Men’s Pyramid,” explained Cara Lee. “Our men stay there if they’re not in a relationship with a woman or if they want or need to spend time away from their household.”

“What do you mean, if a man *wants* to stay away from his household?”

“It’s very simple, Danton. Our idea of a relationship is quite different from you Americans. We’re a matriarchal society. A woman is the owner of any given household, where she lives with her male partner and her birth children, who may or may not be his own. Plenty of couples live together their whole lives under the same roof. However, many more couples split up – either after months or after years. It doesn’t really matter. Lovers always remain civil to one another and even though the father of a child may no longer live in the

same house, he always maintains a close relationship with his offspring. He might live with another woman or he might live in the Men's Pyramid for as long as he likes."

"Very interesting."

Cara Lee continued, pointing at the double pyramid in the center of the cavern. "That is the Love Double Pyramid. The upper, inverted one is called the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid and the lower one is called the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid. You'll be finding out about those pyramids in person soon enough," she smiled at him honestly.

"Very, very interesting." Gore returned the smile.

"Here in the town center there are seven large pyramids. We constructed them as exact duplicates of those constructed in the city of Caral, near the Peruvian Pacific coast, almost five thousand years ago. That city existed for at least one thousand years without knowing warfare. They lived their lives based on the principles of tolerance, fair trade – mostly bartering – leisure time and pleasure."

"You don't say? Did you know that bartering was made illegal in the U.S. in 2020?"

Cara Lee responded, "Yeah. That was really the beginning of the end for your society, brotherly and spiritually speaking. Since then it's only been about money."

They strolled on a few steps in silence and Cara Lee stopped at one of the market stalls.

"Good afternoon, my queen," the vendor greeted her.

"Good afternoon, Caralite. One bag of applegrass and one of peppergrass, please."

"Certainly."

The man handed the queen of Caral her merchandise and she handed him a small, fresh, green leaf, saying, "Have a nice day."

Cara Lee turned back to Gore and offered him a stick of

applegrass, which was made of dozens of individual, dried blades twined together. "Try this. It's one of our recreational drugs."

Gore accepted the stick and began to chew it; it tasted of earthy apple. After several seconds of chewing, he swallowed. "What is this for?"

"We have no alcohol, cocaine, refined sugar or other processed drugs in Caral. Applegrass is unprocessed and has no physically damaging side effects."

Gore was already experiencing euphoria, and he had only eaten half of the stick. "That's very nice," he felt out loud.

"This," Cara Lee held up the bag of peppergrass, a smile returning to her lips, "is a mild hallucinogen and a strong aphrodisiac. You'll be trying this later, when you get your personalized tour of the Love Double Pyramid."

Gore, his mind open and happy, smiled broadly. *Thank you*, he was not thinking of Cara Lee or of "God"; the words had come to his mind involuntarily. He was not a religious man but he felt an unfamiliar connection to an entity he could not name. Surely it had helped him survive the previous evening and was now uniting him with this very special woman.

"Cara Lee, why did you give that man that small, green leaf in exchange for the applegrass?"

"That's our form of currency. You see, everyone works four hours a day here. If a couple has children, one of them must stay at home and care for them or be involved in their school once they're old enough to go. The other partner works for the benefit of the city, for example, in agriculture, cave maintenance or other public sector work. For their work, each Caralite receives forty currency leaves, which only have commercial value until they dry out and turn red exactly twenty four hours after they're picked."

“So, once the leaf is dry, you can’t use it to buy anything? It’s worthless?”

“Precisely. In this way, it’s impossible to accumulate financial wealth. Once red, they are only good as an aphrodisiac tea.”

While Gore chewed on this concept, he noticed people buying cooked foods from vendors and then looked all around him. “Cara Lee, where are you hiding all of the overweight people?”

“Danton, we don’t have any. Obesity and weight problems have been eliminated here through diet, exercise, emotional stability, meditation and frequent sex. We don’t use mechanized vehicles to travel and we don’t use computers – we walk more and think more than people in your country. Both of these activities burn calories.”

“Wow. America really has a lot to learn from your society. It’s incredible that no one there has ever heard of Caral.”

An hour later, Gore sat with his guide in a beautiful garden terrace in her royal pyramid. Glow moss provided ground cover between the various plants, bushes and flowers as well as providing a soft, relaxing, greenish light. Large fire salamanders ran freely, climbing the walls and trees, giving off a strong reddish glow. Here, as everywhere in the city, Gore and Cara Lee did not wear shoes; the ground and space around them was heated by a complex system of circulated geothermal water and air. The Caralites also derived electricity, which they consumed in very controlled quantities, from the Earth’s subterranean geothermal energy.

“This food is delicious,” Gore commented to Cara Lee.

“Yes, all of our food is organically grown, fertilized with the feces of our storm bats, descendents of the famous Carlsbad Cavern Mexican free-tailed bat colony. Even with

the four-hour shifts in the cave farms, we produce more than enough food to feed all residents in the city.”

Gore pointed to the transparent cave fish on his plate, its bones and various muscle groups visible through the skin. “And these? Are they naturally occurring here or are they also raised on fish farms?”

“We raise them in cave ponds. Again, there are plenty for everybody as our eating habits are very controlled – small amounts of grains, fruits, vegetables and fish eaten very often throughout the day.”

They finished eating in silence, Gore focusing on and savoring every flavor-packed morsel, down to the cave truffles that garnished the plate.

“So, Danton,” Cara Lee looked at him meaningfully as she poured him a cup of digestive tea. “Tomorrow at twelve noon you will address the people of Caral and ask them for assistance in your endeavor back in Las Vegas. I’ve already notified the entire populace and they’re already considering their arguments for and against aiding you in your quest—”

“Sorry to interrupt, but how did you notify the entire population? I haven’t seen a single MFD anywhere so far.”

“Through the skin-lichen,” Cara Lee pointed to Gore’s wrist. “Basically, every Caralite has a band of it around his wrist but each band of lichen is part of the same entity and is electrochemically connected to every other band. This lichen has the ability to send human brainwaves across great distances regardless of the telepathic ability of the individual.”

“Amazing! I’ve never heard of any plant or flora that can do that.”

“It’s not exactly earthly fauna, but we can talk about that more later. Let’s get back to the vote. After you make your case to the people tomorrow at noon, they’ll deliberate among

themselves and the city will take a final vote on whether to help you at five in the afternoon.”

“Thank you. But can’t it be sooner. I need to get back immediately and finish what I started.”

“No, I’m sorry. Our law requires a twenty-four hour process, but the clock is already ticking. Don’t worry. Later this evening, I’ll be happy to show you the Love Double Pyramid. I’m quite sure that after our time together there, my people will be of a mind to give you a helping hand and you can leave for Las Vegas tomorrow evening after the vote.”

“Really? Why is that?”

“Believe me, you’ll know why when it happens. I promise you.”

She-Hun Battle Boars and a New Secret Weapon

Nitra Khan sat on a rose quartz throne in the great meeting hall of the royal palace in Hunzania. Boota Bleeda, along with twenty legatas, sat at a large conference table in front of her. The room smelled faintly of perspiration and avocactus powder.

Pitchers of water and Rekol beetle wine rested on the chitin surface of the table, which was supported on legs made of interwoven beetle legs. A large monitor was set into the granite wall for all to see the visual portion of the battle plan to be presented by the ministress of war.

Bleeda addressed Deeza Cata, her senior field legata as signified by the runes on the woman’s chitin breast plate. “Have you briefed the legatas as I requested?”

“Yes,” Deeza unconsciously played with her necklace – a gold chain adorned by fifteen shrunken, gold-plated male genitalia – which she wore around her neck. The shrunken penises, complete with their scrotums, were war trophies she

had claimed from fifteen American generals whom she had personally killed in various battles throughout her military career. All of the other legatas wore similar necklaces; however, none bore as many of the little golden talismans as that of Deeza Cata.

“Queen Nitra, your legatas have been informed of the general plan for the attack on Las Vegas,” confirmed Bleeda. “They are ready for the final details.”

“Well done, Boota. Welcome, my legatas and sisters of warfare on manhood. The time has come for each of you to lead your ten legions of warriors against the American despot. Each of you will command your fifty thousand sisters with the blessing of Hunza. She will carry us to victory and hand us the city of Las Vegas so that we may expand our womanly empire and bring us one step closer to the total defeat of the United States of America.”

The legatas broke into fervent applause while simultaneously making the castrating scissors gesture with middle and index fingers. All of the women present focused their attention on Corporal David Hings; they knew that the American soldier had recently satisfied Hunza’s desires and would bring them luck in battle. Hings, who was chained to the wall behind Khan’s throne wearing only a loin cloth, wore an expression of anxiety and uncertainty as he watched these man-haters enjoying their tactical preparations for war.

Khan now made eye contact with each one of the young field commanders; none of them was older than thirty-five. “And now, give your attention to our ministress of war, Sister Boota Bleeda.”

Bleeda stood up. “Legatas! We will mobilize all troops tomorrow evening at 8:00 p.m. Travel time to Las Vegas should be about twelve hours. The Americans are expecting us; Negon Bush is allowing us to take the city without a real fight in

exchange for crude oil. Our original battle plan for Operation Lick Bush has been modified, however, due to what you are about to see.”

The legatas looked at one another in confusion; they had no idea what their military leader was talking about. Hings knew only too well.

“Now, sisters, have a look at this.” Bleeda activated a device and the monitor in the wall came to life, showing the images recorded at Professor Wrijinn’s testing facility several days earlier.

The legatas watched the video with interest. Holes were blown open in the face of a concrete wall and insect larvae sprayed through them and onto the ground.

Bleeda paused the image on the screen. “What you’re seeing here is the test we conducted for our newest living weapons. We’re calling them Titanas. These giant mole crickets deliver larvae that turn into deadly flying insects, called procto-dragonflies. Now, just keep watching this, sisters, and see how millions of Americans will spend their last minutes of life!” The She-Hun ministress of war smiled sadistically, as she started the video once again.

The twenty women gathered at the table watched the rest of the images of the death of Nitra Khan’s servant, the Clear Channel clone Rush Limbaugh. As the man jumped around trying to remove the insect from his anus, the camera zoomed in on his face, showing his pleading eyes and the desperation that he was feeling. Upon seeing the expression that Limbaugh wore and watching him scream his useless insults, the legatas broke into belly-laughter, slapping their thighs in amusement and delight, once again making the castrating scissors gesture.

Corporal David Hings’s expression changed to one of

complete fear of these women warriors. He could not help but wonder what ghastly plans they had for him.

The video ended and now a map of Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon was displayed. Bleeda walked over to the monitor and pointed, beginning to explain her battle plan, to be executed in two days' time, "All of our battle Hun-Vees will approach Las Vegas from the south together ..."

The Great American Secret

Negon Bush sat in the dressing room of his cavernous bedroom. Next to him stood his personal doctor, Dr. Swaggart, wearing a white lab coat. The doctor leaned over the president and said, "This may feel a bit strange, sir. I've given you a local anesthetic, but you'll still feel a strange sensation. Don't be alarmed."

"Thank you, doctor," Bush gripped the edge of the arm rests so tightly that his knuckles were white. He did not enjoy receiving pain when it was not at his sexual bidding.

Doctor Swaggart leaned over Bush and held a cylindrical, metal surgical instrument about the size of a ball point pen against his skull just above the right ear. "Okay, Negon, it's important to sit still for about thirty seconds."

"No problem, Doc," Bush felt a deadened sensation inside his skull.

Half a minute later, the doctor stepped away from his patient, put the surgical tool down and held a piece of gauze on Bush's head, applying pressure.

"Is that it?" asked Bush, relieved.

"That's it, Mr. President. The nano chip has been inserted directly into the speech center of your brain. It will calibrate itself within one hour, at which point it will be a fully active detonator. Even if you're gagged and cannot speak, you need

only vibrate your voice box with the trigger phrases three times in a row and it will send its signal up to three hundred miles away.”

“Excellent work, doctor. By the way, are you happy with your living quarters in New Vegas?”

“Ecstatic. Thank you very much for that location on city level 1, Mr. President.”

“My pleasure, Doctor Swaggart. You more than deserve it.”

Bush accompanied his doctor out of the mansion and to the parking lot. The president wore a smile as he got into the presidential limousine and headed over to the House of Light to meet Cheney and Rice for their 7:00 p.m. appointment.

*

“Have you seen to all of your final preparations for the move to New Vegas tomorrow?” Bush asked Cheney and Rice across the redwood desk in his God Office in the House of Light. The president’s father, George H. W. Bush III, had had the last Californian giant Sequoia logged twenty years earlier to provide the lumber for the spectacular, polished, orange-red piece of office furniture.

“Yes, Negon, I’m all squared away,” responded Cheney, who had spent all afternoon seeing to the arrangements for his mother, brother and two sisters and their families to move to the new city.

“Yes, sir, thanks for asking,” answered Rice. She had finalized arrangements for her parents and their extended families; she had no brothers or sisters.

The president had taken care of everything for his two sons and his now senile father.

“Good. Glad to hear it,” said Bush, genuinely. “Now, it’s

time for the show!” he looked at Rice, a diabolical twinkle in his eye. Let’s go.”

Twenty minutes later, Bush, Cheney and Rice arrived at an unremarkable-looking civilian edifice, located on city level 25 in the northwest quadrant of the District of Power. Bush and Cheney entered first, leading Rice through a maze of hallways in what seemed to her to be an abandoned warehouse, except for the fact that heavily-armed military guards were scattered everywhere throughout the building. Finally, the three statesmen stood in front of a large, reinforced steel door set into a steel-reinforced concrete wall. Bush saluted the two soldiers standing guard, typed in an access code on the keypad to the left and then put his palm onto a scanner; the heavy, steel door silently swung inward on its hydraulic hinges. They stepped inside a small antechamber, the large door closing behind them. Just as the door behind them was shut, a second one in front of them opened onto the main room.

Before them, two large, high-strength metallic suitcases sat on a conference table. Each case measured one yard square by twenty-four inches deep. Apart from a small video camera, which fed only to a private monitor in the president’s personal studies in both the House of Light and his private residence, the only other object in the room was an uninspiring painting of the crucifixion scene, recently completed by Bush the artist.

“Negon ...what is this place?” Rice asked hesitantly. “What are those suitcase things?” Even the guards out front did not know what it was over which they stood watch.

“Ah, my dear, those are America’s balls!” Bush raised his voice, making a fist with both hands. He looked over at Cheney, who grinned in agreement.

“I don’t understand,” said Rice, looking at one man and then the other.

Cheney explained, “Well, Ms. soon-to-be Secretary of Defense Rice, after the Dalai Lama emasculated all world governments by forcing them to atomically disarm back in ’62, the Bush dynasty felt like, well, ‘what is America without its nukes?’ That is just plain unmanly, you know?” he looked at the future secretary of defense searching her face for understanding. “Now, we have our balls back!”

Comprehension dawned on Rice’s face, then she grimaced, “You mean those are nuclear bombs? We’ve been hoarding nukes in violation of a treaty signed by almost every nation in the world, inspired by the King of Tibetan Buddhism himself?”

“No, of course not,” assured Bush, patting her on the back, laughing lightly, “we just have the two. I think ‘hoarding’ would be a bit of an exaggeration, don’t you?” he winked over at Cheney, who nodded back. The president continued, “Sadie, say hello to the Karlyle babies, affectionately known as ‘George H. W. the first’ and ‘Mr. Majors.’”

“How long have we had these?” she asked, stepping closer to inspect them. The shiny silver cases were undistinguished on the exterior, having only two simple latches, a digital locking mechanism and six heavy-duty carrying handles.

“Under my father’s presidency, my uncle, Marvin Bush V, head of Homeland Security and the CIA, began work on these babies back in 2071. One of his top scientists stumbled across some of the old technology while doing a records search in the National Archives at the National Library. Uncle Marvin then set up a black-ops group of ten engineers and a guard detail of eight, who have lived together under constant surveillance since then. After fifteen years of work, in 2086, they completed the two, 400-pound, ten-kiloton, hydrogen-neutron suitcase bombs you see here before you,” Bush threw a glance upward, “praise God.” The president looked hard at Rice,

holding his hands on the sides of her shoulders. “They never leaked their secret and since then only the Bushes have known about the Karlyle babies. Well, until I told Beem about ten years ago, and now, you, today.” Bush looked harder at Rice. “You understand the severity of what I am telling you, Ms. Rice?” She nodded silently. “You see, both of these bombs have been unusable because my Uncle Marvin, in a delusional act of liberalism on his death bed, refused to pass on to my father several dozen passwords and launch codes which he alone possessed. Last week, the remaining scientists in the black-ops group finally cracked the last of the codes, and now,” the president looked over at his vice president, “we’re ready to kick some serious behind.”

Cheney avoided looking at Bush and said nothing, day-dreaming about the time he had had sex on George H. W. with Ella Houston. He stifled a laugh, remembering how he had fooled her into thinking that he had actually armed the bomb. *Luckily*, thought Cheney, *she never said anything to anyone. What Negon doesn't know can't hurt him.*

Rice looked first at Cheney and then at Bush. “Sir, what on Earth would we need two nuclear bombs for?”

The Galaxies of Love

Bathed in the greenish light emitted by the glow-morels, Danton Gore and the queen of the Caralites, Cara Lee, stood in the main cavern of the city of Caral. Before them, the entrance to the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid, the lower of the two pyramids that formed the Love Double Pyramid, opened into the massive structure.

Gore looked up at the upper pyramid, the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid, in amazement; it rested on its point, inverted, on the point of the lower pyramid.

“This place is truly incredible, Cara Lee. How is the top pyramid supported?”

“The cosmic energy holds it in place. The same energy that bonds molecules together, that holds electrons in their orbital shells, that creates energy in the fusion reaction of our sun, that enters your body and elevates your spirit after coming to orgasm with your sexual partner – that’s the cosmic energy at work. We know how to create it here through peaceful group living, respecting of the ecosystem and having frequent, guilt-free, respectful, reverent sexual relations. Once created, we harvest this energy to help us maintain the intergalactic ley lines and our own society here on Earth. Our crops always grow well, people always have a positive outlook on life and we can collaborate with physical matter to our benefit.

“Ley lines? ‘Collaborate’ with nature? What do you mean?”

“Ley lines, you know? The pathways of electromagnetic energy that criss-cross our whole planet and the entire cosmos, connecting all planets and galaxies to one another in the entire universe. Our Love Double Pyramid sits directly in an energy vortex associated with this system of pathways.”

Gore wore an expression of total ignorance. Even though he had personally encountered entities from a place other than Earth, he was completely unfamiliar with the concepts about which she was talking.

Cara Lee noted Gore’s bewilderment, but continued on, “Also, we can meditate or concentrate on collaborating with nature at a cellular level and do things like transform faulty, disease-causing DNA or move matter for construction and travel purposes – like with our Skysurfer, which I’ll show you tomorrow.”

“Wow.” Gore did not completely understand what he had heard, but he was very intrigued by these Caralites. “I’ve read

some articles about that stuff written early last century, but in mainstream America today those writers are considered to be freaks.”

“There’s nothing freaky about it. Our society of fifty-five thousand people lives virtually without disease of the body and mind, crime or poverty; practically every man and woman of every age is enjoying the physical and mental benefits of healthy sexual encounters whenever they wish.” Cara Lee smiled and offered Gore a stick of peppergrass.

Gore accepted and began chewing and swallowing it down. “It tastes like anise.”

“Yes, very pleasant, like its effect! Come now.” Cara Lee led the American through the entrance and into the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid.

The queen of Caral and her guest walked onto the plant-filled floor of the voluminous, open atrium area of the lower pyramid. Gore looked up and could see all the way to the pointed top of the ceiling, 300 feet above him. Thousands of cosmic love rooms, built on thirty floors, lined the four slanted interior walls of the structure. Small balconies led off of each room, defining the atrium space within the pyramid. From these balconies, many half-dressed, chatting Caralites leaned on the banisters, gazing down at the people below. Semi-naked and naked couples danced rhythmically on ten-foot high pedestals sprinkled throughout the crowd. An acoustic band played on a central stage:

Everybody’s space surfing
Across the universe
We’re going faster than the light
We always said Einstein was not right
We travel through the Milky Way
A black hole’s wave – it makes us sway

Space surfing, space, space surfing!

Gore listened to the strange lyrics and looked in front of him; he sensed and actually felt a positive vibration in the air – a complete lack of fear, a sense of belonging and an exhilaration for life. Caralites stood everywhere, chewing peppergrass and chatting to one another. Many small pyramids dotted this central meeting area of the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid.

“What are all these people doing here?”

“If you’re sixteen and deemed mentally prepared, you can come here to meet new people. Once you establish a connection with someone, you simply go off into one of the three thousand rooms and make cosmic love, using protection of course. The energy of all of this happiness is channeled up into the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid above us.”

“Meet someone? You mean these people are single and meeting one another for the first time?”

“Some of them yes, and some of them no. Some come here alone and some come with their current partner. Everyone knows how to connect with the cosmos and enjoy its pleasure-enhancing, life-guiding energy. People know how to experience this at home with their lover, which is obviously a big improvement over sexual understanding demonstrated worldwide over the last few centuries. However these pleasures are greatly magnified when experienced here due to the number of people all engaging in the same experience at the same time.”

“Wow. Level XXX and the porn industry must be totally unnecessary here.”

“Yes, they are.”

“Damn! That would be thirty billion dollars that people could spend on other things in my America.”

“And how.”

Gore considered for a minute and asked, “And everyone here is single?”

“Of course not. Most of these people are in stable, loving, supportive relationships, many with children. They have come here simply to embrace the cosmic energy with a new person, that is, with a different spirit in a different body than that of their lover at home. Love here is not about ‘the one’ or possession. Jealousy is nonexistent in our society; it’s been schooled out of the population completely.”

“It’s amazing what adults can get their children to believe is ‘normal’ behavior or ‘morally’ right or wrong, no?”

“It certainly is. I think our beliefs are good ones. Maybe one day, America will share at least some of our beliefs.”

Gore was truly overwhelmed. He was hardly conservative when it came to sexual attitudes, but the Caralites had obviously reached a new level of free, open relationships that were not considered religiously sinful or societally unfaithful in any way to a life partner at home. Homosexuality and bisexuality were also openly embraced here for those who chose to experience that vibration of the cosmic energy.

Cara Lee broke into his thoughts, “It’s time to go to the top pyramid, Danton. It’s time for you to experience the essence of Caral – in my royal, cosmic bed-chamber.” Again, that smile of hers.

The words *thank you* came to Gore’s mind once more. This time, he was a little more aware of to whom, exactly, he was addressing them – to the cosmos itself.

The couple walked into an elevator that carried them up into the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid. They stepped out of the lift and onto a platform. Gore looked up in amazement. Above him, floating in mid-air, hovered dozens of small pyramids of all colors of the rainbow, filling completely the enormous space of the inverted Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid.

Cara Lee grasped his hand and they began to rise up, weightless, to the largest of the hovering pyramids – the royal bed-chamber. Speechless and exhilarated, Gore felt that the sexual-spiritual energy here was indeed stronger than that in the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid below.

Cara Lee led Gore through the entrance of her royal bed-chamber pyramid, which hovered nearest to the ceiling. They strode over to a king-sized pallet that floated a few feet above the floor. He noticed quartz crystals set into the walls; they glowed the seven colors of the spectrum, depending on the vibrational frequency received from this chamber and indeed from the entire Love Double Pyramid. The brightly colored bed sheets and blankets, made of the characteristic Caralite textile spun from the cocoons of glow-morel-eating caterpillars, connected Gore to mother nature and all of her resplendent beauty. They undressed and threw themselves onto the bed; the material felt of a soft cotton-silk blend on Gore's skin and afforded him total tactile comfort.

Gore lay on his back, staring at the pointed ceiling. "Cara Lee, how did we just float up here like that?"

"I told you, Danton," she gently caressed his chest, "we can collaborate with matter and harness the cosmic energy to do things that defy your Western understanding of the physical world."

Gore thought about her words for a few seconds and said nothing further about the matter. He asked, "Who are the people in the other floating pyramids today?"

"Some of them are here today because the average citizen is invited here about once a month to experience the incredible sexual-spiritual-connection to the universe that happens when you make love up here. The feeling while making love up here, in the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid, is even stronger than that felt when making love below in the lower pyramid,

which is already the strongest connection to the universe on the planet!” She paused, searching Gore’s eyes to determine if he understood her. Satisfied that he did, she continued, “The others are here because it’s their birthday. All Caralites make love here in the upper pyramid on their birthdays because one is much more in tune with the universe on his birthday. That means these birthday-lovers experience the most intense connection with the cosmic energy possible for a human being.”

Gore was overwhelmed by all he had learned in this strange society.

Wordlessly, the lovers kissed one another and gently caressed each other, concentrating on the seven chakras, lost in time. Gore felt the effect of the peppergrass throughout his physical and mental being; all sensations and mental-spiritual understanding was greatly heightened due both to the drug and the cosmic energy accumulated and conglomerated in this strange place.

Cara Lee now sat on top of him, both of his hands resting on her sacral chakra and both of hers on his heart chakra. Gore had already controlled his peritoneal muscles and staved off his own orgasm many times while Cara Lee had experienced multiple ones. Now, the couple climaxed together.

Gore’s consciousness literally left his body and travelled through time and space, as did Cara Lee’s; they were completely unaware of their own physical corpulence or surroundings. The living crystals in the walls flashed bright magenta and violet; the two lovers were both experiencing life in the third dimension through their crown chakra, which connected them directly with the cosmic energy.

Below, all Caralites in the Sensual Pleasure Pyramid, both those in cosmic love rooms and those in the atrium’s plaza, felt a surge of energy run through their bodies. They sang:

Far away across the universe
There are galaxies I know
Take us there when times get rough
To those pyramids above
To the galaxies of love

In the queen's chamber, Cara Lee sang the words that her people were singing in the pyramid below. She and Gore continued making love.

Outside the Love Double Pyramid, all around the main cavern of the city, thousands of onlookers in the city square watched the structure expectantly. Musicians there now played tribal music; dancers jumped around in unconscious movements, their bodies controlled by external, cosmic energies.

An hour later, inside the royal bed-chamber pyramid, Danton Gore and Cara Lee reached a final, simultaneous orgasm.

Outside in the main cavern, the rhythm of the music also climaxed; the crowd felt the ground tremble beneath their feet, as they watched in subdued silence. The upper, inverted pyramid lifted off of the lower one, a low, deep rumbling filling the air.

A huge, bright ball of intense lilac and white light burned in the space between the points of the two pyramids; the two lovers inside had reached the experiencing of being through the 15th and highest chakra – the crown chakra into the eighth dimension.

