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IMPERIUM HEIRS

Conspirator's Odyssey - Book 1

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BOOKS BY A.K. KUYENDALL

WRITER'S BLOCK

Book 1: *The Possession*

Book 2: *Purgatory* (Coming Soon)

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*The Confessional* (A Short Story)

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CONSPIRATOR'S ODYSSEY

Book 1: *Imperium Heirs*

Book 2: *Sovereign Ichor* (Coming Soon)

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## WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT "IMPERIUM HEIRS"

"A very distinct voice!"

*K. D. Payne, Odyssey Reviews*

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"A great story line!"

Simon Barrett, Blogger News Network

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"A proposed series ... It may work!"

*Jack Quick, Book Bitch*

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"A compulsive page turner!"

Bill C., Alternative Reel

SETTING THE STAGE

“According to our best estimates, more than half of all U.S. government records are classified. For an archivist seeking to preserve and understand our history, it means most of our history is kept secret from us. Think about that for a moment.”

~ Richard Michael Dolan

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Though I'm known for making up stories out of whole cloth, this particular story evolved from a rather remarkable headline appearing in the tabloid famed *Weekly World News* in August 1999. They reported on an incident that took place in the spring of 1917, where the flamboyant fighter pilot known as the Red Baron, who not only shot down eighty enemy planes for the Germans during World War I, was said to be the first human in history to gun down an alien spacecraft.

That's the fascinating claim of former German Air Force ace Peter Waitzrik, who says he watched in astonishment as the deadeye fighter pilot shot a UFO with undulating orange lights out of the sky over Belgium on March 13, 1917. Then, Waitzrik says, he stared in disbelief as two bruised and battered occupants of the downed craft climbed from their spaceship and scampered off into the woods – apparently never to be seen again.

"The Baron and I gave a full report on the incident back at headquarters, and they told us not to ever mention it again," the feisty, 105-year-old retired airline pilot recently told a reporter. "And except for my wife and grandkids, I never told a soul. But it's been over 80 years, so what difference could it possibly make now?"

The aging Waitzrik said he and Baron Manfred von Richthofen – the renowned Red Baron – were flying an early morning mission over western Belgium in the spring of 1917 when the UFO suddenly appeared in a clear, blue sky directly ahead of their Fokker triplanes.

"We were terrified because we'd never seen anything like it before," recalled the easygoing great-great grandfather of five. "The U.S. had just entered the war, so we assumed it was something they'd sent up. The Baron immediately opened fire, and the thing went down like a rock, shearing off tree limbs as it crashed in the woods. Then the two little baldheaded guys climbed out and ran away."

Waitzrik said he assumed the glittering silver spaceship was some sort of enemy invention, until the flying saucer scare that began in the late 1940s convinced him that his buddy had shot down a UFO.

"The thing was maybe 40 meters (136 feet) in diameter and looked just like those saucer-shaped spaceships that everybody's been seeing for the last fifty years," the awed oldster said. "So there's no doubt in my mind now that that was no U.S. reconnaissance plane the Baron shot down, that was some kind of spacecraft from another planet – and those little guys who ran off into the woods weren't Americans, they were space aliens of some kind." Waitzrik shook his head in silent curiosity. "You know, sometimes I wonder what ever became of those guys, anyway."

Imperium Heirs is a tale that not only speaks to those little guys Waitzrik saw climbing from their spaceship and scampering off into the woods, but about what they carried as they fled. That in which Baron Manfred von Richthofen shot out of the sky in 1917 was, in actuality, a royal interstellar spacecraft; his actions alone wholly putting at risk much within our multifaceted macrocosm. What the escaped occupants protected, at all cost, were, in fact, unhatched seedlings of the sovereign family – heirs to the galactic throne.

Arthur Schopenhauer was a German philosopher best known for his book, *The World as Will and Representation*, in which he claimed that our world is driven by a continually dissatisfied will, continually seeking satisfaction. As I consider myself more of an historian than a book author, I find myself in line with Schopenhauer's claim, for I am very much driven by a dissatisfied will that seeks satisfaction.