“Oh, my Caralite Caral! It's a cosmic lift-off of the upper pyramid!” exclaimed an onlooker in the square. “Have you ever seen that before?” she asked the man standing next to her.

“Not in my lifetime!” the man responded. “I've heard it's only happened once or twice since the founding of the city,

and never with an Earth man as the lover in the queen's bed-chamber."

"Yeah," the woman stared off, dreamily, "those aliens from the Galaxies of Love and their second, retractable penis."

The man verbalized her thoughts. "Thinking about the old alien-Venus-butterfly, eh?"

The woman simply smiled back at him.

Inside the Spiritual Pleasure Pyramid, eyes open, Danton Gore was once again out of his body and travelling. He felt Cara Lee's presence there with him, in some unknown part of the universe to him. Six suns shone on the horizon; he sensed the presence of a galaxy cluster and the millions of stars and planets it housed – and of the many highly sexual-spiritual beings living there.

An angel's beauty, six suns in the sky
And I ask myself why
Are we dreaming, is this all for real
Exhilaration we feel

Gore sang the words, which came to him without thinking; Cara Lee was also singing them.

Let's fly to the heavens
Temptations are strong
Up, up there in heaven
That's where we belong

Outside in the main square, the man and woman who had been talking and watching the cosmic lift-off continued singing the song that Cara Lee and Gore sang in the royal bed-chamber.

The woman turned to the man and said, "That American

must be incredibly special. He's just travelled to our mother planet, Om, millions of light years away from here in the Shanti galaxy in the cluster galaxy called Love."

"Have you ever made it to the Galaxies of Love during cosmic sex?" he asked without ulterior motive.

"No, I haven't yet had that connection with anyone. Or maybe the group vibe of the people in the Love Double Pyramid has just never been right for me?" She eyed the man in front of her thoughtfully.

Both of these late-thirties Caralites were in perfect physical and mental health, had very physically attractive bodies, were well educated and were spiritually well-developed human beings.

The man returned her gaze. "Why don't we give it a shot?"

"Of course."

The two soon-to-be cosmic lovers entered the lower pyramid; perhaps, for them, today would be the day they finally reached the eighth dimension, experiencing the universe's energy through their 15th chakras.

Friday

September 9, 2101 A.D.

Operation Exodus of the Elite

Beem Cheney sat at the conference table in the War Room, located on the seventh and bottom level of the House of Light.

“Okay. Very good, general. Keep me posted on the hour, every hour,” Cheney spoke into his MFD, its wireless ear piece in his left ear.

“Yes, sir. Will update you again at 9:00 a.m., sharp.” The general terminated the communication.

“Everything going according to schedule?” the president asked his vice president.

“Yes, sir. Operation Exodus of the Elite is right on track. The first million citizens, including all of our families, have already loaded onto the transport vehicles. My field officers tell me that, between the subliminals and the heavy police presence in the streets throughout the city, Las Vegas is basically a ghost town today. The operation will continue at a rate of one million emigrants an hour without a problem.”

“So, the last transports should leave the city at about 1:00 p.m. and arrive at New Vegas by about 7:00 p.m. tonight?”

“Yes, Negon, that’s correct. We’ll go in the presidential limousine through the underground tunnel under maximum security at 11:00 a.m., in three hours.”

“Great job, Beem. Sadina,” Bush turned to Rice, who was standing a few feet away in the small kitchenette. Staring at the McMeatball’s supersized sausage link breakfast sandwich she was unwrapping, she thought *How can I be thinking of you now?*

“Sadina!”

Bush’s voice broke into Rice’s daydream of her making

wild love to Danton Gore on top of her brand new grand piano that stood in its own music hall in her luxury apartment in New Vegas. She knew the T-Rex tank that had been reported as fleeing Las Vegas on Wednesday night had to have been driven by Gore. She had thought melancholically about him often since then, knowing that she would never enjoy their carnal relations ever again.

“Sadina!”

“Yes, sir.” She turned and joined the two men at the table with her food and a cup of coffee.

“Beem has confirmed that your family is already on their way to New Vegas.”

“Yes, sir. I spoke with my mother a half hour ago. Have your sons already been transferred, sir?”

“Yes, Jim and Dean have already arrived at the New Vegas Military Academy for Young Christian Soldiers. Thanks for asking. Now, what is the status of the subliminals being broadcast today?”

“The latest, militarily-developed, full-freeze subliminals,” explained Rice, “are being broadcast city-wide on television and radio. In fact, these subliminals are so mind-numbing that once entranced by them, you can’t even get up off of the couch for a glass of water or to go to the bathroom. You will have no protests against Operation Exodus of the Elite and, tomorrow, the She-Huns will easily enter and subdue the city once we’ve gone to New Vegas.”

The Anti-Bush Asks for Aid

Overlooking the central cavern of Caral, Danton Gore sipped an herbal tea in the dining hall of the royal pyramid. He felt great. The queen of Caral had just taken him to a group yoga class, followed by a brief meditation.

Queen Cara Lee sat across from him and explained, “The modern-day Caral now consists of six hundred caves, expanded from the original eighty-three that comprised Carlsbad Caverns when the founders first arrived here seventy years ago. Each cave is essentially a city neighborhood. Each neighborhood participates in group activities such as the yoga and mediation you have just seen, neighborhood meals and pre-lunch cosmic sex with partners from their caves, if so inclined. Caralites also have similar inter-cave events. This binds our society together and all feel a connection to the other inhabitants of the city.”

“Who were the founders, anyway?”

“As the intensity of the global storm system increased during the first thirty years of the last century, several thousand Americans, both men and women, along with a handful of foreigners, took residence here in the caves. Led by American groups like Synchronized Global Orgasm for Peace, Sierra Club, Greenpeace, San Franciscan Socialists for Sex, Symbiosis and Synergy – along with members of various European green parties – they all came here to start a new kind of society. Within ten years after that, intergalactic travellers telepathically detected their positive intentions and visited them to help them develop everything you’ve seen and done here up until now.”

“Really?” Gore instantly recalled his encounter with alien beings all those years ago in the desert outside Las Vegas. He had never considered that other people could talk about UFOs with such matter-of-factness; he still had never told another living soul about his experience that day. It seemed to Gore that Cara Lee could see his secret in his eyes. He wondered if she was reading his mind.

The queen continued, “There is a cluster galaxy called Love. The hundreds of galaxies that comprise it, known as the

Galaxies of Love, have names like Shanti, Peace, and Aquarius. A race of people, called Omians, populate thousands of planets within these galaxies and have known peace, intergalactic travel and fair trade for fifty thousand years. Their home planet, in the Shanti Galaxy, is called Om.”

Gore’s rational mind was overwhelmed. Many UFO sightings were reported in America and all over the world in the days of a hundred years earlier. However, because the entire world’s population now lived in underground cities such sightings were very rare in actuality and virtually never reported in the media. *Was it an Omian ship that visited me when—*

“Yes, Danton,” Gore felt Cara Lee’s hand on his, her eyes looking deep into his soul, “it was them in the Primm Valley. I know them well. They visit here periodically. They told me about you. They knew you were special since that day all those years ago. That’s how, over time, I developed a telepathic connection with you, but you never knew it. I couldn’t communicate with you due to our no-contact policy until a sense of impending doom for you overwhelmed me these last few days.”

“Only days ago, I wouldn’t have believed you. But, after everything I’ve seen here, and after that incredible pyramid lift-off last night,” Gore smiled broadly, “it all sounds perfectly natural to me.”

“Good. Very good.” She touched his hand lightly. “Now, regarding your presentation to all Caralites in the Congregation Pyramid, you should know that our society has maintained a strict, no-contact policy with both the Americans and the She-Huns for decades, as I just mentioned. Although we do keep a close watch on what happens in North America.”

“Yeah, I guess so. And you’ve executed that policy to perfection. I tell you, no one in the United States of America ever talks about this place or this society. In fact, the government

said years ago that Carlsbad Caverns had collapsed in onto themselves due to earthquakes.”

“That doesn’t surprise me. The fifth Bush president, Prescott Sheldon Bush III, attacked our city in 2050. The CIA had been monitoring Caral’s progress and decided that our way of life was a clear threat to Homeland Security – after all, we were godless, greeno, orgiastic sinners and Bush could serve God’s will by eliminating us from the Christian-ruled Western world. Besides, he wanted to take what was left of the crude oil underneath the caverns. Like all American presidents since George Washington, he was another conquering Roman Caesar, just with a much, much bigger sword.”

Gore acknowledged Cara Lee’s comment with a nod. “I know. Those poor native Indians. So why didn’t he crush you with his incredible military hardware? Why make up a story about the caverns and the earthquakes?”

“Because of our thorps.”

“What are ‘thorps’? Are they some kind of elite soldier? How many thousands of them did you need to repel an attack from the deadly U.S. military?”

“Four,” Cara Lee answered coolly.

“Four? What? Does ‘thorp’ refer to a regiment of ten thousand men or something? I haven’t seen a single soldier since I arrived here in Caral!”

“Four thorps. A thorp is but one man. One man trained for fifteen years on one incredible weapon.” Cara Lee paused, giving Gore a chance to fill in the blanks.

“A ...,” Gore thought out loud, “weapon from the Omians – the ones living on the planet Om in the Shanti galaxy?”

“That’s right, Danton.” Cara Lee smiled; Gore would make a good Caralite very soon. “Thermo-organic penetrator. Thorp. It refers to the weapon as well as to the man. The She-Huns also had a taste of the thorp technology and have never

come back for more. One thorp can dispense with thousands of enemy soldiers in a matter of minutes.”

“Incredible. You really think that with just two of these men and their alien weapons I can remount the revolution and defeat the Defenders of the Light in Las Vegas?”

“Yes, I do. With complete certainty.” Cara Lee half-closed her eyes and remained silent for several seconds. “Danton ... I’m having a vision. I see millions of people leaving Las Vegas on thousands of huge transport vehicles. It looks like hundreds of thousands of soldiers are with them. What’s going on?”

Gore considered briefly, and Ella Houston’s words came back to his mind. “Unbelievable! They’re leaving early!”

“Who? What do you mean ‘leaving’?”

“Bush. Bush and the selected wealthy elite. They’re moving to New Vegas today.”

“So what? What does that mean?”

“They’re moving out several weeks early, before any of the planned national protests against them can take place; all were scheduled for about two weeks from now. You say there are soldiers leaving also? Oh no...that means,” he paused to gather his thoughts, “the city will be wide open to She-Hun attack. The peace treaty signed on Tuesday must have been a farce. The She-Huns are going to take Las Vegas!”

Cara Lee looked at her cosmic lover, realization dawning on her face as well. “Danton, I see your parents too – they’re in a prison cell.” She fell silent. A few seconds later, she continued, “Their spirits are low, Danton.”

“Can you tell,” began Gore in barely a whisper, “if they’re on the Guantanamo Level? My God, they don’t have long.”

Cara Lee looked tenderly into Gore’s eyes, offering love and support. “Danton, I can’t tell exactly where they are. Let’s not think ugly thoughts like that.” She took his hand and said, “Come on, it’s time to make your argument to the people in the

Congregation Pyramid. They were impressed with the Spiritual Pyramid lift-off last night but you'll still have to overcome their strong belief in the no-contact policy to help you defeat the She-Huns and save the residents of Las Vegas."

"Cara Lee, I have to get back immediately. You said that the Caralites will take five hours to debate the issue before voting on it. Can't we speed up the process?"

"No, I'm very sorry. Our law is quite clear. Group debate must last five hours before a vote. You will have your answer this afternoon at 5:30 p.m. and then you can leave, with or without the thorns."

Cara Lee led Gore out of the royal pyramid and through the deserted city plaza. They walked past the Surfing Pyramid, where Gore could see citizens surfing cosmically generated, ten-foot high waves through its transparent walls. The couple then walked past the Children's Pyramid. Cara Lee explained that all Caralite children up to the age of ten spent hours every week there playing together and with teachers, parents and city elders who taught them about science, philosophy, art, birth and death.

They arrived at the Congregation Pyramid.

"Are you ready, Danton? Everyone of voting age is inside this pyramid waiting to hear what you have to say. That's forty thousand people. I will introduce you and then you'll be on your own. Take a deep breath."

"Yeah. Or ten."

"You'll be fine. Just be honest."

The queen of Caral led her guest into the pyramid. Gore read the affirmation written in large, glowing-green lichen letters above the entrance way: "One thousand Years of Peace." Once inside the structure, Cara Lee led him onto a stage that rose up in the center of the atrium. All eyes were upon him.

Gore, nervous to the point of labored breath, maintained

an expressionless face as he surveyed the crowd around and above him, noting the general happiness and apparent open-mindedness among the brightly dressed congregation. Cara Lee had declared the day a holiday for the serious deliberation of the American's fate, a great honor for Gore. As he gazed upwards at the thousands seated in the grandstands that lined the walls almost up to the top of the large pyramid, he was sure of one thing: these people would treat him with respect and would honestly consider his words – the result of any vote was far from decided. He had to appreciate this in a society; open debate of religion, politics, and personal and governmental finance had died out long before in his own country.

Cara Lee stood at the podium on the stage, which rotated slowly so all listeners got an occasional glimpse of the speaker's face. "Caralite Caral!"

"Caralite Caral!" responded 40,000 voices in one thunderous, united chant.

The queen waited several seconds and began in a strong speaking voice, the architecture of the pyramid providing perfect acoustics for her unamplified words, "My fellow Caralites, we're gathered here today to decide whether we will lend this man," she turned and pointed to Gore, "our help in his revolution. As most of you know, a group called Free Vegas tried to overthrow the American government two days ago. Their attempt failed. However, they still have thousands of men and women that can be called back to battle. I just had a vision before coming here, and it appears that the first enemy of Danton Gore and his revolutionary brothers and sisters is not now the American government, but rather the She-Hun hordes. I believe that they will invade the city, unimpeded, very shortly and enslave, exile or murder the fifty-four million residents there."

A loud murmur rifled through the incredibly empathic crowd.

Cara Lee waited for the comments to subside and continued. “Yes, yes. We don’t have concrete proof but everything points to this fact. It seems that the president of the United States intends to leave the city undefended and hand over these innocent souls to the She-Hun nation to do with as they please.”

Gore looked at his lover from the side, the sight of her flowing garment of morel cocoon silk catching on her perfect breasts and hips, the eloquent speech flowing from her mouth, and an avalanche of thoughts about their sexual-spiritual experiences the night before led him to one conclusion: *I’m truly in love with this woman. I want to spend a whole lot of time with her.*

“Now, Caral has held fast to a no-contact policy with all other nations for forty years. We will not fight unless attacked here at our home city. However, for the humanitarian reason I just mentioned, Mr. Danton Gore has requested our help. The fact that Americans would be much better off with a Free-Vegas-incited radical change in government personnel and policies should not concern us here today.” Light laughter rippled through the tens of thousands assembled in the pyramid. Cara Lee held up her hand, requesting silence. “However, the fact that over fifty million human beings will be enslaved or murdered should! Consider that, although they do not live the lifestyle of Caral and consciously connect with and support the Earth and the universe, the misery and deaths of the residents of Las Vegas will nevertheless weaken the energy in the cosmic grid system of ley lines and vortices, not only in Caral, but indeed in the entire universe.” Cara Lee paused as comments were traded among the members of the audience. “So, my fellow Caralites, I propose that we send two of our thorpis along

with Mr. Gore to Las Vegas to avert this great tragedy. And now, please give your full attention to Mr. Danton Gore.”

The audience applauded the queen’s speech, as she took a seat next to Gore. She whispered something into his ear and gently squeezed his hand.

Gore stood up, still uneasy and self-conscious of being a foreigner about to request the aid of this very insular society. As he took his first step towards the podium, the audience exploded into applause, giving him a standing ovation, broad smiles on all the faces, women and men alike.

At first, Gore could not figure it out, but then he remembered – these people were praising him for his sexual-spiritual performance of the night before; there was no higher standard of behavior in this society than what he had accomplished in the Love Double Pyramid with Cara Lee. The crowd was literally jubilant. He relaxed and his mood lightened as he stepped up to the podium, smiling.

“Thank you. Thank you all, very much.” The applause slowly diminished into silence. “Wow, that was some kind of serious pyramid power last night,” Gore laughed. At the same time, 40,000 Caralites broke into laughter of delight; the queen wore a huge smile. “But really, in all seriousness, I have no right to ask you for help today. The fact is, only two days ago I didn’t even know your society existed. Your queen called me here, telepathically, and since arriving I have learned more about people and the universe than I had during my entire life before that. So, I ask you, have mercy on the souls of fifty-four million of your Homo Sapien brothers and sisters, and help me and Free Vegas to defeat the She-Huns in my home city. That’s all I have to say to you good people. Thank you again for your hospitality these last two days and for your attention and consideration.” The audience applauded one last time.

Cara Lee joined Gore at the podium and addressed her

people. “Take thirty minutes to discuss this among yourselves and Mr. Gore and I will take any questions at that time from the appointed question-askers of the pyramid. Then go to your caves and discuss this matter with your neighbors there and with any Caralites you run into today. We will meet here at 5:30 p.m. to cast our votes. Caralite Caral!”

“Caralite Caral!” boomed the 40,000 voices in unison.

The History of Hunzania

Nitra Khan sat with Vera Dan at a table on the balcony of the royal dining hall. Vera Dan gazed out at the statue of Hunza in the city square below. She had been in this strange queendom for just over forty-eight hours and, apart from love sessions, this lunch was one of the few leisurely times she had had with Khan since her arrival. The queen of the She-Huns had been very busy running state affairs and preparing for the upcoming invasion of Las Vegas – an event about which Vera Dan Bush was not aware.

The American woman studied the statue and asked her lover, “Nitra, why doesn’t Hunza hold anything in her fourth hand?”

“She does, but only a few days out of every month.”

“What do you mean?”

“Once a month, Mother Earth Hunza bleeds her molten lava through the statue and the fourth hand dangles and then drops a sacrificial man into the lava flow,” Khan explained nonchalantly.

“What? Human sacrifice? What purpose does that serve?”

“It’s simple. Mother Earth runs on a lunar cycle and for a few days out of every twenty-eight, once an hour, we provide her with a man to nourish her and provide her with energy.

Besides, we hate men,” declared Khan, suddenly passionate. “We keep them down!”

Vera Dan physically sat farther back in her seat, moving away from the table, startled by Khan’s outburst.

“What are you talking about? Surely not all men are despicable?”

“Really, name one man in your life who was not despicable? Your husband? Your father? These are unworthy men.”

Vera Dan considered briefly that her father was not despicable, but did not object to Khan’s assertion about Nekon Bush.

“Our society was founded by a wide variety of women sixty years ago. Women from all over America, as well as from other countries, fled the institutions of patriarchy and nepotistic capitalism and chose to live here on the shores of Lake Guzman and in the surrounding countryside. They chose to invest their energy in one another, in complete-equality sexual relationships, in the building of a new society and, ultimately, in the breeding of a new race of people to protest and abandon those hated, male-driven institutions.”

“What kind of women? What race of people did they breed?”

“Us. Me. She-Huns.”

“I still don’t understand,” said Vera Dan.

“Well, about half of the original group of five hundred women who came here were lesbian couples. The other half were just angry wives of oil-, defense- and computer-industry billionaires. These women had simply had enough of their cheating, loveless relationships; they divorced their husbands, taking half of their enormous fortunes and giving it all to the building of the city of Hunzania.” Nitra picked up her glass and swallowed a mouthful of Rekol wine. “Over time and generations all the women chose to have meaningful relation-

ships only with other women, and we now refer to ourselves as new-age lesbian feminists. Some of us occasionally take male sexual partners, the concubinos, to enjoy and fulfill natural, biological and physical desires only – never to pursue an emotional bond. There is no spiritual union with them during or after sex, just the personal pleasure of orgasm – and, of course, the woman is always on top.” Khan chuckled.

Vera Dan laughed. “Of course. And the race of people they bred?”

“Us She-Huns. By 2052, only ten years after founding, our society had built up the top genetics laboratory in the world. The patriarchal world governments and businesses laughed at the all-woman run facility, but the scientists there perfected our living weapons, engineered plants and animals for food, raw materials and energy, and designed the genetic make-up of a new race of warrior women.”

“And they invented the parthenogenesis, right?” offered Vera Dan, touching her stomach and thinking about the developing fetus there.

“Exactly.” Khan stood up. “Come with me, my co-mother, I want to show you something.” She held out her hand to Vera Dan.

Khan led her through a maze of passageways, eventually arriving at a large chamber having several gateways that led into a final sanctuary. Half a dozen of the most elite She-Hun warriors guarded each gateway.

The two women stopped at the door and donned heavy overcoats made of material woven from processed Rekol beetle hair. The drone of generators hummed and echoed in the hallways.

Khan opened the door and motioned Vera Dan into the single, large room that was the inner sanctum; this place served as the most sacred temple for Cooba, the She-Hun high

priestess, and high-ranking military, civil and social leaders of the nation of Hunzania, the only members of the society allowed access for prayer. Clouds of vapor billowed out of the women's mouths with each exhalation; the temperature here was maintained at a constant five degrees below freezing.

Vera Dan looked in wonder around the room – mummies stood everywhere, seven in all. A dozen, ten-foot high, ancient Hunzanian runes were carved into the four walls and the ceiling – signifying female fertility, feminine superiority and honor in battle, among others. Various statues of Hunza were placed around the chamber.

“Nitra, what is this place?”

“This is the mausoleum where our DNA mothers now rest for eternity. The founders purchased these remains from a private collection in Hungary in 2044, two years after emigrating to Mexico.” Khan pointed to the center of the room, “That,” Vera Dan followed Khan's finger and saw a fully armored, mummified body, its preserving bandages showing on the hands, legs and face, sitting on a life-sized golden horse, “is the fifth-century warrior, Nitra Khan, of the Hun people. Her mummified body was discovered in Hungary in 2038. After she killed the infamous Attila the Hun and burned his body in 453 A.D., she and her sister warriors split off from the Hun tribe and raped and pillaged men and women as far east as China and as far west as central Europe.”

Vera Dan looked at her own Nitra Khan, a flicker of doubt crossing her face. Khan noticed the look, gently took her lover's hand and said, “Don't worry, Vera Dan, we're not as blood-thirsty as our DNA mothers,” she stretched the truth past its limit. Khan continued on, “That,” she pointed to another mummy in battle dress that stood near a wall gazing in reverence toward the mounted Nitra Khan mummy in the

center of the chamber, “was the ancient Nitra Khan’s right-hand woman. She was also a great warrior.”

Vera Dan slowly walked around the room and inspected each mummy; some of the original, long hair hung down behind each one.

“Nitra, all of these women have dark hair. Why do you She-Huns have blond hair?”

Khan pointed to two sarcophaguses at opposite ends of the rooms which Vera Dan had not noticed earlier. Photographs of blond-haired, blue-eyed women adorned the stone coffins. “Those are the tombs of the great, right-wing English Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, and of the first woman Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel. Even though both of these women worked closely with the Bush dynasty, they were incorporated into our DNA due to their global domination aspirations.”

Once again, Vera Dan considered the exact nature of her co-mother, but did not dwell on these thoughts for very long. “And the others here?” Vera Dan returned to Nitra’s side.

“All the others here are fifth-century female Huns. One is Nitra’s sister and one is her daughter. So, my DNA comes from the strongest women that ever lived on the planet. Our baby carries a mix of these She-Hun mothers’ DNA and yours. She will go far. This makes me very, very happy.” Khan leaned in and kissed Vera Dan passionately; the American woman returned it with equal intensity.

*

Fifteen minutes later, Nitra Khan sat alone with Boota Bleeda at a conference table in their War Room, located in the royal palace.

“Are the legatas on schedule with their battle preparations?”

“Yes, my queen. All thirty-three thousand Hun-Vees will be ready to depart at 8:00 p.m. this evening. We will be one million warriors strong arriving at Las Vegas early tomorrow morning, and, upon completion of Operation Lick Bush, the Americans will wish they had never been born!”

The words “Men, we keep them down!” echoed down the hallways outside the Hunzanian War Room.

The New Vegas House of Light

Negon Bush, Beem Cheney and Sadina Rice sat in the God Office of the new House of Light in New Vegas, Arizona.

“So, Negon, all transport vehicles will have arrived in New Vegas by eight o’clock tonight, five hours from now.” said Cheney.

“Wow, I can’t believe we finally made it here. After the democrats pulled that impeachment vote crap, I must confess, I was a bit rattled. I want to congratulate both of you on jobs well done this week.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Rice, honestly.

“My pleasure,” responded Cheney.

“Now, Beem, what is the status of our armed forces?”

“We have two infantry divisions fully installed in the military base here on the outskirts of New Vegas and another two at Jacob Lake, thirty miles west of here. The armored division has been split between the two bases.” said Cheney.

“What forces are still left back in Las Vegas?” asked Rice.

Bush answered her, “No one important, Sadie. Just some of the municipal police force who didn’t make the cut for New Vegas. It doesn’t really matter.” Bush put a hand on Rice’s and

Cheney's shoulder. "After the gala celebration brunch tomorrow, New Vegas will be the unrivaled center of global capitalism and private equity, *and*" he continued, laughing, "we'll be personally protected by the U.S. government's military forces, who we command!" The president paused and looked into the eyes of both of his trusted advisors. "Once the She-Huns have delivered our oil tomorrow morning and have successfully installed themselves in Las Vegas—" he smiled maniacally, staring upward and gesturing with his two hands, closing them into fists and then opening them quickly, extending the fingers outward, "—Kaboom!"

Caral Speaks

Queen Cara Lee and former Defender of the Light Captain Danton Gore sat at a table on the terrace of a tea shop in the main plaza of the cave city of Caral, near the Congregation Pyramid. Gore sipped his applegrass tea; the stress of the last few hours of waiting for the vote that would take place in a few minutes was at its peak. He slowly breathed in deeply, filling his nostrils with the sweet smell of the cave flowers that lined the terrace.

"Let's get going, Danton. I have a very good feeling." The queen and her visitor had been walking around the main plaza in the central cavern for hours, meeting and talking to hundreds of people. Everywhere around them, people who had been discussing the vote at hand with friends and strangers alike started meandering toward the nearby Congregation Pyramid.

As each Caralite entered the structure at one of the entrances on each of the four sides, he dropped either a rose quartz or a clear quartz crystal into a supervised polling box to cast his vote.

For the second time that day, Cara Lee led Gore up onto the stage in the center of the atrium floor. Over the next few moments, the noise from the voices of the still-debating Caralites grew so loud that the queen requested everyone keep their voices to a whisper.

“We have to help him and the millions in Las Vegas,” one fifteen-year old girl asserted softly to an eighty-five year old stranger sitting next to her.

“No, we don’t! We gain nothing from this. If the thorp technology falls into enemy hands, our society will be finished!”

“Come now, elder, the cosmic energy surely is on our side,” reasoned the girl. All children in Caral were intellectually and spiritually fully developed by the age of fifteen, and could thus vote on critical, potentially society-changing issues.

Several minutes later, the pyramid was full and a man approached the queen with a sealed envelope.

Cara Lee stood at the podium and took the envelope from the grand overseer of the Congregation Pyramid and thanked him.

“Caralite Caral!”

“Caralite Caral!” responded the audience.

“Fellow citizens, I personally thank you for your genuine consideration over the last twenty-four hours of the serious matter at hand. Without further ado, let’s find out what we say as a city.” She calmly tore open the envelope, pulled out the folded sheet of paper therein and unfolded it. As she read the single word written there, she looked at Gore. “Caralites, the answer to the question of providing aid to this American revolutionary is ‘yes’! I thank you once again. Enjoy your evening. Tomorrow we will resume work schedules as normal.”

Gore stood up, smiling from ear to ear. As he hugged the queen, he heard a few boos coming from the gathered people.

However, many more applauded, sending him their support and positive energies to carry him through his quest to both repel the She-Huns and overthrow the oligarchical “democracy” that ran his country.

The Caralites began filing out of the pyramid to carry on with their normal lives after having taken this most unusual vote for them.

“We’ll wait here,” Cara Lee informed Gore. She touched the skin-lichen band on her wrist, concentrating silently for a few seconds. “I have just summoned two of our four thorns to join us from the crowd up here on the stage. These are the two men that will accompany you to Las Vegas. We’ll all walk over to the Love Double Pyramid, where the Skysurfers are stationed, together.”

Gore looked down at Cara Lee’s wrist. “Is the skin-lichen also a gift from the intergalactic Omians?”

“Yes.”

“Our little planet sounds so primitive compared to the Omians living in the cluster galaxy called Love,” surmised Gore.

“Believe me, it is.”

“What do you mean? Have you been there?” Gore asked, truly astounded.

“Yes, I have. They took me there once on their interdimensional spacecraft. You’ll see one day. It’s not like it was last night with just your etheric body during the pyramid lift-off. You are truly there with your three-dimensional body as well.”

Gore silently reflected on her words.

The two thorns climbed the stairs and now stood on the stage next to Cara Lee. They wore off duty, bright green garments of morel silk. “You called us, my queen?”

After the introductions, the foursome walked out of the

Congregation Pyramid, crossed the main square and entered the Love Double Pyramid a few hundred yards away.

Minutes later, Danton Gore and his Caralite comrades stood in a huge open bay that occupied the upper fifty feet of the upper, inverted pyramid.

Gore looked up in amazement; he could see blue sky through the roof of the room. "Wow, I've never seen such a large patch of clear, blue sky like that!"

Ben Bradit, one of the two thorp soldiers, stood next to Gore. The thirty-year old explained to the American, as he pointed at the clear crystalline calcite ceiling above them, "A column of energy extends upwards from this pyramid into the outer atmosphere. From here, 365 days a year, one can see blue sky during the day or stars at night."

"What about the storm clouds?"

"The physical-sexual-spiritual energy generated in this structure cuts right through the storm. It also serves as a homing beacon for the interstellar Omians on which they can focus from millions of light years away. The crystalline ceiling can be retracted and the area where we're standing now serves as a landing pad for their spaceships. It also serves as a charging point for our Skysurfers."

"What do you mean 'charging point'?"

"He means," offered Dan Kessar, the second thorp, aged twenty-eight years old, "that we station our Skysurfers over there," he pointed to a large hangar on the other side of the landing bay, "because the Love Double Pyramid lies directly on an energy vortex point that gives and receives cosmic energy."

Gore looked incredulously at the two men, and then at Cara Lee, standing next to him. He was astonished at what this tiny civilization had accomplished and at the lifestyle it led. It seemed to him incomprehensible that this unknown place lay

only half a day's travel from the "technologically advanced" city of Las Vegas.

"Danton," Cara Lee held both of his hands and looked into his eyes, "initially I wasn't going to come with you, but now I've decided that I will."

"Are you sure? This isn't your battle to fight. You have to maintain your city here, don't you?"

"No. Besides, I care about you." She smiled warmly. "Even though the thorps are telepathically gifted, they will undergo much mental strain using their thorp weapons. I'm the most gifted telepath in our city, and who knows how much additional help you might need."

"Okay," he squeezed her hands gently, "I'm grateful for the support and the company."

The American revolutionary and his three brave allies left the Love Double Pyramid to go and make their final arrangements before departure. They would leave in an hour, arriving at Las Vegas early the following morning.

Saturday
September 10, 2101 A.D.

New Vegas Oil

President Negon R. Bush, Vice President Beem Cheney and Special Agent Sadina Rice sat in one of the four living rooms in Bush's luxury flat in New Vegas, city level 1. As Bush had requested, they all wore their Sunday's best – extremely expensive attire hand-sewn by the country's top tailors. They sat at an African mahogany table and ate a celebratory breakfast of Russian caviar Big Macs, served on 19th-century china, sipping champagne from solid-platinum flutes. Bush had already used his stomach tube twice during the meal and was now ready to fill up once again. He inhaled black ice between courses; Cheney swallowed shots of Jim Beam. Rice abstained from such chemical intoxicants, her only vices being the addiction to and love of power and accumulated wealth.

The room's decoration was spectacular. Bush had had his architect research the dwellings of 20th-century tycoons such as Donald Trump and the Sultan of Brunei to inspire the interior design of the presidential home. The furniture was made of now-extinct hardwoods and upholstered with plush, red velvet material. Chandeliers made of precious gemstones – diamond, emerald, ruby, sapphire and amethyst – hung from the ceiling and cast beautifully colored light around the room. Mosaics of precious and semi-precious gems adorned the floor and walls throughout the apartment – all commissioned from his family fortune from the most famous artists of the day.

Bush's MFD buzzed to life and relayed its message wirelessly to the ear piece in his right ear.

"Okay. That's great!" exclaimed the president into his MFD, ending the call.

“What is it, Negon?” asked Cheney.

“The She-Hun tankers are arriving, all one hundred. That’s five hundred million barrels of crude, enough for several years here in New Vegas. The first one is unloading its oil as we speak.”

“Negon, the tankers have passed the security check, I assume.”

“Yes, Beem, they were checked fifty miles south of the city and were found to contain only oil and various disgusting frozen animal food supplies and refined avocactus products.”

“Typical. Negon, are they sending the first barrel over here, as we discussed?”

“Right-o. It will be here in ten minutes.” Bush turned to Rice, “Eat up, Sadie, we have a surprise for you.”

*

On the outskirts of New Vegas, a line of She-Hun magno-oil tankers, each one measuring 1,500 feet long and one hundred feet high, stretched in a column more than thirty miles to the south. These vehicles harnessed the Earth’s magnetic field in order to float ten feet off of the ground and thereby travel with their incredibly heavy loads consuming the minimum amount of hydrogen fuel possible. Traditional sails, as well as huge kite sails held on cables, caught the storm winds and provided additional propulsion to the colossal transporters.

The first two tankers were unloading their cargos of five million barrels each of high-grade crude oil at one of the New Vegas oil refineries. On the bridges of dozens of magno-tankers farther down the line to the south, a She-Hun zenturia issued her command: “Lower the exit tubes to the surface!”

Phase Two of Operation Lick Bush was underway.

She-Hun Attack Force

She-Hun Legata Zilva Uxian rode in the lead battle Hun-Vee of an armored column numbering 1,500 vehicles positioned at the western edge of the dried lake bed of Lake Mead, twenty miles east of Las Vegas. “Helmswoman, set heading for due west.”

“Yes, legata. Right away.”

Uxian’s forces – 50,000 women warriors, complemented by 50,000 battle boars and 5,000 “scorpion” tanks carried in the holds of the Hun-Vees – began to cut west from Lake Mead and over to Las Vegas. She would arrive with her forces about five miles south of the southern gate into the city and then turn north to invade.

Simultaneously, Legata Mirra Suuna was also breaking off from the main She-Hun battle force at Lake Mead. Suuna was leading her forces fifteen miles to the west, where they would drill into and enter the wastewater system that connected Lake Mead to Las Vegas via twenty miles of underground sewer pipe.

Nitra Khan sat on the bridge of her royal Hun-Vee, which remained motionless at the head of the never-seen-before main force of 30,000 She-Hun war machines. Carrying a total of 60,000 scorpion tanks in their bellies, the awesome force of new-age lesbian feminists would remain at a standstill, cloaked from American radar, for thirty minutes, monitoring the attack on Las Vegas.

1 Samuel Chapter 10

After finishing breakfast, President Bush and Beem Cheney had led Sadina Rice into the palatial bathroom at the president’s home. They now stood in the 900-square foot room,

which was tiled in rare, Italian red marble and which housed a huge bathing pool, shower stalls and dressing areas. All water and electrical fixtures were made of solid gold; black marble sculptures dotted the room. Exotic flowering plants and orchids of all colors resided in hand-made ceramic pots set on the floor, on shelves and on top of columns; dozens more hung from the ceiling.

Next to the bathing pool, which had been emptied of its BushCoke filtered water, the three politicians stood along with a fourth man: Archbishop Henry Bakker of the Pentecostal Church of New Vegas.

Archbishop Bakker stood in front of a table on which rested a golden baptism bowl filled with a thick, black, viscous liquid – the first few gallons of the She-Hun crude oil delivered only minutes earlier to New Vegas.

The archbishop stood at the edge of the bathing pool and silently nodded to Bush, Cheney and Rice, who then descended a few stairs down into the pool. Bakker handed them specially designed masks, which covered the eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

“President Negon R. Bush,” began the clergyman in a solemn, sincere voice, “just as Samuel anointed Saul the King of Israel to inherit the Lord’s land and wealth,” he began to pour the now-American crude oil from a huge golden chalice onto Bush’s head, “so I now anoint you the ruler of New Vegas, the United States of America and, indeed, the entire planet.” Bakker poured more oil on the president’s head; it slowly flowed over his 10,000-dollar Versani suit jacket and down onto his trousers.

Bush said, “Thank you—” He stopped to spit out some crude, adjusted his mask and continued, “Thank you, my Lord.” Speaking to the archbishop he felt he was speaking directly to God. The president continued praying softly.

Archbishop Bakker next began to pour crude oil on

Cheney's head, saying, "Vice President and General of the Army Beem Cheney, just as Jehu was anointed King of Israel and commanded to destroy the house of Arab—" He stopped short. "Excuse me, 'Ahab,'" he corrected himself, "the house of Ahab. Jehu was known as a temple-destroyer, so too shall you continue to lead American armies against terrorist organizations like Free Vegas and destroy the evil temple of the She-Hun goddess Hunza at Hunzania."

Cheney gave thanks and joined Bush in quiet prayer.

"And, finally, Sadina Rice, just as John Ashcroft anointed himself with Crisco cooking oil before taking governmental office as both governor and senator of the state of Missouri, so I now anoint you as the new secretary of defense of the United States of America."

Unlike her counterparts in this, for her, unexpected ceremony, she did not pray or thank God first, but simply exclaimed, "Yes! I did it. It's all been worth it!" She quickly added, "Praise the Lord!" She literally hopped around in glee, slipping on some oil on the floor of the pool, having to fight to keep her balance.

Bakker ordered some servants into the bathroom. They descended the stairs into the bathing pool, stripped the designer clothing off of the newly blessed American leaders, towed them off with chemical cleaners to remove the crude oil and led them up and out of the pool and over to the shower area.

As Bush stood under the hot, cleansing water he thought to himself, *I'll take Nitra prisoner and nuke Hunzania with a Karllyle baby. The She-Huns will be finished off once and for all and I'll get myself all of their oil without a hitch. As the good bishop just told me, the Lord's inheritance is mine.*

Skysurfer Surveillance

Danton Gore sat at a small table, gazing through the transparent walls and floor of the gondola of the Caralite airship known as a Skysurfer. He was looking at the desert ground 500 feet below him, which disappeared as the craft passed through one of the 2,000-foot tall, grey-black storm clouds that loomed everywhere around them. The wind had reached as much as 200 miles per hour during the trip from Caral.

On the offline music function of his MFD, Gore was listening to a classic song from 2025, before Clear Channel Global, Inc., dictated the musical tastes of America. His thoughts were reliving the morning of only twenty-four hours earlier, when he had awoken in Cara Lee's bedroom after having made cosmic love with her in the Love Double Pyramid and achieving its lift off.

When you wake me in the morning
Spend some time just by my side
It's a new day, it's a new way
For me to change the tide
The grey days they are over
It's you who pulled me through
No longer blue

Gore looked at Cara Lee, who lay resting in one of the sleeping hammocks at the other end of the fifteen-foot long cabin. He smiled to himself.

It's not hard to fall in love
It's not hard to fall in love
It's damn easy to fall in love
With you
With you

“Danton,” Ben Bradit, one of the thors, called over his shoulder from the pilot’s seat a few feet from where Gore sat, “we’ll be at Las Vegas in about fifteen minutes.” Dan Kessar sat beside Bradit in the copilot’s seat.

“Okay. Thanks, Ben.”

Gore turned off his MFD. He and his three Caralite companions had covered the 725 miles from Caral in thirteen hours, and were now approaching Las Vegas from the south-east. The American was intrigued by this flying machine, the first he had ever been in; flying was extremely dangerous and expensive since the intensification of the global storm half a century earlier.

Cara Lee got out of the hammock and walked the length of the gondola of the airship, which provided living quarters for four – a small kitchen, bathroom, sleeping hammocks and the table and chairs. She sat down next to Gore and touched his hand lightly.

“So, Danton, what do you think of our bird?”

“Pretty amazing, but let me get this straight. If I understand you,” Gore began to paraphrase what Cara Lee had told him during the trip, “this Skysurfer runs on cosmic energy.”

“That’s right,” confirmed Cara Lee.

Gore continued. “You store your fleet of twenty Skysurfers in the hangar at the Love Double Pyramid, where they’re charged by the cosmic energy that runs through the interstellar ley lines there. All of the joyful sexual-spiritual energy created by the Caralite people in the double pyramid also adds to the charging of the Skysurfers, as well as dumping energy into the whole ley line grid system that runs throughout the universe. The Skysurfer can fly anywhere on the planet.”

“That’s right, Danton. This same energy is also what protects us from being battered by the storm.”

“And that energy creates a bubble around the ship within

which exists a stable atmosphere, all of which actually flies through the air, right?”

“That’s right,” Cara Lee confirmed again.

“Incredible.” Gore remained silent a moment, and then asked a new question. “How long can we maintain this little bubble of security without recharging?”

“Up to ten days,” answered Cara Lee.

Gore looked to the rear of the craft, where an engine designed by the extraterrestrial Omians was mounted onto the outside of the gondola, “And the nuclear photonic engine?”

“It’s good for three thousand miles in average wind conditions.”

“What happens if you run out of energy on the ship?”

“You find a ley line, or better yet an energy vortex, and park the ship there, which will charge up its systems. Or,” she flashed him a smile, “you get a bunch of people to have cosmic, spiritual sex near the ship.”

“Danton,” Ben Bradit called to Gore again from the pilot’s seat, “I think you better take a look at this.” He brought the Skysurfer down to 300 feet; the protective bubble around the ship muffling the engine’s noise and jamming any radar.

Gore stood up from the table where he had been talking with Cara Lee and walked over to the pilot’s and copilot’s seats. “Ho-ly shit!” Gore was looking at the largest She-Hun force he had ever seen in his entire life.

“Caralite Caral,” murmured Cara Lee, who had joined Gore in the pilot’s area. “There must be twenty thousand battle Hun-Vees down there.”

“Or more,” suggested Dan Kessar.

The Skysurfer was flying below the clouds. “How far away are they?” Gore asked Bradit, looking to the northwest.

“Visibility is five miles. They are in the lake bed of the western part of Lake Mead.”

“It looks like you were right, Danton.” Cara Lee put her hand gently on Gore’s shoulder to offer support. “The She-Huns are going to attack Las Vegas with everything they’ve got.”

Gore stared down in dismay. “Our first priority is to rally the people and motivate them to help the remaining Free Vegas revolutionaries fight against the She-Huns and any Defenders of the Light. We’ll go to the SkyFox studios and make a broadcast. Then we’ll let your thorps loose on the invading She-Huns!”

“Good thing you have us along with you,” Bradit, the thorp, smiled at Gore. “Believe me, Danton, you’ve never seen anything like what our weapons can do.”

Initial Report

“This is Cheney,” the general of the army spoke into his MFD, which was on hands free. Looking across the table at the president, he said, “Go ahead.” Rice was also sitting with them at the conference table in the War Room at the New House of Light in New Vegas.

“Yes, sir. This is General Powell in Las Vegas. Our surveillance officers report She-Hun forces entering the wastewater system pipe five miles east of the city. The battle Hun-Vees can’t enter due to their size but it looks like they brought thousands of small, strange looking tanks and tens of thousands of battle boars inside their cargo bays.”

“How many Hun-Vees in all?” asked Cheney.

“I estimate at least twenty-five thousand armored Hun-Vees stretching from their entry point into the sewer pipe all the way back to Lake Mead to the east. There is also a much smaller force approaching the city from the south, as planned with Khan.”

“Okay, Sherman,” continued Cheney informally with his general, “you get those thirty thousand Defenders of the Light of yours fighting good at the south gate. Make sure you get plenty of footage for the press. We need the rest of the country to think we put up a heck of a fight in the nation’s capital on the day a She-Hun nuke accidentally detonated there after they successfully invaded the well-defended city.”

“Yes, sir,” General Powell responded flatly on the other end of the line. Bush, Cheney and Rice showed no emotion sitting at the table. “I’ll stay as long as possible before bailing out with my top officers.”

“You’re doing a great service to your country, Sherm. Those boys that will die as cannon fodder today will get a nice monument put up in their honor, right next to the Vietnam, Iraq and Iran war memorials in downtown New Vegas.”

“Yes, sir, that should make it well worth it for their families,” Powell added earnestly.

“As for you, Sherm,” said Cheney, “we’ve already credited your bank account. You be careful now.”

“Yes, sirs. Thank you, sirs.”

Cheney ended the call on his MFD.

Bush asked, “Secretary Rice,” he smiled at her, using her new title for the first time on official business, “you have taken care of the communications issue, no?”

“Yes, sir. I just confirmed it. All phone lines out of the city have been destroyed, by the She-Huns, of course.”

“Of course.”

“Any microwaves or radio waves leaving the city will be jammed. Those She-Huns really have come a long way with their 20th-century technology, don’t you think?” Rice asked, a facetious smile on her face.

Cheney said, “I’ll say. I can see another story as well. ‘Troops evacuate millions moments before She-Hun A-bomb

explodes.’ That footage we took of Operation Exodus of the Elite will serve perfectly.”

“The public will eat up whatever facts and figures we give them. Nice job, both of you,” Bush commended.

Rice looked silently at Bush, and then at Cheney, not allowing herself to second-guess the plan they had all agreed to involving the use of the Karlyle Babies. She was now completely in their boat, completely committed to a cause that she now called her own.

“Beem, stay in touch with General Powell. Sadina, you can go home and get ready for the celebration brunch. I’ll see you both there in about an hour and a half. But first, let us pray.”

And so, the three highest ranking officials in the American government stood up, walked to the end of the room and into an alcove and knelt down to pray for victory to the ten-foot tall image of Jesus Christ that hung on the wall there. Painted by Negon Bush himself, the man depicted was a white-skinned, blond-haired, blue-eyed Western European, and not a dark-skinned, dark-haired, brown-eyed Semite who lived and led a handful of followers in the Middle East some 2,000 years before.

Legata Suuna Leads Her Warriors

Legata Mirra Suuna marched her troops through a 20-foot wide, rectangular, concrete sewer pipe. The floor was slightly concave and there was room for two scorpion tanks to roll through the pipe side by side; they churned through a river of water mixed with human waste as they advanced on Las Vegas, four miles and forty minutes in front of them. The way ahead of her lit up by tank headlights, the air around her filled with the rumble of moving tanks and the stench of the human

waste, Suuna rode on top of one of 5,000 scorpion tanks, leading her 50,000 warriors and 50,000 battle boars into action.

As Legata Suuna considered that her mission would be relatively easy to accomplish due to the fact that thirty-five million Americans sat on their couches, literally glued to the TV by the full-freeze subliminals, the tank on which she rode hit a large pot-hole in the floor of the concrete pipe. The arm on which she rested her weight suddenly slipped out from under her and she rolled hard to the left, toward the outside edge of the tank's hull. As she quickly braced herself with her right arm to avoid falling off the tank and into the water, she caught a finger up in her necklace of twelve, gold-plated shrunken penises and tore it off her neck.

Over the noise of war machines and marching battle boars, the word "Noooooooo" echoed loudly through the sewer pipe. Legata Suuna watched in disbelief as her twelve war trophies splashed into the water next to the tank below her.

The She-Hun warrior riding next to Suuna on the hull looked at her legata with an expression of horror in her eyes; she said nothing to her commander – no She-Hun would speak at all of such an overwhelmingly bad omen.

The Anti-Bush Returns to Las Vegas

From the front of the Skysurfer, Danton Gore studied the She-Hun troop alignment 500 feet below him. The aircraft was now flying north over Legata Uxian's forces. He heard dull, popping sounds as he could see the battle boars below him being blown to pieces as they cleared several paths through the one-mile wide minefield that encircled the entire underground city of Las Vegas at the ground's surface.

Gore watched Defenders of the Light fire large, mounted pulse cannons from bunkers located at level 0 of Military HQ,

Las Vegas South. The battle Hun-Vees crossing the minefield returned fire furiously.

Once through the minefields, the She-Huns fully engaged the American tanks of all sizes and firepower that awaited them on an unmined strip of land one hundred yards wide that fit between the south gate building and the edge of the minefield. Hundreds of tanks and scores of Hun-Vees already lay motionless below him, burning. Gore watched as a tiny dot on the ground below him ran into a tank at high speed, a fraction of a second after which a fireball rose fifty feet into the sky. The tank remained motionless, the tiny dot having reversed away just before the explosion.

“What do you think, Danton?” Kessar looked up at Gore from the co-pilot’s seat. “I’d say there’s well over a thousand Hun-Vees down there. Looks like after their battle boars clear enough paths through the minefield there will be plenty of them left over to carry out kamikaze attacks on tanks. One of those animals with a Hun-C charge can easily take out a tank if he’s not shot first. The Americans seem to be greatly outnumbered and outgunned.”

“Yes, they are,” Gore agreed. “The poor bastards. It looks like they’ve been left behind to put up a token battle for the media.”

Bradit concentrated on his task at hand. “I don’t like the looks of landing anywhere around here. What do you think, Danton? We could fight them from the air.”

“That might be a good—” Gore stopped short, noticing a concerned look on Cara Lee’s face, standing beside him. “Cara Lee, what is it?”

“Danton, it’s very strange and unsettling. I sense that millions of people in Las Vegas are brain-dead. I can’t describe it better than that. They are motionless in their homes, breathing but dead.”

Gore considered this information and slowly thought out loud, "That Bush really is the incarnate of evil. It must be subliminals, Cara Lee. They must have unleashed powerful ones on the population to stop any protest against the early move to New Vegas and facilitate the She-Hun invasion of Las Vegas."

"Danton, sorry to interrupt," began Bradit, "but what do you want me to do here?"

"Ben, there's no way to know how many She-Huns may already be in the city. Even with your superior weapons it will be hard to track all of them down quickly if they manage to infiltrate on many city levels. We need to wake the people up from their subliminal stupor. If we don't and somehow fail up here against the She-Huns, it'll be all over for the residents of the city." Gore looked at the three Caralites, all of them silently agreeing with him. "Okay," he continued, "let's check out Military HQ, Las Vegas West, as a landing site," advised Gore. "I have a feeling there won't be anyone there. We'll be back up here to deal with the She-Huns real soon!"

"Right away." Bradit fiddled with the controls and put the Skysurfer on a heading to the northwest. Turbulence shook the gondola, despite the protection of the energy bubble. "How far is it?"

"It's about twelve miles." Gore studied the terrain ahead of them. "Okay, we should know a bit more in just a few minutes."

"Danton," began Dan Kessar, "how could the president pull off such manipulation of the media like these subliminals without anyone finding out about it?"

"Well, Dan, the American government and the 'free' press have been expert spin doctors working together for a very long time. Didn't they teach you about the iron-clad financial connection between Saddam Hussein and Al-Qaeda and the

undeniable existence of Iraqi WMDs last century in history class?”

“No, they didn’t.”

“Well, both were given as justifications for wars back then. Both unsubstantiated claims were reported as true by politicians and the press. Later, it came out that both claims were complete fabrications.”

“Danton,” Bradit broke into the conversation, “I have a visual on the western military base.”

“Unbelievable.” Gore looked up ahead of them and saw a completely deserted west gate to the city; not a single military vehicle was on the desert’s surface. “Right. Take us down there, Ben. We’ll head straight to the SkyFox Headquarters on Level 15, where they must be broadcasting the subliminals from. Then we’ll call all citizens to fight against the She-Huns and we’ll head back to the south gate. I think we’ll actually have to fight alongside the Defenders of the Light there.” Gore paused, making eye contact with all three Caralites, “Thank you all very much.”

“You’re very welcome,” Cara Lee answered for her and her two thorns.

“Everybody strap in. Prepare for landing.” Bradit brought the Skysurfer in for its final approach to land next to the clam-shell-roofed building at Military HQ, Las Vegas West. As they descended through heavy turbulence, he pressed a button on the control panel and electric motors began to reel in the fifty-foot long flight cables. These cables attached the gondola to the flexible wing above, which provided lift and, combined with the nuclear photonic engine and the cosmic energy, allowed the craft to fly efficiently and safely through the air. Having turned into the wind, Bradit expertly touched the aircraft down on its main, ten-foot diameter, three-foot wide landing wheel. The aircraft rolled to a stop one hundred feet away, the gon-

dola now resting on its huge main wheel and four smaller, lateral support wheels; the wing had folded up and stowed itself automatically in a compartment in the top of the aircraft. The Skysurfer was ready for immediate take off.

“Nice landing, Ben,” complimented Gore. “Now, let’s get to that TV station!”