It is, however, what he wrote in 1818 that fiercely clings to me – guiding my thoughts as I

peruse the historical landscape, shoveling off the cleverly disguised shit that cloak the many secrets that have been kept from both you and I. Many of us may have seen and/or heard that Schopenhauer wrote that, *"All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident."*

Although that literary passage is a marvelously assembled set of sentences, on the contrary, he never wrote that. What he actually wrote, with which I wholly concur, is, *"To truth only a brief celebration of victory is allowed between the two long periods during which it is condemned as paradoxical, or disparaged as trivial."*

The debate over what's true and what's false in literature is never ending, primarily due to the fact that all written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit, are based on some truth. Like that of a surreptitious military operation, the goal of argumentative writing is to tactically persuade your audience that your ideas are valid beyond the method by which you've chosen to relay your story.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle divided the means of persuasion, appeals, into three distinct categories – Ethos, Pathos, Logos – which we've all experienced throughout our lives. It was either through radio, television, film, or the hypnotic allure of unmovable print. And in each case, we had no clue as to this strategic tactic playing out before us.

I recollect my sophomore year at my first alma mater: Mary Holmes College out of West Point, Mississippi, where I took a creative writing course taught by the late Dr. Clarence Simmons. I was introduced then to an academic text written by John C. Bean and John D. Ramage, *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*, which precisely and rather succinctly spoke to Aristotle's persuasive appeals.

They wrote that ethos (Greek for character) refers to the trustworthiness or credibility of the writer. Ethos is often conveyed through tone and style of the message, and through the way the writer refers to differing views. It can also be affected by the writer's reputation, as it exists independently of the message – his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity, and so forth. The impact of ethos is often called the argument's ethical appeal, or the appeal from credibility.

Pathos (Greek for suffering or experience) is often associated with emotional appeal, but a better equivalent might be appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination. An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally, but also to identify with the writer's point of view – to feel what the writer feels. In this sense, pathos evokes a meaning implicit in the verb 'to suffer' – to feel pain imaginatively.

Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader. Pathos thus refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message on an audience, the power with which the writer's message moves the audience to decision or action.

Logos (Greek for word) refers to the internal consistency of the message – the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence. The impact of logos on an audience is sometimes called the argument's logical appeal.

A rabid bibliophile with many readings under my cap, I know now, more than I ever did during that sophomore year in college, that there are infinite examples of Aristotle's persuasive appeals littered among the sea of well-placed, strategically-balanced, yet beautiful lore. In keeping with the premise of this particular read, below are just a few.

1. Leonardo di ser Piero da Vinci's *Codex Atlanticus*
2. George Orwell's *1984*
3. Milton William Cooper's *Behold A Pale Horse*
4. Jack Finney's *The Body Snatchers*
5. Stephen King's *The Ballad of the Flexible Bullet*
6. David Seltzer's *The Omen*
7. H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*
8. Thomas Michael Keneally's *Schindler's Ark*
9. Dean Koontz's *The Eyes of Darkness*
10. William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist*
11. Richard Condon's *The Manchurian Candidate*
12. Lex Allen's *Eloah Trilogy*
13. Robert Shea and Robert Anton Wilson's *The Illuminatus! Trilogy*
14. Robert Ludlum's *The Bourne Identity*
15. Robert A. Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters*
16. Aubrey Dasher's *Creed of Vengeance*
17. Jules Gabriel Verne's *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*
18. Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods*
19. Peter Straub's *KoKo*

And let us not forget the *Conspirator's Odyssey* series, with which I'm taking the liberty of weighing in. However unquestionably interminable these examples may be, all remain but the tiniest of pebbles dropped haphazardly into a massive basin of still water.

Words I liken to keys, which unlock the incomprehensible doors of the matrix we were conceived in. However, you must choose to read, to absorb, to beware, and to prepare. Don't be misled and/or hindered by the industrial captions that arbitrarily label author's work; e.g. fiction, non-fiction, et alia. These labels are presented to authors and their readers by the publishing conglomerate as a means of categorizing, marketing, and covertly trivializing their contracted mules. They, in fact, have always been the sluices by which our agenda thrives.