She-Huns Knocking at the Door

“Report!” commanded Legata Zilva Uxian, pacing back and forth on the bridge of her Hun-Vee, which had punched through the Defenders of the Light defensive front and now fought on the surface next to the city’s south gate building. “Status, Zenturia Wraga!”

A voice sounded from the main viewing screen. “Legata, I have lost ten of my battle Hun-Vees and my warriors have scored one hundred enemy tank kills here at the minefield. The battle boars have cleared half a dozen separate paths through the minefield to the main city gate and kamikaze battle boars are starting to really cause a noticeable effect.”

“Well done, Zenturia Wraga!” Legata Uxian issued a general command to the over 1,000 battle Hun-Vees that were still in action. “Deploy your scorpion tanks and armored personnel carriers. We’ve secured twenty of the thirty vehicle elevators within the clam-shell building. Begin the invasion of the underground city!” screamed the She-Hun commander.

Legata Zilva Uxian had not known what to expect. Nitra Khan had told her that the American president had promised minimal resistance to the She-Hun invasion, however, he could not be completely trusted. Uxian had not told her troops anything about the arrangement made with Bush; she wanted her warriors to fight their hardest. She, herself, was very willing to die for the She-Hun cause.

“Men, we keep them down!” Uxian encouraged her troops over the Hun-com.

Within minutes thousands of scorpion tanks and She-Hun chitin-armored vehicles were fighting on all ten levels of Military HQ, Las Vegas South.

*

“My queen,” Legata Mirra Suuna yelled into the Hun-com on her wrist, having to scream over the engine noises of scorpion tanks, the clatter of tens of thousands of battle boar hooves and the marching steps of thousands of women warriors, all echoing up and down the length of the sewer pipe leading into Las Vegas. “Praise Hunza, Bush gave Bleeda the correct security codes; we’ve successfully deactivated the second and final ionic-laser protection barrier in the sewer system. We’ve encountered no resistance so far. I expect that we’ll exit this main pipe and be able to begin dispersing throughout the city within fifteen minutes.”

“Excellent news, legata. Keep our sisters marching at double time. Let me know when you have free access to the city. Halabamos Hunza!”

“Halabamos Hunza!”

SkyFox Studios, Las Vegas

Danton Gore sped the Jeep he had stolen from Military HQ, Las Vegas West, through the tunnels in underground Las Vegas. Cara Lee sat beside him and the two thorp soldiers, wearing their alien-designed weapons on their backs, sat in the back seat. All wore high-tech hearing-protection earmuffs taken from the base; they allowed the human voice to be heard if spoken within five feet of the wearer – otherwise all sound

was blocked. Gore had taken this precaution because during a massive demonstration against air pollution in the city three months earlier, the Defenders of the Light had set up public address systems in the street and blasted aural subliminals, bringing the demonstration to an end within minutes.

As the Jeep passed businesses, restaurants, bars and private homes, the four revolutionaries glimpsed a chilling vision: people sitting in front of TV sets, immobile, eyes wide open, jaws hanging down; they had been converted into living zombies. The foursome were extremely careful not to focus on the images being broadcast; Gore did not know how strong these messages were or how long was needed to completely captivate the viewer or listener. There was no vehicle or foot traffic on the streets; everyone was trapped indoors.

Gore now drove the Jeep on city level 15; the SkyFox TV global corporate headquarters complex was only minutes away. Knowing that he risked being located by Homeland Security, he turned on his MFD for the first time since having fled the Dark Temple after the assassination of the presidential clone three days earlier. He pressed a button on his MFD and sent a password phrase and a pre-written message to Cloud Base on an extreme-emergency bandwidth set up for him by the Free Vegas techies; Gore had never used this bandwidth before.

Instantly, the following message appeared on the holographic viewing screen of his MFD. He slowed down the vehicle as he read:

FREEDOM FIGHTER X158. THIS IS AN AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION. IF YOU'RE READING THIS, I HAVE DISAPPEARED, EITHER TAKEN PRISONER BY THE GOVERNMENT OR KILLED. IT'S UP TO YOU TO REGROUP REMAINING FREEDOM FIGHTERS. CONTACT THIS SITE AGAIN IN SEVEN DAYS. IF YOU'RE STILL ALIVE YOU WILL RECEIVE A FLOW CHART DEPICTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALL REVOLUTIONARY CELLS, IDENTIFIED ONLY BY UNTRACEABLE

EMAIL ADDRESSES, COMPLETE WITH COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES. IF THAT HAPPENS, GOOD LUCK REBUILDING FREE VEGAS. THE FUTURE IS GREEN.

Gore brought the Jeep to a stop.

“What is it, Danton?” Cara Lee asked, seeing the distraught look on his face as he hung his head. Silence. “Danton?”

“It’s really up to us now. Cloud Base has disappeared. He’s out of the picture.” Gore stepped on the accelerator; the look of defeat he had just worn was instantly replaced by a look of determination, thoughts of Cloud Base and his missing maternal grandparents spurring him on.

Moments later, Cara Lee pointed to the map of the SkyFox global corporate headquarters complex displayed by the on-board electronic guidance system, “Danton, I sense the broadcast is coming from this building.”

Sixty seconds later, Gore pulled up to one of the ten, 1,000-office SkyFox corporate buildings located at the business complex. He parked next to a huge billboard that declared:

Albert Murdoch’s
SkyFox Television
Las Vegas Affiliate
24/7 Infotainment Division:
Truth through dramatization

“Defenders of the Light at three o’clock!” yelled Bradit, leaning into the front seat and pointing to the steps of the multi-city-level building, fifty yards away.

“Shit! There must be at least five hundred of them,” Gore guessed. “And they’re already making their way towards us.”

“We’re on it!” declared Bradit and Kessar in unison, as they jumped out of the Jeep and readied their weapons.

“Oooooommmmm! Oooooommmmm!” the thorps crooned in unison.

“Are you kidding me,” he said to Cara Lee, “they’re going to chant them to death?”

“Shut up, Danton. They need to concentrate.”

As Gore and Cara Lee got out of the vehicle and took cover behind it, standing next to the two thorps, they heard a very low Om-like sound emanating from the tangle of metal tubing that Bradit and Kessar wore strapped to their backs. From the main assembly, several small tubes led over their shoulders and down the left arms of each man, terminating in a shiny, flexible, metallic glove that covered the hand.

Gore saw no weapons fire from the thorps, but instantly the front forty Defenders of the Light that were walking towards them simply disintegrated; arms flailing, their flesh vaporized into white clouds of moisture. The bare skeletons took one or two additional steps before crumpling and clattering against the ground.

“Holy shit! What the hell do those things do?” he asked Cara Lee, nodding towards the backpacks that the Caralites wore.

Cara Lee explained, “The thorp soldiers connect with the cosmic energy—”

“Oooooommmmm!”

Gore again heard the Caralites chant the ancient Sanskrit letter. He looked at the two men and noticed that a faint, green aura now surrounded them.

Cara Lee continued, “—which after surging through the Earth and air into their bodies, is manipulated inside the manifold they wear on their backs. The energy is then cast forth invisibly from their gloved fingertips. The cosmic radiation splits the water molecules in the target’s body into hydrogen and oxygen and then fuses them back together. This double

atomic process releases a massive amount of energy, which destroys the target organism instantly.”

“Jesus, no wonder no one has sent any soldiers to mess with you guys for the last fifty years,” Gore concluded, as he watched another wave of Defenders of the Light tumble to the ground, their skeletons clattering amongst clouds of their own bodies’ vaporized water.

“Yes,” continued Cara Lee, “but you must know that it pains us greatly to kill any living being. That’s why we’ve maintained our no-contact policy so strictly all this time.”

“Cara Lee, what about Bushfire missiles? They don’t have any water in them. Can the thorns destroy them as well?”

“Not the thorn weapon. But the thorn soldiers’ mental skills include the ability to disable on-board computers and redirect their trajectories. They can even cause them to self-detonate in mid-air.”

Gore remained silent, seriously considering for the first time the possibility that this revolution could end successfully with the aid of just these two men and their technologically unparalleled weaponry. His heart lightened a bit, even though he too was saddened by the inevitable death and carnage that certainly lay ahead of them in the next few hours; he derived no joy from the act of killing.

Within thirty seconds, all 500 Defenders of the Light guarding the TV station had been vaporized.

“Let’s go!” Gore sprinted up the stairs, picking up a pulse weapon and stepping around the piles of human bones that lay there. Leading his three companions into the building, he directed, “We have to find the subliminals broadcast studio, stop them, and then call the citizens of Las Vegas to arms against the She-Huns!”

Inside, the main reception area of the corporate offices was desolate. Gore warned everyone, “Don’t look at any television

monitors, not even for a second.” He read the directory board and saw that there were a total of ten broadcast studios on the two floors above them. The ground floor housed only offices.

“Bradit, you lead. Kessar you protect the rear.” They ran down a hallway towards the stairwell door. As they approached the door, two Defenders of the Light turned the corner from the adjoining hallway. Bradit chanted a quick “om” and the soldiers’ flesh dissolved into oblivion.

The group ascended the stairs one floor and ran down the first hallway lined with studios.

“There,” yelled Gore, pointing at a red, siren-light that flashed on the wall outside the farthest studio from them. Simultaneously, Bradit discharged his weapon, the skeletons of the two soldiers guarding the studio fell to the ground, one skull rolling towards them and coming to a stop a few feet away, wisps of steam rising from its eye sockets.

Now standing at the door of the studio that was broadcasting, Gore instructed, “Let’s start our search for the location of the master subliminal broadcast here. Be careful. Look down at the floor and then slowly survey the room. Bradit and I first. If we’re not back in three minutes, come in after us, but be careful because we might be in trouble with the subliminals. Double check your earmuffs. Let’s go!” Gore turned the door-knob, Bradit stepped through the doorway and Gore followed him, leaving Kessar and Cara Lee standing among the bones on the floor in the hallway. Cara Lee picked up a pulse rifle from one of the dead soldiers at her feet.

Inside the doorway, the two men found themselves in a dark anteroom and stopped at a set of drawn, heavy-cloth curtains; the actual broadcast studio was on the other side. An easel stood there, announcing in removable, white letters:

Now broadcasting – This week's edition of:
A Bunch of Bush
The Weekly Talk Show with the President

“Be careful!” Gore warned his comrade and slowly drew the curtains apart. They entered the studio next to the stage, about ten feet from the first row of seats, stage left.

Cautiously surveying the room, the first thing Gore and Bradit looked at was the 500-seat, studio audience area. All the seats were empty – except one in the front row.

“Who’s that?” Bradit asked Gore.

“That’s Peter Cronkite, a member of one of the most respected news families ever. Ben, look at that.” Gore pointed to Cronkite’s crotch, where he had wet himself. Gore instinctively knew not to consider it further, but out of the corner of his eye he saw flickering light up on the stage to his right. He could not help himself – he turned his head only a fraction of an inch, but that was all it took.

Ben Bradit had already taken a couple of steps forward and looked to his right, at the huge screen mounted above the stage where the talk show guests sat during interviews. Gore forced himself to look away, but was unable to do so.

Both men had instantly lost their freedom of will; they could not tear their eyes from the image of Negon Bush. On the screen, the president wore blue jeans, cowboy boots, a denim shirt and a ten-gallon cowboy hat. He sat on the porch of a working, exotic tropical animal ranch that he had had built recently in New Vegas. Lush, green plants surrounded him and the sounds of chirping birds and singing toucans filtered through his speech from the background. “Jesus loves you. Be happy. Be satisfied. You’re content and relaxed. Don’t get up.” The words filled the studio, over and over; the image and sound ran on a continuous loop.

Outside the studio, Cara Lee nervously clocked the elapsing time. Kessar kept a keen eye out for any enemy soldiers that might appear from around the corner at either end of the hallway.

Thirty seconds later, the second pair of revolutionaries entered the studio. They passed through the anteroom, drew the curtains apart and looked at the profiles of their slack-jawed friends, who were standing only a few feet in front of them.

Cara Lee quickly, but carefully, surveyed the entire studio through half-closed eyes. She saw no soldiers. “Danton! Ben! Danton! Can you hear me?”

The two men remained motionless, arms hanging limply at their sides, weapons on the floor, staring at the screen above the stage. Kessar took two steps forward and looked to his right – he was instantly entranced by the image on the screen.

Cara Lee took a deep breath, raised her pulse rifle and opened fire above the stage without looking. She fired hundreds of rounds at the screen mounted on the wall. A thick, whitish-yellowish liquid oozed from the pulse-bullet holes: pus flowing from the pixels that described the diseased images of Negon Bush there. Looking at the floor, she picked up Gore’s weapon and emptied its entire magazine into the screen as well. She grabbed Kessar’s pulse weapon and destroyed the eight loudspeakers mounted all around the studio.

Slowly, Gore, Bradit, Kessar and Cronkite shook their heads from side to side, trying to clear their brains of the mind-numbing Bush bewitchment.

Cara Lee breathed a sigh of relief and hugged Gore. He pushed her away like a bad-morning person woken unexpectedly from slumber by a bedmate. She slapped him lightly, “Danton, snap out of it!”

Seconds later, Gore said, “Wha’? Who are you?”

Cara Lee slapped him again.

“Wow,” Gore said, now in control of his mental faculties, “I can’t believe I allowed myself to get sucked into that.”

“Don’t be too hard on yourself,” Peter Cronkite’s voice consoled Gore from behind. “These are the most powerful subliminals ever designed.” Cron-kite approached the group of four from the front row of the audience seats. “They embedded one thousand suggestive images in every five seconds of the broadcast. The verbal suggestions are also played at an incredibly high density.”

Cronkite shook hands with the foursome and continued, “Not only that, they discovered a new way to direct their message into the low-level, primal part of the brain, thereby accessing the conscious and subconscious thought processes directly. Very devious stuff.”

Gore looked at Cronkite, a man in his early forties who wore an off-the-rack suit and functional meatball-leather shoes, and asked, “What are you doing here anyway? You’re a household name in the media business. Surely, you could’ve bought your way into New Vegas.”

“You are correct. In fact, I paid for an apartment there but Bush personally revoked my property title a few days ago and only returned half the money.”

“Did you piss him off somehow?” asked Gore.

“You didn’t see it? It was all over the papers.”

“No, I kind of had to leave town.”

“Oh, that explains your clothing.” Cronkite shot a glance at their bright, morel-cocoon silk clothes. “I don’t see much colorful, comfortable clothing like what you guys are wearing, except in the hippy and new age crowd. Anyway, I interviewed the president on Wednesday morning after the election and asked him some tough questions about the need for the election in the first place and the signing of the peace treaty with the She-Huns. The fact is, I voted for Van Hong and did

some hard thinking after the election. Well, like all politicians since Ronald Reagan, Bush completely evaded the meat of the questions after giving lengthy responses that provided no information whatsoever and then smiling broadly and asking God to bless America. I, unlike every other reporter on television for the previous one hundred years, didn't let him off by simply moving on to the next question; I actually called bulls-hit on him and once more asked him to answer the question. He again evaded the question. This went on for about twenty minutes, after which time the president excused himself from the interview and left the studio. An hour later, I received the news about my apartment in New Vegas and Albert Murdoch himself demoted me."

"Is that the freedom of the press that America is so proud of?" asked Bradit.

"Yup, that's it. Press them for the truth, and you don't get invited to the presidential press conferences. Or worse," Cronkite answered the Caralite.

Gore looked hard at Cronkite and said, "Maybe it's a blessing in disguise, Peter, because now you're going to go down in history as a major player in the Free Vegas revolution."

"How's that?"

"I'll tell you all about it on the way. This studio isn't the main broadcast computer. Where is it? We need to get that subliminal loop off the air. And then you're going to interview the new leader of Free Vegas on national television!"

She-Huns Enter Las Vegas from the South

"Go ahead, Legata Uxian," ordered Nitra Khan, who was looking at the image of her legata on the main viewer screen on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee, still parked east of Las Vegas at the dry bed of Lake Mead.

“My queen, the American soldiers have fought well here at the south gate, but have taken heavy casualties,” reported Uxian. “I estimate that sixty percent of their force has been destroyed. We have lost only a quarter of ours. We should have them totally defeated on all ten levels of this military base within another thirty minutes. My warriors, scorpion tanks and battle boars are already entering the city from the clam-shell building. We have control of all thirty vehicle elevators there.”

“Excellent. We’ve confirmed that the subliminal broadcasts are still on, as Bush promised, so you should easily subdue the population. Your objective is to keep people inside their houses until we have occupied the city, then we will systematically enslave the men. Out of respect for women in general, we’ll offer them the opportunity to convert to our way of life. If they refuse, they must leave the city and relocate somewhere else in America with only the shirts on their backs. Sister Uxian, be careful with the subliminals. We’ll turn them off in a few hours. As for me, it’s time to initiate Phase Three of Operation Lick Bush. We’re moving out momentarily. The Titanas are digging well and will be reaching their target within a few hours.”

“Don’t worry, my queen,” said Uxian, “we have everything under control here. We look forward to your return here within the next twenty-four hours. How’s Legata Suuna’s progress in the sewer pipe?”

Khan looked at Bleeda, sitting next to her on the bridge; she was speaking on her Hun-com.

“Suuna is doing fine,” Bleeda informed both Khan and Uxian. “She estimates that the first of her troops will exit the main sewer pipe and begin infiltrating the city at large within five to ten minutes. It’s all coming together very nicely.”

The Re-call to Revolution

“My fellow Americans,” Peter Cronkite sat at a desk in Studio 4 at SkyFox TV, Las Vegas. Danton Gore sat next to him. They had no way to know that this broadcast was not reaching all of America; nevertheless, it was reaching all the citizens of Las Vegas. It was also reaching the Defenders of the Light, on the emergency bandwidth of their MFDs.

“I have here with me, Mr. Danton Gore. Mr. Gore, let’s hear your opening statement.”

“Thank you, Peter.” Gore turned to address a camera, its light blinking red. “I’m Danton Gore, of Free Vegas. Several minutes ago, I cut off a broadcast of President Bush that you have all been watching for more than twenty-four hours. The broadcast has immobilized millions in Las Vegas through the use of military-grade subliminals. Your minds are numb but should now be clearing up. Don’t be alarmed or afraid. You must listen to me for the next few minutes. All of our lives depend on it.”

“Mr. Gore, why do our lives depend on it?” prompted Cronkite.

“Again,” began Gore, “do not be alarmed at what you’re all about to learn. As I speak to you, there are She-Hun forces entering the city from the south gate.”

“But didn’t the president just sign a peace treaty with them?” Cronkite calmly led him on.

“Yes, he did. But he has betrayed the citizens of this great city. Only thirty minutes ago, I saw with my very own eyes tens of thousands of She-Huns in battle with Defenders of the Light. I saw hundreds of thousands of additional warriors to the south and east of the city. It is clear that Bush is in alliance with these women warriors. He is already in New Vegas with virtually all of the Defenders of the Light there to protect him

and the other elites. That's why the subliminals were broadcast in the first place."

Cronkite inquired, "How do you know this?"

"I saw the battle at the south gate to the city from the air."

Cronkite immediately wore an expression of genuine surprise; this was the first he had heard of the Caralite aircraft.

Cara Lee, Bradit and Kessar stepped onto the stage and took seats next to Gore. The men still wore their thorp weapons.

Indicating the three Caralites next to him, Gore continued, "These people are our new allies. They have a machine that can fly. We came here from their city of Caral, which is seven hundred miles away from here. Our government has hidden their existence from us for more than fifty years. These two men have incredibly powerful weapons and will assist us in our fight against the She-Huns."

"What are you asking of your fellow citizens, Mr. Gore?"

"Well, Peter, I'm asking every surviving member of Free Vegas, as well as all civilians, to immediately march on to the military HQ at Las Vegas South. Our battle today is not with Bush and his corrupt government, but with the She-Huns. We must secure Las Vegas for ourselves. Today. Right now."

"Thank you, Danton." Cronkite turned to look directly into a camera, "I urge you all to listen to this man. I know this all sounds unbelievable, but I have complete confidence in him. This is no joke, people." Peter Cronkite was a trusted news anchorman, and Gore had to hope that the man could gain the people's trust. The newsman continued, "You citizens must hit the streets immediately, otherwise, we'll all be She-Hun slaves by tomorrow. I'll remain here in the studio. We'll be broadcasting live from now until the end of this historic event. Leave your TV sets on. Please call in to the station with

any information you have. This is our command center, the command center for the Free Vegas revolution. Thank you all. Good luck and be strong.”

Peter Cronkite stood up and shook hands with Gore and the others. On his MFD, Cronkite began calling his team members to come into work and help him field calls and run the studio. On camera, he gave Gore, Cara Lee, Bradit and Kessar a final thumbs up as they ran off the set to go and defend the underground city of Las Vegas against the She-Hun invaders.

Welcome to New Vegas

In New Vegas, newly reelected President Negon R. Bush sat at a 150-foot-long table on the stage that had been erected at the foot of the twenty-five city-level-high statue of himself. One hundred of the world’s wealthiest men and women joined him there, comprising the most financially esteemed group of humans on the planet that day. The highest-financed armed forces in the world protected them and their city.

Bush spoke with Cheney and Rice on this, the day they had finalized their greatest achievement ever. Virtually all of New Vegas’s inhabitants had arrived the day before and were now settled into their homes; the six million international residents of this city represented only 0.3 percent of the world’s population, but held 95 percent of its financial and material wealth.

Bush sipped a flute of champagne, not wanting to take any black ice before he gave his speech at 11:30 a.m., a few minutes away. He sang along with the Clear Channel clone of Frank Sinatra, who stood in front of the city’s philharmonic orchestra on a platform floating half way down the 2,500-foot-deep main atrium of the city. Bush hummed and murmured,

“Money, get back, I’m all right Jack, keep your hands off of my stack.”

The moving platform shot downward to twenty feet above the floor of the atrium, hovering just above the president. Bush continued to sing along, *“Money, it’s a hit, don’t give me that do goody good buuuullshit!”*

Cheney leaned over to Bush, “Ah, Clear Channel Pink Floyd song number 7. One of my favorites. What’s it called again?”

“Who cares? Those lyrics are the word of my God!” responded Bush. The two men continued singing a moment, and the song finished.

The vice president gave Bush a nod. It was time for the president to address his new city. Against his earlier intentions, Bush sneaked a black ice crystal onto his upper lip and up a nostril before walking up to the microphone. The president placed his hands on the podium and looked proudly all around him. Five hundred thousand spectators, seated in orderly rows of bleachers that encircled the monument of their president and business leader, stared back at him. Hundreds of thousands of additional onlookers had crowded into the apartments having balconies that looked directly onto the city’s central air-light shaft; eighty city levels in all. Massive TV screens had been put up everywhere around the plaza, as well as mounted on the building faces all the way up the shaft to the surface.

“My fellow citizens, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to New Vegas, the greatest city ever built!”

The gathered plutocrats exploded into applause, shouts and whistles of approval. On the stage, Bush was beaming. He was truly high on the moment, kicked up a notch by the black ice.

“You have all been selected by God, and by free market economy, to inhabit this paradise. We live here in celebration

of victory over the weak, the immoral and the mediocre.” He paused as the audience continued its intoxicated applause – intoxicated by power, prestige and drugs. Bush continued, “New Vegas has citizens from over eighty different countries. For the first time in history, one city will manage the whole world’s corporate structure through a unified private equity community. Billion dollar hedge fund deals will be brokered over lunch with your neighbor before a relaxing round of rocket golf. Concepts like freedom of information and free and fair trade, which have held back bottom-line capitalism for more than a century now, will know no place in our fair city. Protected by the Defenders of the Light, we will prosper here as no society has ever dreamed of before us! Thank you, and may the New-Testament God bless you all!”

Gathered on the balconies that hung into the main light shaft above the city square below, the world’s super-super-rich hugged and kissed one another and applauded themselves. Unable to afford the exorbitant admission charge or lacking the connections to attend the festivities in person, the rest of New Vegas’s citizens, five and a half million of the merely super-rich, watched the ceremony on TV at home.

Bush stepped down from the podium and resumed his place between Cheney and Rice at the head table.

“Well spoken, sir,” Rice complimented the president, as she handed Cheney a 100-dollar bill.

Bush looked at Cheney quizzically, as the vice president accepted Rice’s money saying, “Yeah, Negon, I was completely confident you could get through that speech without fathering a single Bushism!” Cheney smiled and slapped Bush on the back as he took a shot of bourbon from his platinum hip flask.

Bush looked at Rice and laughed light-heartedly, the president was in a great mood. “Beem—”

Cheney's MFD came to life. "General, sir?" rang out over the mini-speaker.

"Yes. Cheney here. Go ahead."

"General Healy, here, with your thirty-minute update."

"Any changes since your last report, general?"

"No, sir. Everything is fine. The She-Huns are continuing to file into Las Vegas through the south gate and the main eastern sewer outfall pipe." Healy's voice was a monotone. "The Defenders at the south gate will be defeated shortly. I guesstimate that the entire She-Hun force will be in or around the city within three hours."

"Okay, general. Report back in thirty minutes."

"Yes, sir. Over and out." Healy ended the communication.

Cheney looked at Bush and then at Rice; they were all thinking about the same thing – in only a few hours' time, the world would see its first war-time nuclear blast in more than 150 years.

*

United States General Gene Healy sat naked, tied up in a chair. Next to the American, a She-Hun warrior held a castrating scissors inches from his genitals. They were in an interrogation room on the royal Hun-Vee.

Throughout that morning, the She-Huns had expertly captured all ten surveillance vehicles that General of the Army Beem Cheney had deployed under Operation Peeping Tom. Healy's mission was to watch over the women warriors in the desert and report back to his commander.

General Healy stared in horror at one of his majors who sat next to him. Drugged and unconscious, the man was receiving

medical attention from a She-Hun doctor – below him, on the floor, lay his scrotum and testes in a large puddle of blood.

The She-Hun warrior patted Healy on the shoulder. “Keep up the good work, general,” her English was barely understandable in her heavy Hunzanian accent, “and next time we won’t have to give you any incentive.” She glanced without emotion at the motionless man in the seat next to him.

A Change of Mission Priority

“Okay, Bradit,” began Gore, “your driver will take you to the south gate. We’re going to head back to the Skysurfer and then give you support and survey the situation from the air. I’m curious how much of that massive She-Hun armored column is on its way into the city.” Gore looked to Kessar and Cara Lee to confirm that they understood the plan now that the subliminals had been turned off.

Cara Lee held her fingers to her brow and leaned against their parked Jeep, still outside of the SkyFox corporate building.

“What is it, honey? Are you okay?”

She reached out, resting her other hand on Gore’s arm. “My God, Danton, I can’t believe it. I’m having the most disturbed vision I’ve ever had in my entire life.”

A moment of silence passed between the four revolutionaries, during which Cara Lee actually lived Bush’s thoughts at that moment. As he sat almost 200 miles away in New Vegas, recalling the conversation he had had with Sadina Rice two days earlier, the president’s voice sounded in Cara Lee’s mind. “*Sadie, they need to be sacrificed along with the She-Huns because they are simply anti-Americans. Many are poor, or black, or Latino or Native American. Many are not Christian-God-fearing and are not of good Western-European stock.*”

Bush's voice began to rise. *"They crap on the American dream through mediocrity. They disgrace the concept of American capitalism through beliefs in fair pay and the responsible consumption of natural resources. It's downright communist and disgusting."* Bush's voice now screamed, impassioned, in the Caralite's mind, her body shook back and forth. *"If you have the money to heat your house to eighty degrees and walk around naked inside of it in the middle of winter, then, as an American, you should go for it! No questions asked! Cars that get six miles to the gallon? Burn up that gas, I say! Consumption without regard for the environment is my God-given right, not a privilege, mind you. A right. Unborn generations are just that, unborn! They don't care. If you have the cash to pay for it, whatever it is, then buy it happily and raise the GDP. Support the American economy. Be my guest, please! Sadie, these people just can't do that. They won't be missed. Jesus has spoken to me. God has spoken to me. They tell me that they honor my work and that I can use any means necessary to set up the greatest society to ever bless this Earth in New Vegas. Don't you see that—"*

"What is it, queen?" Bradit grasped Cara Lee's arm firmly, interrupting her vision.

"I think...I don't know," the Caralite woman was still trembling slightly. "He's talking to Rice about sacrificing people and something about She-Huns. I sense a raw, sinister presence on a lower level of the city, and ... a...second, similar presence in New Vegas."

"What are you talking about—" a familiar, foul feeling filled the pit of Gore's stomach, as he recalled Ella Houston's story of a few days earlier. "That evil bastard!"

"What?" Cara Lee implored Gore. "Danton, what is it?"

"I think he has a nuclear bomb. With what you're say-

ing about New Vegas, maybe two. If he's left one of them here..."

"...Then he's planning to use it on the city's population," Cara Lee finished the thought.

"No doubt he'll blame it on the She-Huns in the press afterwards," offered Kessar, now familiar with the political workings of America's mainstream media.

"Caralite Caral," sighed Bradit.

"Okay, listen up," commanded Gore, already in military mode and trying to instill confidence in his comrades. Here's what we're going to do ..."

*

Danton Gore drove his Jeep at one hundred miles an hour through the empty tunnels of Las Vegas. "Are you sure you know where we need to go?"

"Yes, Danton," answered Cara Lee confidently, "As I told you outside the SkyFox building, I know where every ley line on this planet is. There is one running north-south exactly twenty-three-point-four miles west of the center of Las Vegas."

Ben Bradit sat in the back of the Jeep, keeping a sharp eye out for any enemies that might need to be eliminated. Dan Kessar, the second thorp, was on his way to the south gate of the city.

"You're sure this is a better option than looking for clues in the God Office at the House of Light?"

"Danton, Bush is too cunning for that. I'm confident there is no trace of his evil plan there. I'll try to make empathic contact with him in New Vegas again. You keep driving and don't get us killed. If we die in a car crash, fifty-five million others will die with us."

Gore concentrated completely on the road in front of him. They would arrive at the cosmic energy meridian within a few minutes. Next to him, Cara Lee closed her eyes and focused her empathic ability on gleaning information about the location of the atomic bombs from Nekon Bush's weak and muddled brainwaves.

Two minutes later, the queen of Caral gave up her effort, sighing in disappointment.

"No luck?"

"Nothing. His mind is clouded by the effects of black ice and images of Nitra Khan piercing his nipples with a needle and Sadina Rice whipping him hatefully. I doubt he's particularly open to the idea of the empathic connectivity of sentient beings, which makes it much more difficult for me to connect with him, especially if he's not actually thinking about the bombs."

"Don't worry, Danton," encouraged Bradit from the back seat, "Cara Lee will connect with our interstellar guardians once she can pull energy from the ley line."

Gore had trouble having the faith that these two Caralites had in the universe and unseen extraterrestrial guardians. But he had no other choice. This woman could not connect with Bush's mind and time was running out – the bomb could go off at any minute now.

Cara Lee and Bradit began to sing a Caralite song:

The galaxies and stars above
One day from there they'll bring some love
Into our lives
There's magic up in distant skies
They'll come and open up our eyes
Put an end to all lies

Just as Gore checked the odometer to verify their location, Cara Lee shouted, “Stop here!”

Gore stopped the vehicle. The Jeep sat on the right-hand shoulder of the two-way road. “Now what?”

“Let’s all join hands,” instructed Cara Lee. The trio held hands. Bradit had done this before. “Danton, do you remember how you felt in your spirit after we made love in the double pyramid in Caral?”

“Yes, I’ll never forget that feeling.”

“Believe it or not, just by meditating you can experience almost the same thing,” explained Cara Lee. “I need you to recall that sensation now. Don’t be alarmed at anything that you’re about to feel. It will seem strange to you, but there is no danger. Just focus on your love for me and for all life.”

The three revolutionaries held hands in the Jeep, concentrating on spiritual matters. Cara Lee joined their three life forces together and augmented them with the cosmic energy flowing along the ley line directly beneath the vehicle.

They all continued the song; the words simply formed themselves in Gore’s mind.

They will come to us some day
From stars so far away
And our world will change forever
They’ll take all war, pain and hate
Before it is too late
And will turn them into laughter

Cara Lee began to chant. “Rada-Sata Ha. Rada-Sata Ha,” she intoned the names of the three letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Involuntarily, Gore joined in. The sound of the three chanting voices joined together in perfect harmony and ech-

oed down the eerily empty tunnel. Gore chanted louder and louder, his eyes half open. Slowly, he was aware of another consciousness inside his own.

“Welcome to Earth, Rada-Sata Ha,” Cara Lee greeted the extraterrestrial spirit.

Gore felt the ecstasy that he had felt two nights earlier after having travelled through the universe with Cara Lee during their cosmic sex.

“It is my pleasure to visit you,” Gore heard a voice in his mind; an observer outside the meditation circle would have heard nothing. Bradit and Cara Lee heard the same voice – that of Rada-Sata Ha – coming to them across millions of light years of space from the planet Om in the Shanti galaxy in the Galaxies of Love.

“How can I be of service to you, my beautiful Cara Lee?”

A pang of jealousy shot through Gore’s mind, but he did not allow it to distract him from the cosmic task at hand. Unseen to him, a smile quickly crossed Cara Lee’s lips.

“Rada-Sata,” Cara Lee began, “unfortunately we don’t have time for an extended visit. I just have one question for you of incredible importance. The life energy of more than fifty million beings depends on it.”

The extraterrestrial voice entered all of their minds simultaneously. “One of the atomic bombs is located in the garbage disposal facility on city level 135, Sector B, northwest quadrant. It’s in Building D. I’ll tag it with an energetic beacon that you can easily track, Cara Lee.” Rada-Sata could both detect the actual bomb and read Bush’s mind from across the universe. “The second one is under Beem Cheney’s bed in New Vegas. It’s hidden in the floor there.”

Gore was vaguely aware of a strange physical sensation and then realized that the three of them were levitating several

feet above the seats in the Jeep. In his mind, he heard Cara Lee's voice, "Thank you, Rada-Sata. Until we meet again!"

"It has been my pleasure." And he was gone.

The trio, still holding hands, slowly sank back down onto the seats. In his head, once again, he heard Cara Lee's voice, "Danton, Bradit is not hearing this. Did I detect some jealousy there?"

For the first time in his life, Danton Gore communicated with another human being telepathically. "No, not at all."

"Come, now, Danton. Every one of us felt it. Energy doesn't lie. Words do. There's no room for jealousy in the Caralite philosophy. Only for living in the moment and extreme enjoyment – whether it's one Earthling penis, or two Omian ones." She smiled, leaned over and kissed him lightly on the lips.

With a bit of difficulty, Gore dismissed all considerations of jealousy regarding his lover, turned the Jeep around and headed for the nearest vehicle elevator.

She-Huns Enter Las Vegas from the East

She-Hun Legata Mirra Suuna raised her submachine gun and gave a battle cry, "Halabamos Hunza!" Behind her, the cry was repeated by 50,000 She-Hun warriors, an awesome sound completely filling the walls of the gigantic sewer outfall pipe in which they stood.

Legata Suuna had reached her goal: the origin of the concrete effluent pipe connecting Las Vegas to Lake Mead through which she had marched her troops for the better part of the previous hour. Her tank rolled onto the floor of a cavernous collection chamber three city levels tall, 300 feet long and 300 feet wide. This chamber served as one of several main junction rooms for wastewater leaving the city, and was part

of a massive wastewater treatment facility that occupied one square-mile on city levels 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Standing on her tank fifty feet inside the chamber, Legata Suuna looked up. She saw forty smaller sewer pipes at a height of ninety feet above her. Water now trickled from their openings, ran down the walls and finally pooled on the floor. Looking down, she saw that there was hardly any standing water here – only about two feet. Ladders and catwalks lined the walls of the chamber, allowing access to the various outfall pipes that emptied into the room. She saw a large, metal door set into the base of the opposite wall of the room.

Legata Suuna climbed inside the small scorpion tank and closed the hatch. “Fire!” she commanded.

The main cannon unleashed its shell, which crossed the room and destroyed the large door in the wall there.

“Zenturias,” Suuna cried into her Hun-com, “battle plan Lick Bush, Phase I, completed!”

Bone-chilling screams and yells rose up from the tens of thousands of She-Hun troops, as they, their battle boars and their fighting vehicles flooded past Legata Suuna’s tank, sloshed their way through the collected wastewater and ran up the vehicle access ramp behind the now destroyed door. Suuna had confidence that her troops would fulfill their mission: enter and hold the city for approximately seven hours, at which time the other She-Hun forces would return to occupy Las Vegas. Nitra Khan had informed her that the broadcast of the subliminals had recently been interrupted, but the battle boars were very hungry and her warriors very blood thirsty – she was not concerned about resistance from the local populace.

Once on the ramp, the She-Hun forces advanced into all areas of the treatment facility and from there, into Las Vegas on multiple city levels simultaneously; She-Hun warrior and

battle boar screams were now being heard in Las Vegas for the first time in American history.

The Karlyle Baby – Mr. Majors

Danton Gore and Cara Lee stood in Building D of the abandoned garbage disposal facility on city level 135; they were close. Very close.

“It’s just in the next room,” said Cara Lee, eyes half closed, as she mentally tracked the cosmic energy beacon that was leading her to Mr. Majors, the illegal suitcase nuclear bomb.

Gore, Cara Lee and Bradit stepped through a doorway and looked into a huge room where dozens of mountains of industrial refuse such as metals, plastics and paper stood awaiting assortment. When this facility was operational, refuse was sorted here according to various criteria and then sent for burning or burial; nothing was recycled or reused.

“Cara Lee,” said Gore, “I hope you can find this damned bomb quickly. It would take dozens of people hours to sort through this mess.”

Bradit lightly tapped Gore on the shoulder and gestured for him to be quiet; he then returned his attention to the multiple entrances into the room. Even though they had not seen a soul within city blocks of this building, Bradit was ready for soldiers to enter at any minute.

“Rada-Sata Ha, Rada-Sata Ha,” Cara Lee sang her companion’s name. Gore joined in, offering his support. A smile crossed the Caralite’s face. She opened her eyes wide and confidently walked over to a large pile of scrap metal. “It’s in here.” She looked at Bradit and Gore. “Be careful, it’s already armed.”

Just then, Gore’s MFD sounded and Cronkite’s voice rang out, hysterically, “Danton! Danton! Come in Gore!”

“Gore here, Peter. What’s up?”

*

On city levels 10 through 15 in the eastern part of Las Vegas, thousands of Legata Suuna’s warriors roamed the relatively empty streets for this time of day. Gun shots rang throughout the city, as the She-Huns fired their submachine guns on and killed the unfortunate citizens who happened to be walking around near the invaders. The six-legged battle boars tore through the streets at incredible speeds for such large animals, easily running down unarmed pedestrians and greedily devouring them amongst shrieks of horror and spattering human blood.

Hundreds of She-Hun scorpion tanks, their characteristic anti-tank stinger weapon curled upward and behind the hull, rumbled around firing their main cannons into the fronts of the residential buildings that lined the streets. Female war cries reverberated off the facades of the residential buildings; the She-Huns were making a strong statement – stay indoors and capitulate. From behind curtained windows, citizens looked onto the streets in total fear; some of them spoke into their MFDs.

*

“Cronkite, what is it?” urged Gore, unsettled by the tone of the newscaster’s voice.

“I’m receiving hundreds of reports of She-Huns and battle boars attacking homes and people on the street at city levels 10 through 15, in the *eastern* part of the city. Strange looking She-Hun tanks have also been spotted.”

“East?” Gore asked himself quietly. “We only saw them

fighting at the south gate from the Skysurfer,” Gore said out loud, looking thoughtfully at Bradit and Cara Lee.

“I’m telling you, they’re on five levels in the northeast and southeast quadrants. It’s impossible to know exactly how many She-Huns have entered, but surely more are on the way. No one seems to know where they came from. Can you send a thorp over there?”

Gore continued to look at Cara Lee and Bradit in silence. *Think, Danton. How are they coming in at the eastern part of the city?* Then it hit him. “Cronkite, what sector are you getting your reports from?”

“From Sectors F and G. Seven miles out from the center square of the city.”

“Listen to me. I can’t send a thorp. We need Bradit with us and Kessar is busy fighting at the south gate. There is a massive water treatment facility over there. They must have infiltrated the city undetected through the sewer system from Lake Mead.” Once again, Richard Gore’s knowledge of the city’s infrastructure, which he had shared with his son years before on some innocuous occasion, now came to the aid of Danton Gore and the Free Vegas revolution. “I know it sounds crazy but I want you to immediately broadcast this message.” Gore rapidly gave the newsman instructions.

*

In the large wastewater collection chamber at city level 11, Legata Mirra Suuna stood on her scorpion tank, screaming orders to warriors all around her. The highly decorated field marshal-ess spoke into her Hun-com. “Queen Nitra, half of my troops have exited the main sewer pipe and have entered the city. I estimate that in another twenty minutes, all of my forces will have penetrated Las Vegas and will wreak havoc

and terror in the streets. So far, we have encountered no armed resistance whatsoever out there.”

“Excellent news, legata. I see a high-command post in the future She-Hun city of Hunza Vegas for you. Phase Three of Operation Lick Bush is well under way. We should have contact within ninety minutes. We’ll send you reinforcements after mission completion. Legata Uxian reports that she’ll have defeated the Defenders of the Light at the south gate completely within twenty minutes. We’ll coordinate your efforts inside the city then. Halabamos Hunza! Khan Out.”

Amid the incredible noise of troop movement in the wastewater chamber, Legata Mirra Suuna continued barking orders to nearby warriors and into her Hun-com. She was dimly aware that the sound of churning water seemed louder to her. Quickly, she gazed up at the openings of the sewer pipes in the walls of the chamber above her; she saw that where before wastewater had only been trickling from them into the room, it now flowed freely. She did not pay this too much attention, but somewhere inside her psyche, uneasiness began to stir.

The She-Hun leader screamed into her Hun-com, “All maneuvers, quadruple time!”

*

“This is an emergency order,” the voice of Peter Cronkite boomed out of millions of TV sets all over the city. “I have been instructed by Danton Gore, the acting leader of Free Vegas, to direct all citizens to run to your bathrooms. Run to your kitchens. Why? I’m not joking here, folks. Flush! Then flush again! Run the water in all the taps in your household. All sinks, showers and toilets. Anyone listening in industrial facilities, open all effluent valves to one hundred percent capacity. A She-Hun force of unknown strength has begun entering the

city through the main sewer system for an unknown amount of time. President Bush allowed them to breach the high security there in the pipe, designed to prevent just such an invasion. This was the fate he had in mind for us – to be enslaved by these ruthless, women barbarians. I say that’s really a bunch of bush! And what do we do with bullshit? We flush it away! Now, go do your duty!”

*

“Hurry up, you lazy Rekols! Move, move, mov—” Legata Suuna stopped in mid-sentence; she realized that the battle boars were now swimming in herds rather than trotting. “Come on! Schnell!”

The small scorpion tanks were plastered with female bodies, each one now carrying twenty warriors through the rising water. Those She-Huns who had to walk, strained against the hip-high, cold, murky wastewater in order to make their way across the chamber and gain access to the vehicle ramp on the other side.

Still standing on her tank, Suuna felt a rush of pungent wind on her face, her pony tail swaying back and forth across her back. The force of the breeze steadily increased; suddenly, a full-fledged wind blew her hair up and over her shoulder. She heard low rumbling noises emanating from the openings of the pipes in the walls above, as if locomotives were rapidly approaching her position. The unsettling noise echoed loudly throughout the massive wastewater junction chamber.

The She-Hun commander looked all around her. *What the Hunza is going on here?*

The wind on Legata Suuna’s face blew stronger. The rumbling sounds continued to grow in volume. She looked up at the forty pipe openings; each one gushed at full capacity.

Undercurrents tore through the rising water in the room, which now covered the hulls of the scorpion tanks completely, the thousands of women warriors who had been walking across the chamber forced to swim frantically. Standing on the hull of her tank, Suuna grabbed the main cannon with both arms; the water was pulling hard at her legs.

“Move out!” she screamed into her Hun-com; the driver put the tank in motion. As the tank crossed the chamber, the swirling, black water ripped her foothold, tearing her arms from the main cannon and plunging her into its undulating mass.

The legata struggled to swim up to the surface eight feet above the floor. She broke through and thrashed her head around wildly, trying to catch her breath. The She-Hun felt herself being sucked backward – back into the main sewer pipe that led to Lake Mead through which she and her forces had just come. Shrill screams of She-Hun warriors bounced off the walls as Suuna fought against the current – to no avail. Twenty thousand She-Hun troops still had not exited the main 20-foot diameter sewer outfall pipe, which now contained a raging river that coursed out of the collection chamber and towards Lake Mead.

Out of habit, Legata Suuna clutched at her necklace for strength and support – but it wasn’t there. As she was pulled under once again, she realized the bad omen visited upon her earlier in the day was now being fulfilled. With her last breath, she shouted, “Praise Hunza! Men, we keep them d—”

An American Revolution Rages On

Caralite Dan Kessar piloted the Skysurfer while simultaneously continuing to wage war upon the She-Huns several hundred feet below him at Military HQ, Las Vegas South. The

thorp had just eliminated his 500th enemy vehicle in the mere twelve minutes he had been doing battle since arriving from the TV studio. The Caralite had also managed to kill a thousand She-Hun foot soldiers and five thousand battle boars.

“Oooooooooommmmm!”

Unseen to the observer, a burst of cosmic energy generated in his thorp weapon shot forth from the airship. On the surface, the target Hun-Vee rolled to a stop. Inside it, thirty She-Huns had just been simultaneously vaporized by the awesome Omian technology; aside from its missing crew, the Hun-Vee remained physically and structurally in tact.

Kessar had established contact with the commanding officer of the Defenders of the Light, and was told that the remaining 9,000 American soldiers were now supporting Danton Gore and Free Vegas.

Inside a battle Hun-Vee, Legata Zilva Uxian observed the battlefield on various monitors on her battle bridge. She saw hundreds of wrecked and disabled Hun-Vees everywhere around the south city-gate building. Slowly she addressed her weapons officer, “Sister, what is going on out there?”

“I don’t know, legata. I’m unable to locate any source of extreme firepower in the American lines. Oh my Hunza! I just saw a unit of fifty sister warriors go up in a ball of smoke on monitor three. Their skeletons are lying bare-boned on the ground.”

Legata Uxian responded instantly, remembering her training well, “That wasn’t a ball of smoke, sister. That was a cloud of water vapor that came from their own bodies. There is a Hunza-damned thorp out there somewhere.”

“A thorp. You mean a Caralite? Why would there be a Caralite here?”

“I don’t know, but it’s clear we’re now in a no-win situation.” Legata Uxian opened a channel to all her warriors on

the battlefield. “Retreat! Immediate retreat! Pull back and regroup at the western edge of Lake Mead.” The field marshal-ess commanded her helmswoman to pull the Hun-Vee around and head south, out of Las Vegas. “What is the final count for my She-Hun warriors that got past the Americans and into the city?”

“About twenty thousand, my legata.”

Zilva Uxian grunted in acknowledgement as she hailed Queen Nitra Khan on her Hun-com to deliver the disappointing news.

*

Ten minutes after having repulsed the She-Hun attack at the southern entrance to Las Vegas, Dan Kessar landed the Skysurfer at Military HQ, Las Vegas North. He got out and ran into the north gate building, covered by its massive, clam-shell looking roof, where Gore, Cara Lee and Bradit stood next to the Jeep awaiting him; they had arrived with their deadly cargo, strapped into the rear of the vehicle, moments before. They quickly exchanged hugs of jubilation with Kessar – the campaign against the She-Huns was going very well city-wide and they had located the nuke, Mr. Majors.

“Now what, Danton?” asked Kessar hurriedly; he was amped up after his battle with the women warriors.

Gore addressed all three Caralites, thinking out loud. “It’s impossible to deactivate this H-bomb now. My gut tells me that Bush is going to blow it real soon. Dan, Ben, there is a mega-tornado approaching fast from the northwest – it’s about eighty miles from the center of the city. I’m sure it’s dangerous, but can we fly the Skysurfer in those conditions?”

Bradit answered Gore, “Yes. We can surf the front edge of the mega-tornado and greatly increase our speed.”

“That would be much better than driving this thing out of here,” Gore asserted, gently patting the bomb, deep in thought.

“Do it, Ben.” Cara Lee ordered Bradit, the senior of the two thors and the more experienced pilot.

Outside the city, the mega-tornado’s funnel wind speed was picking up to a typical velocity of 350 m.p.h.

*

“The future is green! The future is green!” Hundreds of citizens sang in unison, marching on foot and driving cars and trucks in the eastern part of the city to fight the She-Huns there. Peter Cronkite had been relaying Danton Gore’s supplications to take up arms and march on the southern and eastern gates to the city repeatedly during the previous hour.

The group of newly self-declared revolutionaries would soon meet up with thousands more to carry out battle. Lacking any organized strategy, the common will to defend their city from the She-Huns was all they needed to keep their spirits up.

Throughout the city, 25,000 members of Free Vegas marched alongside 500,000 civilian citizens of Las Vegas. Carrying weapons that ranged from sophisticated military pulse rifles among the Free Vegas contingent down to personal firearms, Molotov cocktails and even kitchen knives among the civilians, the members of this rag-tag group of revolutionaries were willing to lay down their lives to keep their city from the hands of both the She-Huns and President Bush.

“Look! Over there!” a woman pointed to a squad of twenty She-Huns, a scorpion tank and a few dozen battle boars a hundred yards away from her on city level 18. The revolutionaries broke into a run, charging their female enemies. This skirmish

would pit 300 Americans against less than two dozen She-Huns and their weapons.

As the two sides opened fire on one another and the battle boars claimed their first victim, one of the animals burst into a thousand bloody pieces. The woman looked around and located a Defender of the Light standing twenty yards away from her, his pulse rifle raised to the shoulder, already trained on another She-Hun target. She threw her Molotov cocktail at the scorpion tank and smiled thankfully – she had never thought that she would live to see the day where Defenders of the Light fought shoulder to shoulder with regular, working class people such as herself.

Hundreds of such skirmishes were taking place all around the eastern and southern sectors of the city. The 40,000 She-Huns who had managed to enter Las Vegas would never surrender; they still had tens of thousands of battle boars with them, as well as scorpion tanks, and would proudly perish inflicting as much damage as possible on their American enemies.

*

“This is Peter Cronkite, continuing with our minute by minute coverage of the Free Vegas Revolution, Day 1.” Cronkite sat in the studio, half a dozen monitors behind him showing images of fighting between She-Huns and Americans all over the city. One of them showed the thorp, Kessar, and his alien weapon vaporizing dozens of She-Hun warriors at once. “I’m speaking via MFD with Danton Gore. Again, Mr. Gore has declared himself the new leader of Free Vegas. The former leader, known only as Cloud Base, has not been heard from since Wednesday night, and is presumed dead or captured by the Bush administration.”

The image of Danton Gore appeared on the TV screen. Behind him, several Defenders of the Light could be seen carrying something towards the Skysurfer. Cara Lee stood on screen, next to him.

Cronkite continued, “So, Mr. Gore, I understand you have some rather shocking news for the people.”

“Yes, Peter. I want all of the American public to know about this.” The camera zoomed in on the group of soldiers behind Gore; a shiny silver object reflected light between their moving arms and legs. “That,” Gore pointed behind him, “is an atomic bomb. Specifically, a ten-kiloton, neutron-hydrogen bomb.”

Cronkite feigned shock; he already knew about the bomb. “But how can that be? No such weapons have existed for forty years.”

“I’m not really sure about all the details. What I do know is that this is an illegal, armed bomb that is designed for maximum radiation exposure and minimal structural damage. We found it on city level 135. Again, it is armed. President Bush plans on detonating it inside our own city limits. He wanted you,” Gore pointed into the camera, “every remaining citizen of Las Vegas, to perish along with the She-Huns today, no doubt blaming the blast on them afterwards.”

“What are you going to do now?”

“The Caralites,” Gore put his arm around Cara Lee, “have really come to our aid here today. Their thorp technology has already repulsed the She-Hun attack at Las Vegas South. One of the thorps is currently in the city at level 10 near Military HQ South aiding the Defenders of the Light and the citizens of Las Vegas fighting the She-Huns that managed to get into the city proper down there. With their aircraft, which you can see behind me, we will fly this bomb over the Grand Canyon and drop it in there.”

“Why there?” asked Cronkite.

“Peter, we have very little time and extremely limited options. The walls of the canyon will protect us from the explosion and hopefully contain much of the fallout. It is the best we can do right now. I call for the immediate arrest of President Bush under the laws governing high treason against the people.”

“Me too. Thank you very much, Danton Gore. And good luck. And God Bless you and our great country.”

“Thank you, Peter. I’ll thank my God – the cosmic energy – the Caralites and the Omians. You’ll all understand more about that after we win the revolution. The future is green!”

Gore kissed Cara Lee on camera. The film crew could be heard to be clapping in support. In the background, Bradit jumped out of the Skysurfer, giving Gore the thumbs up sign; the bomb was secured for travel.

Gore immediately entered the aircraft and gave a final goodbye wave to an on-board camera that had been installed inside the gondola.

The last image the TV viewers saw was from outside the Skysurfer, its wing shooting skyward, unfurling, and filling with wind as the strange craft lifted up into the stormy skies.

Well, I’ll Be Damned

It was approaching 1 p.m. The city-warming party for New Vegas was in full swing. The chairs and bleachers in the main square had been removed, and dozens of no-dance floors had been set up all over the square. Thousands of the world’s elite floated, jubilantly flailing arms and legs, no-dancing in the Bloomberg Fields. One man rose up 700 feet and landed on the giant nose of the statue of Bush, still moving his entire body to the rhythm of the music. He was immediately arrested

for dancing with his feet touching the ground. After nonchalantly bribing the policeman one month's salary, he returned to the celebration without delay.

The revelry on the balconies facing onto the air shaft had intensified, with blue and black ice aplenty and caviar burgers topped with Texas barbeque sauce being swallowed down by the minute.

The presidential VIP tent was full of the administration's family, friends and business partners. A large, private room had been set up in the corner of the tent, the entrance guarded by several Defenders of the Light. Bush and Cheney entered and sat at a table inside. The two sets of identical twins that had made the perilous journey from overseas at immense expense to the president awaited the two men. The stunning Dutch girls posed half-naked, providing eye candy for the two top politicians in the world, while the Brazilian girls played domination games with one another a few feet away.

"So, Negon," Cheney said as he retrieved a bottle of bourbon from a locked cabinet, "how did it go with Seeta last night? I assume you have christened your new bedroom in style?"

"Don't use that expression with sex. The good Lord will strike you down for that!"

"Oh, give it a break, Negon. We're celebrating today." Cheney sat down at the table next to Bush and poured out two shots of the liquor. "So?"

"So, what?"

"Seeta! How was she?"

"Oh, it was great! She nearly sent me to the hospital." Bush leaned in to Cheney for privacy and whispered, "I asked for an especially harsh beating given that I'm going to kill fifty-five million of my fellow Americans within a couple of hours."

“Good for you, Nekon! I’ll drink to that!”

The two men clinked their glasses together and downed the caramel brown liquid in one shot.

Bush coughed as the fire water passed down his throat. “What the heck is that, Beem?”

“Only the most expensive bourbon in the world. It’s a bottle of Evan Williams one-hundred-and-twenty-four-year-old Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey, worth five hundred thousand dollars. I’ve been saving it for a special occasion.”

“Girls,” Bush said to the four beautiful women, “I’ll give you a call in a bit.” He motioned towards the door, and the entertainment left the room. The president stood up and retrieved an item of his own from a different locked cabinet. He returned to the table, sat down and placed a small, white marble jewelry box down. Bush entered a five-digit security code in the electronic locking mechanism, and then slowly opened the ornate box. “And here’s a special little something that *I’ve* been saving for the appropriate occasion.”

Cheney looked inside and saw a whitish powder peppered with shimmering pinkish crystals. He looked at Bush quizzically.

“Pink Peruvian, Beem, from the 1970s. Ain’t it beautiful to look at? The best quality cocaine in the world then and now. One of my ancestors put it in the family safe back then and it has been passed down from generation to generation ever since.”

Bush took a crystal and placed it on the small mirror he kept in the box, chopping it into powder and then into fine lines with a pen laser-blade he also kept there. “And how was your sex last night, Beem? Did you tell her there was a nuclear bomb under the bed?”

“I didn’t tell her. But, believe me, I felt quite a man knowing it was there while I was banging the hell out of her!”

“Beem! Language, please!” Bush gave Cheney a quick stare. He withdrew a diamond-encrusted glass tube from the jewelry box, leaned over the table and snorted half of a rose-pink line. Tilting his head backward, he sucked air again in through his nostril. “Ahhh. Nothing like getting high old-school style, eh Beem?” Bush snorted the second half of the line through his other nostril. He held the small tube out to Cheney.

As Cheney took the tube, his MFD sounded. He spoke immediately, as he was expecting the call, “Go ahead, General Healy.” Five-star General Beem Cheney leaned over and snorted the first line of cocaine he had ever tried in his life.

“Sir?” a voice questioned from the MFD. “This is Major Burns at Jacob Lake. I don’t know any General Healy.”

Cheney hesitated for a second, leaned over, carefully snorted his second line and then said, “Go ahead, Burns.” He handed the tube back to Bush, sucking air in hard through both nostrils.

“Everything okay, sir?”

“Yes, major. What is it?”

“Well, General Cheney, I don’t quite know how to say this,” the sound of Bush taking his second line could be heard in the background, “but I have just seen on my radar screen that a massive armored column is on the move 40 miles southwest of my position. I can confirm that they’re She-Hun battle Hun-Vees.”

“What? Are you sure, major?”

“Yes, sir. I have triple checked my computer. There is a mega-tornado brewing to the northwest which has greatly reduced our long distance radar capabilities. I now confirm no less than twenty thousand Hun-Vees apparently going for New Vegas, approaching from the west, sir, running along the north rim of the Grand Canyon.”

“What’s he saying, Beem?” Bush asked in a drug-induced haze. “How the hell is that possible?” the president’s voice grew more aggressive. The fundamentalist Pentecostal president swore unrepentantly, the furor of battle now superseding his strict moral position regarding swearing.

Cheney held a finger up, requesting the president remain silent, “Standby for orders, Major Burns.” Cheney ended the call and thought hard for a few seconds. “Negon, somehow those warrior wenches have managed to get all the way to Jacob Lake undetected. General Healy must have been forced to report to us under duress. I think they’re going to engage us there at the base or head directly into the city. What do you want to do?”

Even though he was in a drugged stupor, Bush’s military mind remained sharp. He slowly said, “That lying bitch!” He paused to think a moment and continued, his voice rising, “Those lesbos think that with a surprise attack they can hit us head on and win? They’ve been drinking too much Rekol wine if they think they can do that with their 20th-century hardware.”

Bush leaned back and took in a deep breath. He let it out and gave instructions to Cheney, who relayed the president’s orders to the tank commanders at the Jacob Lake and New Vegas military bases on his MFD. Then, he poured a double shot of his 124-year-old Kentucky Bourbon for the president and himself.

After draining their shot glasses and snorting another line each, Bush said, “It’s time we christen the War Room here in New Vegas. I think one of the first acts to be completed there should be the remote detonation of Mr. Majors. Even if there’s not millions of She-Huns in Las Vegas as we had hoped and we don’t reap any real military benefit from lighting him up there, after we blame those lesbos for the nuclear explosion

and establish them as a heinous enemy, we'll never have to argue with the Men of Light again in order to get big defense budgets passed for fighting against them."

Cheney grunted in agreement as he made some calls to military leaders on his MFD. The two men stood up and hurriedly left the VIP tent.

Lake Mead

"Noooooooo! Hunza, why have you deserted us?" Legata Uxian screamed at the top of her lungs, surveying the apocalyptic scene in front of her from the bridge of her battle Hun-Vee. Hers was the first of those fleeing the Skysurfer and the thorp at Las Vegas South to reach the western shores of Lake Mead in order to regroup forces.

Her spirit had been shaken to its core. A huge stain of water wet the lake bed over an area of several square miles. All of the water had filtered down into the sandy soil, leaving behind its cargo strewn about everywhere: corpses. She-Hun corpses. Battle boar corpses. Thousands upon thousands of them – all dead from drowning.

Thousands of motionless scorpion tanks also lay haphazardly on the lake bed, as if toys thrown to the ground in boredom by a leviathan.

Sobbing loudly, the highly-decorated legata called her queen to deliver the terrible news.

Dangerous Delivery

"Danton, I can't do this alone!" The Skysurfer had been lurching in all directions unpredictably. "The turbulence is too much for me to manipulate alone. I'm measuring wind speed at four hundred miles per hour in the outer edges of the funnel cloud

of the mega-tornado to the northwest! We're harnessing wind velocities up to two hundred miles per hour at our present position and I'm not sure how much longer I can do it."

Bradit had been flying the Caralite craft for more than fifteen minutes – and it took concentration and expert meditation skills to control the Earth's atmosphere and maintain the protective, stabilizing bubble that surrounded the flying machine. But now, the sky's fury was too much for the Caralite to handle alone.

"Sit down in the other pilot's seat and sing along with me."

Danton Gore sat down, shaking slightly, and placed his hands on a double pyramid that stuck out of the control panel. Through the clear floor of the gondola, he could make out the ground amid swirling sands 1,000 feet below them. The neutron-hydrogen bomb was well secured in a small cargo area at the rear of the gondola, however, Gore did not know anything about the stability of such devices and whether the turbulence could set it off.

The airship dropped fifty feet in a single second; Gore's stomach shot up into his throat. He knew they had covered an incredible distance since having left Las Vegas. He also knew they were still thirty or forty minutes from their intended drop zone deep within the Grand Canyon.

"Take us there when times get rough, to those pyramids above, to the Galaxies of Love." Bradit sang the Caralite song while fighting with the controls of the Skysurfer.

"Take us there when times get rough," both men now sang together. *"To those pyramids above,"* Gore held onto the double pyramid, willing the storm to abate, funneling his mental energy and will to live into the cosmos, hoping this would give the ship the energy it needed to maneuver its way through the

turbulent air around them. *“To the Galaxies of Love! Take us there when times get rough ...”*

Preface to a Monumental Battle

Nitra Khan and Boota Bleeda sat in their command chairs on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee. Two protective rings, each of 50 Hun-Vees, formed a double circle around the huge battle vehicle, which had stopped its advance forty miles west of the planned battle field at the Kaibab and Walhalla Plateaus. From here, at the edge of radar range, the queen of the women warriors was looking forward to observing and directing the attack of her 30,000 Hun-Vees and their cargo of 60,000 scorpion tanks against the American armored forces of New Vegas. The news about the defeat at Las Vegas had unnerved both She-Huns, but that was already simply a battle statistic of the past.

Bleeda considered as she listened to the pings and pongs against the outside of the hull, rocks and desert debris being flung against the vehicle by the fierce, swirling winds outside. “How far away is the mega-tornado?” she asked the radar officer.

“Distance is forty miles due north to main funnel cloud of the tornado. There are at least twenty satellite tornados surrounding it. Winds are swirling at four hundred miles an hour and the tornado itself is moving erratically at fifty miles an hour along the ground.”

Khan asked, “Will it pass by here?”

“It is on a steady path to pass directly over New Vegas,” the radar officer leaned over, studying a collage of monitors in front of her. “We will get some high winds here from the general storm, but all funnel clouds should miss us by a comfortable distance to the north-northeast.”

A She-Hun approached the minstress of war and handed her a large bowl of popcorn; the plant was still grown all over the queendom of Hunzania. “Thank you, sister,” said Bleeda.

“Boota, you’re going to eat at a time like this?” asked Khan.

“Of course,” said the portly Bleeda. “We have passed years leading up to this event and the last week orchestrating this final battle, which will leave the Americans to live at our whim,” she smiled, popping a few pieces of the heavily battle-boar-buttered, fluffy, white, popped grain into her mouth. Watching the ten monitors mounted throughout the bridge, she leaned back in her chair, took a big handful of the classic American snack food and put her feet up onto a footrest. “Everything has gone better than could have been expected so far regarding the surprise attack against New Vegas. Let the show go on!”

Showdown at the Grand Canyon

American four-star General Albert J. Houston finished applying his black lipstick in front of his wordless tank crew. He closed his eyes and focused on the feeling of the silk fishnet stockings that pressed against his skin under his combat fatigues. Houston sang along at the top of his lungs, “*Better watch out, ’cause I’m a war machine!*”

The crew now joined their general, singing along with the voices of the Clear Channel clones of the legendary 20th-century band, Kiss, that blasted over the sound system inside the tank’s cockpit.

All 30,000 battle Hun-Vees were now fighting on the Kaibab Plateau, located just to the north of the Walhalla Plateau. The Walhalla Plateau ended in cliffs that dropped straight

down into three separate canyons: the Grand Canyon, Bright Angel Canyon and Nankoweep Canyon.

“Fire!” Houston commanded his gunner inside the tank.

Outside the tank, a Bushfire missile launcher mounted on the hull launched its first of ten weapons. Each of the ten-foot long missiles packed a devastating 100-pound explosive charge and employed a target-seeking technology that delivered its warhead to the weakest points in the enemy vehicle – air vents, armor plate joints, exhaust pipes. Even so, it took at least two direct hits to completely disable or destroy the largest of the battle Hun-Vees and its crew of warrior women.

“Yeah, baby!” yelled Houston as he watched the missile fly underneath a battle Hun-Vee and detonate there, blowing off most of the wheels on the left side of the target. “That’s the way we like it.” Another Bushfire missile leapt from the missile launcher, seeking the same Hun-Vee.

General Houston commanded two divisions of 10,000 Abrams M10-A10 tanks each, and was the senior field commander on the battlefield. His armored divisions, along with two others of equal strength, had come south from the military base at Jacob Lake to establish the western and northern fronts. An additional 40,000 M10-A10 tanks, stationed at the military base at New Vegas, defined the northeastern front. The women warriors were hemmed in between the three American armored fronts and the gaping divide of the Grand Canyon.

“Fire!” Houston’s tank fired its third missile, after the computer had located and locked onto a new target. “These bitches will never make it alive off of this plateau!”

In the first few minutes of battle, the American tanks launched more than 100,000 Bushfire missiles at the She-Hun enemy vehicles; twenty percent of the Abrams tanks carried the weapons. Smoke and flames dominated the viewing monitors of all the military vehicles involved in the battle.

Despite effective softkill and hardkill countermeasures such as jamming signals and anti-missile missiles and large-caliber machine guns, the She-Huns had suffered the loss of 5,000 battle Hun-Vees in the opening minutes of the conflict. Varying in size and crew number from twenty to 200, they lay in flaming, deathly piles of ruin all about the plateau. Hundreds of additional wrecks also burned – the American M10-A10s.

On the bridges of the remaining 25,000 Hun-Vees on the Kaibab Plateau, Nitra Khan's voice boomed out over the Hun-coms, "Now!"

The New Vegas War Room

The War Room at New Vegas, located under the New House of Light, was abuzz with activity. Scores of top military commanders and advisors shouted back and forth to one another, running here and there trying to keep tabs on what was happening over to the west on the Kaibab Plateau. A huge monitor on the wall represented the battle in real time as thousands of yellow lights pursuing thousands of red lights – yellow was American, red was She-Hun.

"General Houston, report!" commanded Cheney, who was seated at a table with Bush, Rice and a dozen other generals, just in front of the main monitor. The military leaders talked among themselves, tapping on keyboards and entering battle commands into quantum-drive computers that sat in front of them.

"Beem, we're kicking the shit out of these pagan lesbians," yelled Houston in the heat of battle. "I'd say we've already scored four or five thousand Hun-Vee kills, that's about a ten-to-one kill ratio for us. The rest of the Hun-Vee force has just high-tailed it south, thousands and thousands of them. They're crossing the narrow pass onto the Walhalla Plateau. They must

figure they have a better chance against us if they only have to engage us on one front. Up here on the Kaibab we have them completely surrounded, except to the south.”

Bush, veins popping out of his neck, screamed, “Albert, do you see the royal Hun-Vee anywhere?”

“No, Mr. President. I’ll let you know when I do. What are my orders, sir?”

“Take half your tanks and follow them onto the Walhalla. Drive them over the cliff edge into the Grand Canyon – we’ll use the oldest form of hunting there is!” Bush looked at Cheney, who nodded in agreement.

“Yes, sir!”

“General, make sure you launch all of your Bushfire missiles.”

“Yes, sir!”

Bush looked over to Cheney and said flatly, “We have to be good Christians here, Beem.”

“What do you mean, Mr. President?”

“I’m not saying that as the president of the United States. I’m saying that as president and CEO of HalliBush & Cheney. Each one of those Bushfires has already net our corporation one million dollars through production. Each replacement missile, another million.”

Cheney smiled, “A pleasant thought, indeed, Negon. But how is that Christian?”

“Beem, come on, didn’t you go to your bible study classes? Matthew 25:29, ‘For unto everyone that has, shall be given, and he shall have abundance!’”

“‘And from him that has not,’” chimed in Cheney, “‘shall be taken even that which he has!’” The vice president completed the quotation by heart, reached over and high-fived the president. Laughing, he added, “Like those poor bastards in Las Vegas, huh? What about Mr. Majors, anyway?”

“We’ll give it a bit more time, Beem.”

Women Wage War on the Walhalla Plateau

She-Hun Legata Deeza Cata stood on the bridge of her battle Hun-Vee. “Deploy magnetic smoke!”

Outside, thousands of Hun-Vees had just crossed the narrow approach onto the Walhalla Plateau from the Kaibab Plateau to the north. As the She-Hun vehicles continued moving south, their huge cargo bay doors opened and thousands of the small, quick scorpion tanks disembarked. Both the Hun-Vees and the scorpion tanks released tens of thousands of small canisters, which began to belch out a thick, orange smoke.

“How many American tanks are in pursuit?” Cata asked her radar officer.

“It looks like half the force, legata. The other half is holding a position just north of the Walhalla Plateau – they’re forming a defensive line across the two-mile wide access lane to it.”

“Excellent!”

Outside Cata’s Hun-Vee, despite the strong winds that swirled in every direction due to the close proximity of the deep walls of the three canyons that geologically defined the Walhalla Plateau, the orange She-Hun countermeasure smoke effectively blanketed the entire battlefield.

*

“General, sir!” Houston’s gunner was yelling to his commanding officer, panic in his voice.

“What is it, soldier?”

“Sir, my missile guidance radar screen has gone berserk. They never showed us anything like this during training.”

“What do you mean, your screen has gone ‘berserk’?”

“Sorry, sir. Please come have a look for yourself.”

Annoyed, Houston got up from his command chair and walked a few steps over to the gunner, stumbling as the tank lurched to the left. He looked at the radar screen, which registered hundreds of thousands of enemy targets on the battlefield.

“What the hell?”

“I don’t know, sir. We’ve been told there are a maximum of forty thousand enemy targets. The radar is showing phantoms.”

“Sir!” yelled the driver.

General Houston turned around and, before he could even ask the driver what he wanted, Houston saw on the main view screen that clouds of thick, orange smoke enveloped the entire plateau around them. He had never seen anything like it before. “Stop the tank!”

A second gunner studied his instruments intently as Houston pushed past him, opened the hatch and looked all around the tank outside.

Coughing, the commander quickly reentered the vehicle, “Damn, that stinks of sulphur.” He resealed the hatch.

“Sir,” the second gunner informed his general, “my readings indicate that the smoke is laden with some kind of magnetic particle. It’s completely jamming our navigational radar and missile guidance systems. We can only drive and fire weapons based on eye-ball observations.”

“Those clever wenches,” Houston reached inside the top of his combat pants to adjust the garter belt holding up his fishnets there, “I’ve got to give them some credit for that.”

General Houston gave the order to all tanks on the Wal-

halla Plateau to proceed with caution. Tanks were to triple-confirm targets before firing pulse cannons; he did not want to begin losing thousands of his tanks to friendly fire.

Almost immediately, General Houston started receiving panicked reports from dozens of his subcommanders in the field.

“Sir, I’ve just lost ten M10s to those scorpion-looking tanks!”

“General, I have visual on Hun-Vees. But those little fuckers have already scored twenty kills on my squad!”

“What the hell is going on out there?” Houston screamed to no one in particular. His crew was unable to give him information from the computers. The She-Hun smoke had completely crippled the Americans’ ability to electronically monitor the battle effectively.

“Fuck it!” Houston donned a gas mask and again climbed out of the tank to see first hand what was happening. The battle field was shrouded in orange smoke. Visibility was fifty yards – he glimpsed shadowy silhouettes of American and She-Hun vehicles speeding around in the smoky fog.

Houston watched in horror as a She-Hun scorpion tank sped towards an M10-A10 about forty yards away from his tank. He yelled down to his crew in the tank, “Those little bastard tanks have a flexible tail that sticks out of the rear of the hull. It curves up and back over the top of the turret where it looks like its holding some kind of explosive charge. I’ve never seen these scorpion-looking tanks before.”

The general watched as the She-Hun vehicle rammed its prey. The tail thrust forward, piercing the armor of the American tank and sticking its stinger bomb into a welded joint between two armor plates. Held in place by tiny metal barbs, the bomb detached from the tail of the scorpion tank as the vehicle sped away from its target in reverse, simultaneously

dropping ten new canisters of magnetic smoke. Three seconds later, Houston watched as the M10-A10 was torn apart by the twenty-five pound Hun-C explosive that had been planted on it.

The scorpion tank was already reloading its stinger with another explosive charge. Houston barked coordinates to the gunner inside his tank and watched with satisfaction as a Bushfire missile took out the She-Hun tank he had just been observing. As the general climbed back down into the tank, he saw a dark blur flash by his vehicle, lots of moving legs, a large cylinder tied under the silhouette's neck. He closed the hatch.

Once again inside the M10-A10, Houston removed the gas mask and commanded one of the gunners, "Put out a message to all division commanders: aside from the threat of those scorpion tanks, these bitches brought their kamikaze battle boars with them."

The Royal Hun-Vee

"Legata Cata, field report!" demanded Nitra Khan. Watching the main monitor on the bridge, she had been following the raging battle on the Walhalla Plateau, at the northern rim of the Grand Canyon, for the previous twenty minutes; the orange magnetic smoke had no effect on She-Hun radar.

"My queen, it's very hard to say. It is complete chaos up here. Based on the reports of my warriors, I would extrapolate that in all, our sisters have so far killed as much as half of the American M10-A10s. About thirty-five thousand of them. Since deploying the radar-jamming smoke, we have been taking heavy losses, but not as bad as the Americans. I estimate a third of our Hun-Vees and maybe half of our scorpions. These are not all KIAs; many of our sisters abandoned disabled ve-

hicles and are fighting on foot or have boarded other battle Hun-Vees.”

“We knew losses would be heavy, Deeza. Keep your warriors in high spirits! Men, we keep them down!”

“Of course, my queen. Halabamos Hunza!”

Khan turned to Bleeda, “That’s two hundred and fifty thousand of our sisters dead up until now, Boota.” The queen of the She-Huns went silent.

Bleeda put down her empty bowl of popcorn. “Come, Nitra. They have died in a holy Hunza war against men. And they have taken many of the enemy swine down with them. Their souls will rejoice at Hunza’s palace once we have added the city of New Vegas to our queendom. We’ll find a way to defeat the thorp warrior in Las Vegas. After that, the conquest of the rest of America will be relatively casualty-free.” Bleeda looked at her queen encouragingly. “Now, let us go and pray!”

Bleeda stood up, as did Khan. As they left the bridge, Khan called Professor Wrijinn on her Hun-com, “Sister Wrijinn, how are the Titanas doing?”

“Right on schedule, my queen. They are digging very well.”

“Excellent work,” praised Khan. “Now, please come join us in the bridge-temple.”

The two She-Hun commanders walked past two guards, entering the sacred prayer house next to the battle bridge. “Halabamos Hunza!” Khan and Bleeda prayed together, standing before an eight-foot tall statue of the two-headed, four-faced She-Hun goddess.

They watched in silence as the high She-Hun priestess, Cooba, sat on top of the captured American soldier from the agritube attack, Corporal David Hings. They were engaging in ritualistic sex on a pallet at the foot of the statue. Wisps of her blood-red hair hanging down from the bun on top of her

head, sweat glistening on her naked body, the small figure of Hunza on her necklace swinging about wildly, Cooba slapped Hings as she climaxed. Several seconds later, Hings came. He looked exhausted; he wore an expression of contented resignation on his face, having just passed his second sexual test with Hunza.

Professor Wrijinn entered the temple as the She-Hun high priestess was declaring the good news.

“He has done well yet again!” Cooba informed her queen, lightly patting Hings’s face. “That bodes very well for our warriors on the battlefield.”

Walhalla Plateau

Amid tens of thousands of burning wrecks spread out over every square mile of the Walhalla Plateau, twenty engineering Hun-Vees made their way out of the melee towards the northwest edge of the plateau. Thick black smoke from burning wrecks mixed with the She-Hun orange radar-jamming smoke provided plenty of cover for the large vehicles to slip away unnoticed. Thousands of scorpion tanks began to fall in line behind them.

Moments later, the engineering Hun-Vees were parked along a one-mile stretch on the northern border of the Walhalla Plateau, Bright Angel Canyon opening up before them.

“Fire!” Khan’s voice rang out on the bridges of the engineering Hun-Vees. Large rockets shot forth from the vehicles, each one pulling six, four-inch diameter cables of Hunzonium, a high-strength metal amalgamate, behind it. The head of each rocket embedded and then dug itself deeply into the earth on the north side of the 1,500-foot wide gorge, its Hunzonium cables trailing behind and spanning the 2,000-foot deep canyon.

Immediately, millions of Golden Orb Web spiders, genetically modified to be even bigger and faster than their DNA ancestors, piled out of each Hun-Vee and began spinning webs between the six suspended cables carried across the gorge by each rocket. A mere ten minutes later, thousands of miles of web as strong as Kevlar had been spun. Twenty bridges, each one capable of handling millions of pounds of weight, now crossed the canyon between the Walhalla and Kaibab plateaus. A force of 30,000 scorpion tanks, accompanied by several thousand of the smaller battle Hun-Vees, began to cross the spider-web-Hunzonium bridges north to the Kaibab Plateau. The remainder of the She-Hun force fought on the Walhalla Plateau; thick clouds of orange-black smoke swirling about everywhere.

The New Vegas War Room

“General Cheney! Come in, General Cheney!” armored division commander General Houston’s voice bordered on hysterical.

“Cheney here. What is it, Albert?”

“These damn lesbian feminists are kicking our manly asses!” Houston reached into his combat pants and adjusted the garter strap on his left leg. “I don’t know who you’re paying for intelligence, but they haven’t done their fucking job lately. I haven’t seen any of these She-Hun technologies before. I have lost contact with ninety percent of my division. Most of the other division commanders are reporting heavy losses. We can’t see a god damned thing out here and we’re on radar black out. I think we’re down to about five thousand M10-A10s out here on the Walhalla Plateau. I advise we pull back north and regroup!”

Cheney answered without hesitation, “Confirm! Pull back

and regroup with the other forty thousand tanks on the Kaibab Plateau. Reinforce that front at the two-mile wide access lane between the two plateaus. Pin them in to the south of the front, and we'll starve them out down there on the Walhalla. Move out immediately!"

"Yes, sir!"

Cheney looked over at Bush and let out a sigh of uncertainty. Bush's face also reflected confusion and frustration. Sadina Rice had now joined the two men at the conference table. The secretary of defense looked at both men without saying a word; her expression of consternation spoke tomes.

Main Atrium, New Vegas

"Great! Carl, that's great," the CFO of BushCoke stood next to the deputy director of the Department of Homeland Security on a terrace facing the main air shaft of New Vegas. "I'll put you in for ten thousand shares at ten thousand a piece." The CFO had just brokered a deal with the government official based on illegal insider information, and had made himself a cool four million dollars in fees in a matter of seconds – the equivalent of more than 350 years' earnings at minimum wage. The deputy director would make twenty million in less than a week, when the stock price was guaranteed to rise.

Standing next to the two men, their wives were busy sealing a deal with a third man, a private equity broker, who was guaranteeing them a thirty percent annual return on a minimum investment of ten million dollars.

"And where will you invest our money?" asked the wife of the BushCoke CFO, simply making conversation.

"You don't need to worry your pretty little head about that unpleasant little detail; I promise you'll get your return. Legally," the man lightly cupped her left buttock. She smiled

half-drunk, having already forgotten her question, took his glass and worked her way over to the bar to get him a refill of champagne made from grapes grown in her private agritube.

“What the hell is that?” the private-equity man asked the wife of the Homeland Security official, still standing next to him. A reddish, four-winged insect had landed on his arm; the Americans had failed to detect the Titanas digging in the soils around New Vegas since they had been released through the tubes lowered down from the magno-oil tankers hours before. He swatted the thing off.

“What?” asked the woman.

The private-equity man watched as the procto-dragonfly flew off of his arm, downward and then disappeared behind him. Instantly, the man let out an ear-splitting shriek, clutching at his buttocks. It was too late. The most modern She-Hun living weapon had already chewed through his trousers, entered his anus, shot out its lubricating liquid, worked its way six inches into his body and released its deadly neurotoxin. The woman was now kneeling over the man; he lay inert on the ground. She screamed hysterically – she was looking at and feeling someone else’s real pain for the first time in her life, unable to switch the TV channel. She never saw the flying insect that would end her own life; she did feel it.

Thousands of festive open-air balcony parties just like this one were raging on all around the main atrium, and, indeed, all over the dozens of other smaller air-light shafts throughout the city of New Vegas.

In the Skysurfer

“My God, look at that!” Gore exclaimed to Bradit, who sat beside him in the gondola of the Skysurfer. General storm conditions in their vicinity had subsided significantly over the

previous half hour and visibility had increased greatly. Danton Gore looked in awe at the scene he saw on the distant horizon twenty miles to his north and east.

Bradit looked and remained speechless; he saw the main mega-tornado funnel cloud stretching more than 4,000 feet from its cumulonimbus home downward to the Earth's surface. Two dozen smaller, yet still impressively large, satellite funnels travelled alongside the main twister. Such storm systems were notorious for changing course up to fifty miles in any direction in a matter of only a few minutes' time.

Gore returned his concentration to the mortal-consequences task at hand: the safe dispensing of the nuclear bomb on board into the Grand Canyon. Holding on to the double pyramid on the control panel, he sang in unison with Bradit, *"Take us there when times get rough, to the Galaxies of Love ..."*

"To those pyramids of love!"

Cosmic energy flooded into the Skysurfer and the bubble that surrounded it, maintaining the airship aloft.

The New Vegas War Room

Sadina Rice exclaimed, "Look!" She pointed to the main monitor on the wall. "The smoke is clearing on the Walhalla Plateau. We can see some of the enemy tanks again." On the monitor, red lights began reappearing on the map of the battlefield. "And they're moving fast!" The red lights moved to the north in real time. "But, what the hell is that?"

Cheney noticed it too. Tens of thousands of red lights now showed on the map of the Kaibab plateau, to the north and west of the American line across the access lane to the Walhalla. "Negon, look at that!"

Bush looked at the main screen; he clearly did not under-

stand what he saw there. The other monitors showed live video feeds coming from American tanks for the first time since the orange smoke had been released.

“Houston, report!” commanded Cheney.

“General Houston here, sir.”

“Albert, what the hell is that to the north and west of your position?”

“I know, general. I just saw them. I thought those bitches were only to the south, trapped on the Walhalla. But then I discovered my radar was damaged from the exposure to that orange smoke shit earlier in battle. It’s still not completely functional. Can you tell me how many tanks are there, sir?”

“Albert,” the seriousness of Cheney’s voice immediately disconcerted Houston, “I estimate thirty thousand scorpion tanks and five thousand Hun-Vees approaching from your western flank at a distance of only two thousand feet.”

“That’s ridiculous, Beem. Where the hell could they have come from?”

“Albert,” said Cheney, “I have no idea. But they will be engaging you in thirty seconds.”

Bush now understood what was happening. He stood up at the conference table and encouraged Houston, “Albert. This is the president. May God be with you! Fight well! And, Albert,” Bush added with absolute conviction in his voice, “any tank crew that retreats from this battle will be punished by death as a traitor.”

“Yes, sirs!” Bush, Cheney and Rice heard the song lyrics “...*Let the motherfucker burn, burn motherfucker burn!*” blasting from inside General Houston’s tank as he ended the communication.

President Nekon Bush slammed his fist down onto the table, upsetting a cup of BushCoke he had been drinking. “God damn it!”

Sadina Rice now looked at Bush as does an enraged mother at her naughty child. “Looks like Nitra Khan might just get us good. She didn’t castrate you with her She-Hun scissors, but she might as well have as far as your political future is concerned.”

Bush and Cheney both looked at Rice flabbergasted; this woman had never spoken in such a tone to either of them. Now that she was officially the secretary of defense, it was evident that she would flex her political muscle much more than ever before.

Before Bush could react to Rice’s comment, Cheney changed the channel of the main TV monitor at the head of the table, after having quietly taken a call on his MFD.

“Lord have mercy!” exclaimed Bush, as he and the other two most powerful multi-billionaire politicians in the world watched a surreal scene of widespread death occurring in the place that was built to physically symbolize the height of American political, social and economic power and domination – the main city square of New Vegas.

On the monitor they saw, amid clouds of loudly buzzing, swarming red procto-dragonflies, tens of thousands of the New Vegas elite lying dead on the ground. Tens of thousands more jumped around wildly, dropping their cocktail glasses and clutching their buttocks before falling motionless to the ground. Tens of thousands of others were fleeing in all directions toward the exits that led off the square, covering their anuses while being pursued by the sinister She-Hun living weapons.

A procto-dragonfly landed on the broadcasting camera lens, although its image was quite blurred, it was clear that this was a large, fierce-looking insect.

“Jesus Christ! What the fuck are those things?” Bush was

so upset, he actually took the Lord's name in vain and used the king of curse words in the same sentence.

"I have no idea, Negon." Cheney stood up.

"Neither do I," added Rice, who was no longer upset by Bush's military shortcomings that day, but who had now become terrified for her life by the multi-pronged She-Hun attack that was unfolding before them.

"Look, Negon," Cheney addressed the president sternly, "we can't risk staying here until we find out what those insect things are. They're probably all over the city. We have to get the hell out of here right now. As the vice president, I'm going to execute Operation Bail Out." He looked deep into the president's eyes, who nodded in affirmation. Cheney took Bush's arm and turned to lead him from the room.

Bush sighed as he resignedly looked one last time at the monitors around the War Room. They now showed death in New Vegas and an impending battle of uncertain outcome on the Walhalla and Kaibab Plateaus, where only an hour before they had been displaying images of the might of the American military squashing the She-Huns and the president giving his historic welcome speech to New Vegas. "I'll get that bitch if it's the last thing I do!" Bush screamed. All one hundred people in the War Room fell silent at once.

Cheney made a hurried call to a special unit whose singular task was to get the president to safety during a national emergency.

"Execute Operation Bail Out!" Cheney yelled out the command in a loud voice.

Vice President and General of the Army Beem Cheney led his president out of the room without a word to anyone. Behind them strode Secretary of Defense Rice and a handful of high-ranking generals and members of the intelligence agencies. As they were leaving, tens of thousands of small orange

lights appeared on the map of the Walhalla Plateau behind them, appearing in clusters in front of the northerly advancing She-Huns – the kamikaze battle boars had just been released en masse from the cargo holds of the battle Hun-Vees.

Kaibab Plateau

General Albert Houston sat motionless in his M10-A10 tank, staring, mind numb, at the floor; his face was ashen, his mouth hung open in total disbelief. He had just led a small unit of ten tanks against a bigger force of Hun-Vees and scorpion tanks. All of his remaining tanks on the western front had been destroyed by the Hun-C bomb-stingers of the scorpion tanks.

From the south, the main force of Hun-Vees and their kamikaze battle boars had pounded the Americans, defeating them completely; less than 1,000 American tanks remained; several thousand Defenders of the Light, having fled their M10-A10s, fought on foot in unorganized desperation.

Four-star General Albert Houston's tank sat fifty yards from a cliff that dropped 500 yards straight down into the Nankowep Canyon. He was down to his last Bushfire missile; he had no pulse ammunition left for either the tank's main cannon or its mounted machine guns.

"Orders, sir?" requested the driver.

"Change the music. I want to hear Clear Channel AC/DC song number 88."

The gunner put on the music. The four-man crew watched the main monitor; two of the largest-class battle Hun-Vees and four scorpion tanks were closing in fast on the M10-A10 from a distance of one hundred yards. Looking his general straight in the eye and receiving the slightest of nods, the driver steered the tank at full throttle straight towards the largest Hun-Vee.

"What are you doing?" screamed the gunner.

The lyrics and heavy metal music of General Houston's favorite song blasted throughout the cockpit, adding to the confusion.

"I'll be damned if my family jewels end up around the neck of some She-Hun bitch!" Houston answered the gunner, speaking the driver's thoughts. He turned to the second gunner and said, "On my command, launch our last Bushfire!"

"Negative, general. I'd rather take my chances as a prisoner then commit suicide going after those Hun-Vees."

"What? How dare you—"

A huge explosion ripped through the hull and cockpit of the tank, cutting off Houston's words; a She-Hun 120-mm shell had just scored a significant hit.

Houston picked himself up off the floor, miraculously uninjured. As he looked around the smoke-filled cockpit of the now motionless tank about to give an order, he realized that his three soldiers were all dead. The M10-A10 was only twenty yards from the largest Hun-Vee.

The American general threw the driver's body from his seat, sat down there and hit the throttle full. The tank lurched forward again. Leaning over to the weapons console next to him, Houston tapped commands into the keyboard with one hand. Above the hull, the last Bushfire missile was locked and loaded.

Houston, at the top of his lungs, sang along with the high, gravelly voice of the infamous 20th-century AC/DC singer, finally facing the truth about himself, *"I'm on the highway to hell...my friends are gonna' be there too..."*

As the M10-A10 fired its last missile at point-blank range, Houston screamed his final words, along with those of the infamous Australian band, in rapture, *"I'm on my way to the promised land..."*

The Bushfire detonated, igniting the gasoline from the

M10-A10 as its charge exploded; Houston's tank went up in a massive fireball, taking half of the She-Hun lives on the target Hun-Vee along with his own.

*

On the Kaibab Plateau, Legata Deeza Cata was ecstatic. The biggest battle against the American patriarchy in Hunzanian history had just ended. The She-Huns were the victors. The scorpion tank crews had performed perfectly, destroying two-thirds of the much larger and more powerful American M10-A10 tanks. The battle Hun-Vees and the kamikaze battle boars had finished off the rest. But the price had been high. Only 15,000 Hun-Vees and 15,000 scorpion tanks had survived the day's carnage – more than half a million She-Huns had given their lives for Hunza. Another half a million souls had given their American lives for the sake of “freedom” – the private equity and corporate control of the world through its main manipulators and benefactors, U.S. President Negon R. Bush and the additional five percent of the country's population that lived in New Vegas.

Standing on a small balcony that led off of the bridge of her battle Hun-Vee, Legata Cata yelled down to some warriors standing outside their scorpion tanks below, “Halabamos Hunza!”

“Halabamos Hunza!” responded the women warriors looking up at their commander, who disappeared back inside the Hun-Vee.

All over the Kaibab and Walhalla Plateaus, She-Huns yelled slogans such as “Hunzania forever!” and “Men – we keep them down!” to one another, making the castrating scissors gesture with their middle and index fingers. The sounds of traditional Hunzanian battle songs drifted across the plateaus,

women warriors singing along as they stood outside their vehicles in circles around opened barrels of Rekol wine, swilling down the greenish stuff from large goblets, eating cold roasted Rekol beetle meat by the handfuls. Women danced and kissed one another everywhere.

With religious-political fervor and plenty of victory shouting, She-Huns bearing the rank of zenturia and higher bent over American corpses and climbed into M10-A10s to claim their gruesome war trophies – male genitals – to be dried, shrunk and then worn on their necklaces.

Deeza Cata returned to the bridge of her Hun-Vee after having collected several war trophies herself. Although she had wanted to wear four-star General Houston's penis on her necklace, she had had to settle for a two- and a three-star general's genitals. She checked the progress of the mega-tornado to the north and east; it was no longer a threat to them.

Outside the Hun-Vee, the She-Hun victory celebration raged on for miles in every direction, lyrics sung in the Hunzanian tongue rising up through the air to the tune of Beethoven's Ode to Joy:

Hunza led us to this triumph
We're the victors, not the men
Pagan over patriarchy
First time since all time began
Sisters we will stand together
Hunza's love has made us strong
All world's women, sister She-Huns
We'll show the men where they belong
Where they belong
Where they belong

Operation Bail Out

Beem Cheney yelled into his headset, “All systems go!”

Sadina Rice and Negon Bush were strapped into the cockpit next to the general of the army, both fully outfitted for orbital space travel in the Virgin-Galactic-built SpaceShipTen. The three Americans had reached their escape airship through a heavily guarded, secret tunnel that led from the New Vegas War Room to the launch site. The ten high-ranking military and intelligence officials that had fled with the president moments earlier were already en-route in a tank convoy to the Presidential Emergency Operations Center that had been built in a fortified underground bunker fifty miles northwest of the city.

Behind the clear faceplates of their space helmets, all three politicians sobbed wordlessly as they watched the monitors on the control panel; images of city-wide death at the hands of the She-Hun flying insects appeared on them. The three statesmen realized that in order to fulfill their governmental duties there was simply no time for them to save any of their immediate or extended families living in New Vegas.

“Ignition!” screamed Bush in anger and frustration – and in mortal fear for his deeply religious, spiritually vacuous life. The main engine of the spacecraft exploded to life in the launch silo.

Bush pulled himself together and yelled above the roar of the engines in the cockpit. “What about the storm winds out there? Won’t that mega-tornado throw us around like a toy plane?”

“We should be okay,” assured Cheney, “our launch window is open for another two minutes. Besides, I’ll take my chances with the alternative being one of those dragonfly-looking things working its way up my poop chute!” Cheney

looked to his left and into Bush's eyes. "Thanks for breaking protocol and allowing the vice president to fly along with the president in this situation, Nekon. I really want to be with my best friend right now."

"Me too, Beem."

The two men smiled warmly at one another.

The airplane-spaceship shot out of its tube and entered into the bumpy airspace over New Vegas, heading south. A mere 120 seconds later, they levelled off at an altitude of 400,000 feet above sea level; they shot into low-Earth orbit there at a velocity of more than Mach 23.

Holding back tears of sadness and disappointment, Rice observed in wonder, "My God, it's beautiful!" She had never been in orbit of the planet before. "Look at the curvature of the Earth."

"Pretty amazing, isn't it?" Cheney said knowingly; he had been up five times in his life, but never on an escape run.

Bush, who had been up twenty times before, singularly for diversion and at a cost of 500 million dollars per launch to the American taxpayers, yelled in anger, "Damn those lesbian feminists! Look at that!" He was studying the plume of black smoke rising from the wreckage-strewn battlefield at the north rim of the Grand Canyon, which was clearly visible to them eighty miles below.

"Nekon, someone is sending us a message on a non-military frequency," Cheney informed the president. "I don't know who it could be. No one knows we're up here. Should I patch it through to our main computer?"

"Go ahead." Bush took the call.

"Hello, Nekon, you little piss ant. So, tell me, how does it feel to get raped?" a slightly-accented She-Hun voice speaking excellent English rang out in the cockpit of SpaceShipTen. "I've been waiting to feel like this since I was fifteen years

old. Your army has been smashed on the Walhalla and Kaibab Plateaus. Obviously, we're aware of that little launch from New Vegas a few minutes ago, so I'm guessing that the people there were experiencing extreme anal discomfort." She paused, laughing heartily, waiting for a response. There was none.

Khan continued, "You listen to me, you little fuck, New Vegas is mine – I'll give the procto-dragonflies another hour, and then we'll cross the minefields in the path behind our battle boars and enter the city. You can't go back there."

Bush burst out, screaming, "You She-Hun shithead—"

"Oooh. Such strong language from a chosen man of God such as yourself?" goaded Khan.

"Gloat all you want, you lesbian wench. Your victories are for nothing. When this is over, every red-blooded American will want your hide!"

"Right now, every one of them wants *your* hide," retorted Khan. "You just got your ass kicked by a bunch of women. Your political career is over, not to mention your manhood. By tomorrow I'll be back in Hunzania after having taken your beloved city of the elite. I'll be making love to Vera Dan, who's already the co-mother of my daughter, the heir to the rapidly expanding queendom of Hunzania. She'll gladly dance upon your grave!"

Bush's face burned red. After several seconds of silence in the cockpit, he asked, barely controlling his anger and contempt, "Where are you, Khan?"

"Right, like I'm going to give you my position, Neggie, so you can send a thousand Bushfire missiles after me."

"It's not that. I know you must be somewhere near New Vegas so just have a look out of your window and watch the show. I'll be the American hero that triples the defense budget and hunts you down like a Free Vegas terrorist to pay you back

for what you're about to do with your despicable She-Hun nuclear weapons!" Bush ended the communication, grinning maniacally.

On the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee, Khan turned to Bleeda and asked, "What the Hunza is that desert roach talking about?"

*

Danton Gore and Ben Bradit continued singing the Caralite song *The Galaxies of Love* in the gondola of the Skysurfer, which was finally approaching its destination – a bend in the Grand Canyon that ran far to the north of the general east-west orientation of the gigantic gash in the Earth's surface. Given the winds from the northwest and its geographical location, this part of the canyon would provide the greatest degree of protection from radioactive fallout for both Las Vegas and New Vegas. Danton Gore was unwilling to inflict harm on the residents of the new super-elite city; morally and spiritually despicable as he felt them to be, he could not knowingly murder civilians.

"We will be at the drop site in one min—"

Bradit's voice was cut off as a massive wall of wind slammed into the Skysurfer. Gore involuntarily screamed in panic, as he felt the ship tear through the air, out of control.

"Concentrate, Danton!"

Suddenly, both Gore and Bradit felt a strong, comforting presence in their psyches – Rada-Sata Ha. The Omian had decided to check in on the airship from across the universe at just the right time.

Immediately, the ship stabilized – having just been blown three miles to the east of its position only seconds earlier. The Skysurfer now hovered motionless, 500 feet directly above

Bright Angel Canyon. Rada-Sata Ha's presence left the Sky-surfer.

"Damn! What a ride!"

"Yeah, that was a pretty rough one even for me," responded Bradit, "and believe me, I've flown in some pretty severe stuff."

"Holy shit!" Gore was looking down onto the Walhalla and Kaibab Plateaus. The flames that engulfed the larger Hun-Vees there leapt upwards 150 feet above the ground. Tens of thousands of columns of black smoke rose from the burning wrecks of Hun-Vees, scorpion tanks and American M10-A10s, joining together into massive, swirling pillars of smoke higher up in the air, where they were blown to the southeast by the winds at the leading edge of the mega-tornado storm system.

Bradit studied the plateau and the Grand Canyon below him, one of the seven natural wonders of the world displaying nature's beauty and awesome power, now transformed into a colossal graveyard. "It looks like the She-Huns have won. What do you think?" He pointed to the east, to the northwestern edge of the Walhalla Plateau. "Do you see those She-Huns over there?"

Gore followed Bradit's finger and saw a group of Hun-Vees positioned in a circle, hundreds of women dancing and celebrating around it. "Well, I don't see a single American tank intact. It looks like the She-Huns picked a fight with the Defenders of the Light out here on the open plateaus and kicked some serious ass," he observed.

Danton Gore continued to survey the plateaus below him to the east. He still could not detect a single surviving American tank. What he could see, however, were thousands of clearly functional Hun-Vees stretching away to the horizon.

*

Still strapped into his co-pilot's chair in the cockpit of SpaceShipTen, President Nekon Bush forced himself to remain calm as he inhaled a crystal of black ice. The ship was speeding towards New London, Mexico, located some 1,400 miles south of New Vegas near the old city of Acapulco. Bush, Cheney and Rice would initiate an orbital path that passed directly over the city; one revolution of the Earth would take them ninety minutes.

The mood in the ship was melancholy. Bush stared out the window, overwhelmed; his sons and senile father, George H. W. Bush III, had surely died a horrible death in New Vegas. His life's work had just disintegrated into nothingness in the space of only a couple of hours. "My dream city is done for," he spoke in a soft monotone, addressing no one in particular. "My family's genetic, financial and political dynasty has ended." Suddenly, he screamed, enraged, pounding his fist on the control panel in front of him, "I'll be damned if those She-Hun bitches will ever spend even one second in my elite city!"

Just then, a woman's voice sounded inside his ear, the surgically implanted nano-chip bomb detonator following its voice programming, "Mr. President, sir, we'll be out of detonation range in one minute."

Amid the multitude of his thoughts, Bush felt an unfamiliar presence in his mind, which dissipated after only a few seconds.

*

Ben Bradit looked up from the battle scene and surmised to Gore, "So, Nitra Khan double-crossed Nekon Bush before he

could blow up his nuke and kill the She-Huns in Las Vegas, double-crossing her?

“I guess so. And that brings up a difficult decision,” mused Gore. “I don’t know if I can drop this bomb here knowing that all these She-Huns will die a terrible death—”

“Danton!” Cara Lee’s voice screamed inside Danton Gore’s head. “Get rid of the bomb. Now! Don’t hesitate! I finally managed to get into Bush’s mind and I’m talking about seconds here.”

“I don’t...” Danton Gore was hesitating. Ben Bradit was not; he had also heard Cara Lee’s voice in his mind.

The Caralite had already stood up from his pilot’s seat and run to the rear cargo area. The Skysurfer lurched to the left and began to lose altitude. Gore instinctively continued singing the cosmic song, holding onto the co-pilot’s steering double pyramid on the control panel. He managed to maintain the airship more or less in a stable hover.

Bradit quickly leaned over the cargo-loading door and worked several levers to get it open. The airship lurched again. Bradit lost his balance backwards and slammed against the wall. The precious seconds passed, Bradit unable to get to the bomb and release it.

Suddenly, Bradit felt the calming presence of Rada-Sata Ha all around him, and the aircraft stabilized once again. He jumped over to the large, silver suitcase and released the lock holding it in place on a conveyor belt next to the cargo hatch. Squatting, he leaned over and heaved the American weapon of mass destruction with his hands and shoulder. The neutron-hydrogen suitcase-bomb rolled off the belt and began its free-fall; it would reach the floor of Bright Angel Canyon in fifteen seconds.

Bradit ran back to his pilot’s seat, and sped the Skysurfer to the southwest, towards Las Vegas, gaining altitude while

soaring on the flank of the storm system's southeasterly blowing winds. Cosmic energy also aided its flight, firing the ship's nuclear photonic engine as it accelerated away from the Grand Canyon.

*

Vice President Beem Cheney turned his head and looked over at President Nekon R. Bush; Sadina Rice was strapped into the center seat between the two men. Bush looked Cheney in the eye. Cheney slowly nodded to Bush in approval; this moment having finally arrived, the vice president's mind went numb, as he failed to comprehend the implications of what they had done up until now, and what they were about to do.

Rice looked at both men, bewildered and sad. She was crying again, still thinking of her family and the procto-dragonflies swarming throughout New Vegas. Overly emotional, the secretary of defense questioned her president's decision. "Nekon, shouldn't we at least wait until there are more She-Huns in Las Vegas? Is it really necessary to sacrifice so many of your voters?"

"As I've explained to you several times, Sadie, they are not *my* people. *My* people, *my* base, are my peers – the super-rich elite. We inherit money and use it to make more. We don't work for minimum wage or even for a fair-ish, upper-middle-class wage. We deal in the millions. In the billions!" Bush was now yelling. He paused and took a few deep breaths. The president continued in a calmer, more controlled voice, "Besides, Sadie, there is simply no longer enough crude oil, fresh water and minerals for everyone to live yours and my kind of life. These people must be sacrificed for us, the chosen ones, to continue on in our hard-earned comfort. Besides," the president of the United States and of a dozen Fortune-500

companies concluded, “this will provide the perfect justification for massive defense budgets against the She-Huns for the next hundred years, and that’s good for every corporate officer sitting in this spaceship.” Bush smiled deeply at Rice, and then at Cheney.

“Are you sure, sir?”

“Sure as Creation Theory, Sadie.”

Rice looked at her boss and business colleague, and said nothing else. As she began to contemplate her part in the act about to be committed against the innocent people of Las Vegas, the words of a famous Bush matriarch, whose memoirs Rice had read repeatedly, entered her head. She muttered under her breath, “Thank you for your wisdom, Barbara.” Sadina Rice then, in a whisper, resolutely repeated those same insightful words regarding American war-making: *I won’t waste my beautiful mind on thoughts of body bags and death.* She began to shut guilt-ridden thoughts out of her psyche.

Sitting beside Rice, the president of the United States suddenly screamed out again in anger and frustration, “Go straight to the Devil’s inferno, you evil She-Hun bitches.” His face still bright red, he took a slow, deep breath and let it out. After that, in a much calmer tone, an interior cockpit light shining off of his beady eyes, Nekon Rudy Bush recited slowly and without emotion the two nuclear bombs’ detonation trigger phrases, three times each: “Socialist-Pacifist-Greenos. Socialist-Pacifist-Greenos. Socialist-Pacifist-Greenos. Fair redistribution of wealth. Fair redistribution of wealth. Fair redistribution of wealth.”

*

Legata Deeza Cata sat in the command chair of her battle Hun-Vee on the Kaibab Plateau. She would start the convoy

to New Vegas shortly; she wanted to allow her women warriors more celebration time. They had earned it. The She-Hun thoughtfully fingered the necklace of shrunken penises around her neck – she would relish the victory ceremony at the royal palace where her queen would bless her newest war trophies, already drying and shrinking in her quarters. She sipped a glass of Rekol wine and considered what spoils of war she would take home from New Vegas.

Suddenly, the portholes all around the bridge became white with blinding light, which immediately filled the entire bridge. Outside the vehicle, the neutron-hydrogen blast that had been unleashed by the bomb dropped from the Skysurfer and into the Bright Angel Canyon 500 yards away from her position raced up and out of the containing rock walls there.

As Legata Deeza Cata considered just exactly what it was that was happening outside her vehicle, her Hun-Vee and its crew, along with the other 15,000 surviving She-Hun battle Hun-Vees gathered on the two plateaus, was instantly transformed from a powerful fighting machine into radioactive ash.

*

The Skysurfer sped along at 600 miles an hour; it was now five miles southwest of the drop zone. The TV camera installed on the aircraft before launch was sending live images to the Las Vegas SkyFox TV studio.

Danton Gore looked out the rear of the gondola, to the northeast, and watched two, huge mushroom clouds rise up into the air. One was from Mr. Majors, the bomb Bradit had just dropped into the Bright Angel Canyon.

“I guess he set off the second bomb in New Vegas as

well,” Gore thought out loud. “Unbelievable.” He looked at Bradit, “Why would he do that?”

“Sore loser, maybe?” observed Bradit, looking deep into Gore’s eyes and seeing real pain there. “Danton,” he put his hand on Gore’s shoulder, “those She-Hun deaths down there, they’re not on you. They were engaged in military maneuvers against Las Vegas and New Vegas and they were taken out by a military weapon. That’s it. Don’t overthink it.” Bradit gave Gore’s shoulder a light squeeze. “Let’s just be glad that the prevailing winds will carry the fallout from both bombs to the southeast, away from Las Vegas and Caral. Now, we have to really focus. We still have to outrun these blasts. Let’s go!”

The Skysurfer continued on southwest, towards Las Vegas, running on the storm winds and the cosmic energy generated by the two men, Cara Lee and Rada-Sata Ha.

*

Forty miles west of the Kaibab Plateau, Nitra Khan gasped to catch her breath: feelings of sadness, torment, anger, hatred and disbelief physically racked her body as she sat on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee. “That evil Bush son of a bitch.” On the main view screen, she had just tuned in to the SkyFox broadcast from the Skysurfer; the two nuclear mushroom clouds were billowing skyward.

Boota Bleeda sat beside the queen of the She-Huns, her mouth hanging open. The half-full bowl of popcorn fell from her hands as she watched the immense clouds climb up 15,000 feet into the air. She had seen movies of this during her military training, but they did not begin to reflect the magnitude of what she was witnessing first-hand at the moment.

Khan’s military mind kicked into gear. “Full speed northwest.”

The royal convoy of one hundred Hun-Vees headed into the wind to distance itself from the nuclear blasts in and near New Vegas. Later, they would loop around and head south to Lake Mead, to rendezvous with the few surviving She-Huns already gathered there.

*

Peter Cronkite was genuinely moved as he narrated the most important broadcast of his career, “My fellow Americans, the images you have just seen from the Caralite Skysurfer near the north rim of the Grand Canyon are truly unbelievable.” Cara Lee sat next to him in the studio. Dan Kessar, the thorp, was still fighting the She-Huns within the city. “For those of you viewers outside Las Vegas just joining us, again, we apologize. We have been broadcasting all day from here at the SkyFox Studios in Las Vegas, however, there was an electronic block on our signal to the rest of the country. Our crack technical team identified, located and removed it twenty minutes ago. They said they have never seen such advanced technology anywhere before. They also said the hardware was marked as ‘U.S. military.’

“Viewers, you have just witnessed the explosions of two neutron-hydrogen bombs. Details are sketchy, but it appears that President Nekon Bush had these bombs in his weapons arsenal and had planned to detonate at least one of them here in Las Vegas. Danton Gore, formerly a captain in the Defenders of the Light and now the leader of the Free Vegas movement, has just saved this city and its fifty-four million inhabitants. We’ll be talking with him just as soon as he returns to the city. The second bomb, it seems, was detonated in or near New Vegas.

“Again, earlier today, She-Hun armies invaded Las Ve-

gas. Although the main attacks were initially repulsed, tens of thousands of the women warriors managed to enter the city. Small street skirmishes continue, however, our citizens have risen to the occasion and we anticipate that all enemy soldiers, tanks and battle boars will be defeated very shortly. Here are some live pictures from some of the neighborhoods on city level 25 where there is still some fighting going on...”

*

“The Lord really does work in mysterious ways!” Neron Bush observed out loud as the three American politicians, still strapped into their flight chairs, watched the SkyFox broadcast inside SpaceShipTen. “God’s nuclear creation put an end to the She-Huns on the Walhalla and Kaibab Plateaus, but I honestly don’t understand why he spared so many common people in Las Vegas.”

Cheney, still quite drunk, unstrapped himself and slowly floated off of his chair, weightless. Having finished the expensive Kentucky bourbon in his hip flask, he squeezed some champagne from a plastic tube he had found under the pilot’s seat. Large droplets of the stuff floated and sparkled in the air in front of his face. He maneuvered his head to and fro in order to pluck them out of the air one by one and swallow them down. “They just ruined us, Neron. The whole world will think we’re traitors.”

Neron Bush had gotten over the initial shock of the destruction of his dream city. “What are you talking about, Beem?” He inhaled another crystal of black ice. “Wag the dog.”

“Wag the dog? What do you mean?”

“A film from early last century. Manipulation of the press, you know? I *am* the master spin doctor. How can they prove

anything? The special unit that guarded the bombs and the scientific team that rearmed them have both just been vaporized in New Vegas. We'll simply say the She-Huns had nuclear technology and blame it on them. The whole country will get behind us and we'll go after them with everything we've got. We'll change the official version several times in the first few days, broadcasting new information for the first time at off-peak viewing hours. After a week, no one will even remember the specifics of what they were arguing about only a few days before. Cronkite will have a fatal accident, as, of course, will Gore and his comrades."

"What about the fact that we just lost seventy percent of the nation's army?" asked Rice.

"No problem," answered Bush calmly. "Terry Blair down in New London will lend us some troops. He'll do anything for me and the U.S. presidency unquestioningly. Like most Western European leaders, the Blairs have a long tradition of brown-nosing America's presidents, regardless of our political policy, left or right – they just always wanted the biggest kid on the block on their side. Like Beem suggested, we'll run a recruitment campaign in the slums of Las Vegas and the other cities, which should get us plenty of new cannon fodder."

"Maybe you're right, Nekon," Cheney called over his shoulder, he was now floating around the ten-seat cabin of the spaceship, opening every compartment in search of more alcohol. He finally located one full of champagne in plastic tubes. Tossing a few tubes towards Bush and Rice, he called, "Don't look so sad, Sadie. What's done is done. Have a drink. Maybe you could do a weightless domination session with Nekon to get your beautiful mind off of things!"

Rice, still buckled into her chair, ignored Cheney. Although distraught, she managed to repel any deep reflections on the part she had played in the commission of the deceitful

deeds carried out recently in the name of American representative democracy. Unbuckling herself, she caught a tube of champagne, opened it, squeezed a few large droplets out and sucked the glistening, floating blobs down.

Cheney was really enjoying himself in the weightless atmosphere, doing flips and twists in the cabin. He called to Bush, “Come on, Negon! Buck up! In New London, Blair has some of the best dominatrixes around! They’ll go old, old Victorian school on your ass!”

Bush hesitated, but a smile then broke onto his lips. He unbuckled, braced his feet against his chair and launched himself at Cheney thirty feet away. “Yeeeeeeeeeeee!” He now smiled broadly, the fact that he had just detonated two neutron-hydrogen bombs on his own American soil having completely fled his consciousness.

“Negon, brace yourself!” Cheney was against the back wall of the cabin. He bent his legs and then pushed off with all his strength, launching himself towards Bush, who was flying towards him twenty feet away.

“Weeeeeeeee!” Cheney held his arms out in front of him and shot through the air. “Look at me. I’m a Bushfire missile!”

Quite drunk and disoriented by his weightlessness, Cheney glanced off of Bush’s flying body and slammed into the wall of the cabin, next to an emergency door. Bush stopped himself and looked back at Cheney.

“Son of a bitch, that hurts!” Cheney looked down at his elbow, which was bleeding after having squarely hit the cover plate of an air vent on the wall, dislodging it slightly.

Rice had to laugh. Getting out of her flight chair and enjoying the feeling of weightlessness, she cracked a smile and said lightheartedly, “Beem, you really are an idiot.” She, too, was now easily able to forget about the unleashing of nuclear weapons on her own people.

Cheney, laughing, said “Come on, Sadie, lets—” He stopped mid-word, and let out a piercing scream, clutching at his anus with both hands. “Get it out! God help me! Get it out!” Cheney frantically lowered his trousers. All three now heard a loud buzzing throughout the cabin.

Rice stared at Cheney, who floated in the cockpit, in surprise. She had no idea what he was talking about. Then, the images of the flying red insects came flooding back to her mind. “Beem, what is it?” she asked with genuine concern, realizing what was happening to him. She covered her rear end with both hands.

But Beem Cheney, the vice president and general of the army of the United States of America, did not answer her. Floating above the emergency door near the center of the passenger cabin, eyes still open, he tried to speak but could not. The procto-dragonfly, already six inches up his rectum, had released its paralyzing neurotoxin. Unmoving and still conscious, Cheney was suffocating, his lungs immobile. He would be dead in a few minutes.

Bush, weightless, arrived at his friend’s paralyzed body and held his hand. The president felt wings lightly touch his face, a humming in his ears, a blur of red passing by his head.

“Beem! What is it?” Bush beseeched his friend, losing his leash on fear.

Sadina Rice snapped. She began to scream at Bush, all traces of humor gone from her voice, “It’s that god damned biotechnology you sold the She-Huns, you imbecile!”

Bush looked deep into Cheney’s eyes, the fear of death clearly registering on them. The president let go of Cheney’s hand, covering his ass with both of his own.

Rice continued berating Bush. “This is the direct result of your selling biotechnology to the She-Huns over the years for

your own financial gain off their damned oil. It's all been for nothing. It's all been in vain." Rice was now speaking about her own life and actions over the previous eighteen months. "You'll go down in history as the most self-serving Bush ever, you perverted, deranged, good-old white boy!"

Bush let out a scream, as a procto-dragonfly began to eat into the flesh of his left hand, releasing its strong irritant. He withstood the intense pain for a few seconds, yelling, "You're wrong, you black bitch! I'll go down in history as the greatest capitalist visionary-businessman ever!" He could not stand the pain any longer and moved his right hand to swat the insect off of his left.

Instantly, Nekon R. Bush, the seventh Bush president of the United States and the last living member of that familial economic-political dynasty, yelped in pain and fear as a procto-dragonfly tore through his trousers and shot up his anus. Rice watched, terrified for herself, as Bush writhed in pain, clutching at his buttocks; he spun slowly through the air in the cabin, arms thrashing.

Ten seconds later, Nekon Bush was immobile, fated to die by suffocation.

Rice screamed hysterically from the cockpit as she swatted half a dozen of the insects away from her rear end. Several procto-dragonflies bit her hand and one of them gained access to its target area...

The Virgin Galactic SpaceShipTen continued its flight at a height of 400,000 feet above the Earth's surface: an orbiting mausoleum for the three most powerful people on Earth.

Resolution of the Revolution

Amid uproarious applause and shouting, Danton Gore, Cara Lee and the two Caralite thorps rode atop an Abrams M10-A10

tank one hour after the Skysurfer had returned from its mission. They waved at the more than one million jubilant people that had come out and now lined Las Vegas Boulevard. The surviving Defenders of the Light marched behind the M10-A10 tank, shoulder to shoulder with thousands of Free Vegas revolutionaries and with hundreds of thousands of everyday citizens. Together, these individuals formed the unorganized army that had defeated the She-Huns over the previous hours. The victory procession ended at Arnold Schwarzenegger Speedway, already renamed The Galaxies of Love Arena. Gore and his companions got off of the tank and walked into the stadium through the main entrance.

Moments later, Danton Gore, Cara Lee and the two thorps stood on a stage in the center of the racetrack infield. Behind them, the Rolling Stones clones waited patiently to begin a mega-concert that would feature nonstop live music for the next twelve hours. Gore looked around the stadium, humbled by the presence of several hundred thousand people gathered in the stands and racetrack infield – all still clapping and cheering, their eyes now focused on him and the three Caralites. Peter Cronkite, the master of ceremonies for the impromptu political event, also stood on the stage.

“Silence! Silence, please!” Cronkite’s voice thundered out over the public address system. “Thank you all for being here! First off, let’s have an official round of applause for Mr. Danton Gore and his Caralite friends!” Applause exploded from the crowd in the stadium. The one million citizens watching the live broadcast on the huge TV screens that had been set up all along Las Vegas Boulevard also joined in. The cheering was heard on city level 29 for miles around the arena, and on five city levels above and below.

Cronkite continued, addressing Gore, Cara Lee, the two thorps, and the gathered spectators, “You all must be tired.”

Cronkite spun slowly around 360 degrees, looking at the grandstands that surrounded the entire racetrack. "And now, despite the nasty events of the last week perpetrated by Nekon Bush, please listen to what Danton Gore has to say with an open mind. And here you have, Mr. Danton Gore, the leader of the victorious Free Vegas revolution." This broadcast was being sent all over America, as well as all over the world.

Danton Gore stepped up to his microphone, hands held calmly behind him. Although emotional, he did not feel any of the nervousness he had felt only days before while addressing the Caralites in the Congregation Pyramid. "Thank you, Peter. First, I would like to say, let's have another round of applause for all of those who fought for our freedom today." The spectators again applauded enthusiastically. "Citizens of Minneapolis, Chicago and Atlanta, we know you have formed many forward-looking groups such as Free Vegas. We urge you to follow our example and together," Gore paused for effect, "we will complete the Second American Revolution!" The crowd responded by increasing its applause. "And now," Gore continued in a melancholy voice, "a moment of silence, please, for all who died today, be they She-Hun, Defender of the Light or citizen of Las Vegas or New Vegas."

The crowd immediately fell silent.

One minute later, Gore kissed Cara Lee on the stage. He was on the verge of tears, now truly overwhelmed by the emotion all around him. "Life truly is a roller coaster. Only a few nights ago I fled this city, a fugitive from the Bush administration. It appeared that the Free Vegas revolution had been crushed, yet, here I stand before you, on the eve of a new beginning for our great city and our great but misguided nation." Gore paused. More applause. "We will iron out the details in the days to come, however, it appears that Nekon Bush was the traitor in the end. His whereabouts are unknown, but even

he and his newsmen and women will have a hard time explaining away the events of the last twelve hours. Let's not dwell on that, but rather look to our future." Gore now looked directly into the camera in front of him. "I know many of you voted for Nekon Bush less than one week ago. However, things are very different now. He betrayed you. He betrayed me. He betrayed twenty thousand dead Defenders of the Light at the south gate to the city. It appears he even betrayed his own people at New Vegas. The list goes on and on. There's nothing else to say. His actions speak for themselves." Gore paused for a few seconds to let the weight of his words sink into the minds of the hundreds of millions of people listening to and watching him. "It is time for a new mindset in America. I now invite you all to sing along with me. The words will appear on the TV screens."

Gore turned, covered the microphone with his hand and smiling, said to the Stones clones, "Key of C, boys."

Just then, two Defenders of the Light escorted Bridget and Richard Gore up onto the stage. Gore hugged his parents, tears of joy and relief from all that had happened to them and to their son streaming down their faces.

As the world-famous rock band fired up, Danton Gore sang into the microphone, standing arm in arm on the stage with his parents, Cara Lee, Ben Bradit, Dan Kessar and Peter Cronkite:

One thousand years of peace
It was not Rome or Ancient Greece
Sure not America's Disease
It was the Kingdom of Caral
The Kingdom of Caral

The Galaxies of Love Arena erupted with music and song,

the whole crowd having chimed in and now singing along throughout the stadium. Voices sang the song out on Las Vegas Boulevard and even in the viewers' homes. All began to have visions flash through their minds. An unexplainable feeling of calmness, belonging and unconditional love also began to penetrate their psyches. No subliminals were necessary; this was the natural, cosmic force entering these people.

In Peru, a long time ago
Pacification came to grow
The warlords, they had to go
From the Kingdom of Caral
The Kingdom of Caral

Cara Lee sang with eyes closed, as did Bradit and Kesar. They were fully connected to the cosmic energy that is in every atom and molecule in every corner of the universe, be it of hydrogen or lead, water or blood. Keith Richards ripped into yet another improv guitar solo, the entire band of clones dancing for the first time in their lives. The group vision now being seen across America and the world was that of a peaceful, pre-Mesopotamian society living in harmony with nature in wooded, mountain communities and along forested beachfronts. The crowd continued singing along with all those on the stage:

What man has done before
That man can do again
What tragic state we're in
These times of cold and dark desire
To make them change, we need a fire
Why don't we rebegin?

No weapons and no wars
No worship in the halls
Humanity could evolve
In the Kingdom of Caral
The Kingdom of Caral

Its pyramids of might
Attraction and delight
Love and peace, life was alright
In the Kingdom of Caral
The Kingdom of Caral

Every participant in the singing ritual, whether present at the arena or watching, listening and singing at home in America and abroad, now saw in his mind's eye daily life as it was carried on in Cara Lee's Caral, inside the Carlsbad Caverns. All that Danton Gore had learned and experienced there was being felt first-hand by people everywhere for the first time in their lives: societal self-sufficiency; equality of men, women and children; healthy food; yoga; meditation; natural, mind-altering plants; guilt-free enjoyment of spiritual, sacred sex. All across the planet, hundreds of millions of faces wore smiles of delight.

*

Nitra Khan, Boota Bleeda and Professor Nara Wrjinn sat in silence on the bridge of the royal Hun-Vee. Outside at the western edge of Lake Mead, the remaining 3,000 battle Hun-Vees awaited Khan's orders. A few straggling survivors of the neutron-hydrogen bombs detonated near the Grand Canyon occasionally rolled in and joined the devastated She-Hun armored column.

Bleeda broke the silence, stating what they were all thinking about. “How could Hunza have done this? We beat Bush. We beat the elite Defenders of the Light. Completely. Why would she steal victory from us on the battlefield at the Grand Canyon and at New Vegas?” She fell silent.

A few seconds later, Wrjinn added, “And at such a high cost in She-Hun life.” She began to weep.

Several more seconds passed in silence, and Nitra Khan spoke – as the queen of the She-Huns. She placed her hand on Wrjinn’s shoulder. “I don’t know. But let’s take heart, sister. Your Titanas and procto-dragonflies surely worked perfectly. We’ll be back to fight another day soon. We’ll bring enough live weapons and new warriors to defeat Las Vegas and Caral, regardless of those Hunza-damned thorps.” Khan’s voice was rising. She began to pound her fist on the armrest of her commander’s chair. “I *will* pave the way for my daughter with Vera Dan to inherit and expand the queendom of Hunzania to all four corners of the globe!”

The three She-Hun warriors looked into one another’s eyes, finding some comfort there.

“I think,” began Bleeda, “we should castrate him.”

“Who?” responded Wrjinn.

“The fat American. Hings.”

“No, Boota,” said Khan firmly. “*We* are still alive. You and me and Nara. Hunza spared us and it must have something to do with Hings’s performances with high priestess Cooba. Don’t you agree?”

Bleeda looked at Khan hard, and finally said, “By Hunza, you have a good point, my queen. It will be interesting to see if the American passes the test with our priestess the next time we sacrifice the men during our Earth Mother’s bleeding days.”

“Let us go and pray, my sisters,” Khan said with com-

passion. The three women stood up. “Helmswoman, take us home, commanded Khan.

As the three women left the bridge to go and pray to Hunza in her bridge-temple on the royal Hun-Vee, the broken She-Hun armored column began to limp slowly home.

*

In Las Vegas, in the Galaxies of Love Arena, Danton Gore, hand in hand with his mother and Cara Lee, continued singing the words of the Caralite song:

What man has done before
That man can do again
What tragic state we’re in
These times of cold and dark desire
To make them change, we need a fire
Why don’t we rebegin?

We’re not Rome or Ancient Greece
Sure not America’s disease
We want a thousand years of peace
We’re the *New* Kingdom of Caral
The *New* Kingdom of Caral
We’re the *New* Kingdom of Caral
The *New* Kingdom of Caral

The song finished. The crowd was bewildered by what they had seen, heard and felt. Slowly, applause went up from the arena, gaining in volume until it was once again uproarious.

Standing on the stage in the infield, Danton Gore raised

his arms and requested the crowd be silent. A few seconds later, a contented hush fell on the stadium.

“What you have just seen and felt,” explained Danton Gore, slowly and clearly, overwhelmed by many facets of recent events, “is not fantasy. Those were visions of a real place, called Caral, located in Carlsbad Caverns, seven hundred miles southeast of here.” He paused as a wave of murmurs surged through the crowd. “You older Americans might remember when Prescott Bush III attacked Caral fifty years ago. The American government has covered up its existence since then.” Gore looked directly into the camera. “The Caralite life can be your everyday life here in Las Vegas and all over the country. We *will* rebuild our city. If we want it, with the help of everyone we can easily create a modern city that will house one hundred million people comfortably.

“I invite all Americans to come and live here in Las Vegas or to change the way of life in your own cities. Every household will have more living space while, at the same time, we will create thousands of square miles of new underground forest and park land. Our agritubes can provide more than enough organic fresh fruits and vegetables for all. We’ll run our society on renewable energy sources; the days of being a prisoner-nation to She-Hun crude oil will be over. Education will eliminate ignorance, hatred and intolerance. As it used to be for our great founding forefathers three hundred years ago when they fled the oppression of European monarchies, open discussion among strangers of topics ranging from government to religion to economics and morality will once again be embraced as the norm in society, rather than shunned by the right wing as subversive, liberal babble, as it is today!”

Inside and outside the stadium, people looked at those around them, applauding with a new understanding of one another.

Gore continued, “I have been to the cave-city of Caral. Their society works. Our goal should be to emulate their philosophy of life.”

All sang the song of Caral once again, this time without music; the Rolling Stones clones sang *a capella* along with the crowd.

Again, the song finished. Danton Gore hugged his parents, Cara Lee and the two thorns, all still standing on the stage next to him. He took Cara Lee’s hand and then slowly embraced her. With his hand on Cara Lee’s back, Gore gave a thumbs up signal to the band, who smiled happily back at him.

The Rolling Stones tore into *Salt of the Earth*. Mick Jagger’s clone crooned the lyrics to the song his DNA-father had written along with Keith Richards more than 130 years before:

Raise your glass to the hard working people
Let’s drink to the uncounted heads
Let’s think of the wavering millions
Who need leaders but get gamblers instead
Let’s drink to the salt of the Earth ...

Epilogue

Sunday, September 11, 2101 A.D.

It was 9:00 a.m. Well rested, Danton Gore and Cara Lee sat in a beautiful flower garden that was surrounded by fields of bright green grass and stands of noble woods and forest. Thousands of citizens of Las Vegas were enjoying this nature reserve on city level 1 for the first time ever: only two days before these thousands of acres of natural beauty were the private property of Nekon Bush's tax-payer-subsidized private estate.

"Danton, where do you think we should build the Las Vegas Love Double Pyramid?"

Gore did not answer her; he was pondering the many issues that he and the new leaders of America would now face. In the end, eighty of the 103 Men of Light had perished in New Vegas. Luther Van Hong, one of the few respected, non-corporate-affiliated Democrats, had stayed in Las Vegas and would be part of any new national government based there. Open discussions would take place on what form of government and society would replace what America had come to represent as manifested by the city and society of New Vegas. Gore and Van Hong both knew that a true representative democracy – one person, one vote on any national issue – was needed.

Danton Gore leaned over and kissed his beautiful lover as they sat in the lush green grass. One hundred years to the day after the tragic events that took place in America on 9/11/2001, he was looking forward to the challenges ahead of him. Danton Gore would not make the same mistakes that the leaders of his country had made all those years ago, dividing the country and turning the world against the United States when all nations had initially been so willing to support America. No, Danton Gore would reach out and unite his country with

a new philosophy of life, a new daily routine following the principles of Caral. And Cara Lee and his parents would be by his side as he did so.

Gore squeezed Cara Lee's hand and words came to his mind from somewhere across the universe:

My fairy's name is freedom
She's peaceful and bright
She cares for mother nature
Our future's road aright

She never bears a weapon
Spreads love everywhere
My gorgeous, pretty freedom
I love you, I swear

Freedom, Freedom, Freedom
For the U.S.A.
Freedom, Freedom, Freedom
For America

"Danton, look!" Cara Lee pointed to the sky, visible through the transparent roof above them.

For the first time in fifty years, blue sky and brilliant sunlight was being seen over the entire city of Las Vegas, as well as all around the country and the entire planet – and this diminishing of the global storm would not last for merely a few fleeting moments, but rather for as long as the new leaders of America truly worked to run their country anew, and not follow in the same, self-serving footsteps of the now-perished New Vegas elite.

Cara Lee, in her beautiful mezzo-soprano voice, joined by

Gore, sang out the words to a song sent to her by Rada-Sata
Ha:

After the storm
You will never walk alone
Storm clouds will move away
Thunder, rain and lightning
Become sunny days

Appendix I

Appendix I

Original Song Lyrics in the Text (the page numbers below in this pdf file are incorrect. All of the song titles are correct. Go to the website to see complete song lyrics for all of these songs and download 14 original songs for € 3.95 / \$5.95).

The following is a list of the song titles of the original songs that appear in the story. All songs were written by Andreas-Christian Meyer, who is the sole copyright holder. Go to the webpage www.acmeyer.com to see the complete lyrics of these songs, as well as music demos and video clips of them. The CD that is correlated to this book, entitled *A.C. Meyer, Freedom for America!*, was recorded by A.C. Meyer along with friends of ours in Fuerteventura, Canary Islands.

Miss Extreme (pp. 37, 41)
Hey Mr. Bush (p. 65)
Holidays in Guantanamo (p. 165)
Space Surfing (p. 177)
Galaxies of Love (pp. 180-1)
With You (Hoo, Hoo...) (p.199)
They (p. 219-20)
Sisters over Patriarchy (p. 240)
Kingdom of Caral (pp. 260-1, 263)
Freedom for America (p. 265)
After the Storm (p. 266)

The website also includes author biographies and video clips, artwork and additional music, which is unrelated to the novel, written and performed by A.C. Meyer.