Throughout time, many creative minds have meticulously used the superlative dominance of literature to slowly awaken the masses to the covert doings of individuals of this world and beyond. It is an art form stronger than you may think, for one cannot save a world nestled in a box, strategically dormant to the realities of their existence. Exposing the masses to narratives once thought to have been pulled from midair was actually meant to help soften the blow felt when the world's dirty laundry could no longer be contained.

As a young man and a United States Marine Corps brat for the better part of my existence, I grew up with the smell of fatigues, which lingered regularly about the many bases my family and I both visited and resided—the pungent aroma trailing me as I made my way through life.

Along with my cravings, bordering on the obsessive, for ready-to-eat military stock meals (MRE's), I was brought up to appreciate the military's code of conduct. On the other side of the coin, and through my days, I was especially diligent in historic readings, literature of all genres, and with the media goings-on in the world, all witnessed from an obscure perch I dubbed *Fort Kuykendall*. As the days in my life ticked by, and as history played itself out before my eyes, I continually found myself at a loss for words in reflection of the many tempestuous global occurrences.

There was entirely too much upheaval in the world, and I couldn't get my head around it all. This is when I decided to prioritize, and I allowed my passions to take hold. Though I was

born eleven years after his assassination, the late John F. Kennedy became my focus, and with this came a torrent of mysterious doors I instinctively knew neither I nor anyone else was meant to open.

In reflection of my time as a military brat, witnessing repeat deployments on behalf of our nation, and from what I had discovered, I was then, and still am to this very day, floored by the rampant political corruption that has covertly reduced our American soldiers to blind defenders and lambs for the slaughter.

In searching for answers through an extensive research process, a highly complex picture began to emerge with both eerie and true-to-life connections. In my desperate need to make sense of it all, I pushed on exhaustively researching every angle that emerged, and then I made a connection that, at first, even I could hardly believe. I discovered the true meaning behind former President Dwight David Eisenhower's January 17, 1961 farewell address to the nation. By playing on the complexities within my own research, I decided to use the very same historical information, which led to this discovery, to present a plausible backdrop, and "Conspirator's Odyssey" was born.

As it is written in Wikipedia, "*A conspiracy theory explains an event as being the result of an alleged plot by a covert group or organization or, more broadly, the idea that important political, social or economic events are the products of secret plots that are largely unknown to the general public.*" And so I chose to present my story in the trend of "The Illuminatus Trilogy."

I made it a point to paint an all-too-believable picture of interconnecting, power-hungry, conspiratorial madmen who essentially run the nation behind the scenes. But while "Illuminatus" is scatterbrained and nearly impossible for the average reader to follow, "Conspirator's Odyssey" gradually blossoms to reveal each new layer and fold at just the right pace.

History is a rather convoluted thing as it is recorded – the sheer weight of the world's words endlessly drowned in that previously mentioned sea of well-placed, strategically-balanced, yet beautiful lore. As a self-described historian, objectivity is a necessity and deathly warranted with such studies, but as an author of questionable fiction who wanders the grandiloquence of history's many gateways, I've always fancied the rim of the steepest literary precipice.

It all unraveled on the evening of July 3, 1947 in the tiny town of Roswell, New Mexico, while respected business owner Dan Wilmot and his wife were simply relaxing on their front porch. On this evening, they witnessed a bright, saucer-shaped object with glowing lights move across the cloudy sky at an undeterminable rate of speed. The next day, a tremendous amount of unearthly debris was discovered in the area, and the infamous Roswell UFO crash incident entered American – indeed, the world's – lore.

Many years later, President Dwight Eisenhower's farewell address to the nation on January 17, 1961 was not only purposeful, it was a cunningly cloaked one, so as to not infringe on the presidential oaths or divulge the many secrets to which he, as all presidents, was bound. Having succeeded Truman for the Presidency, and having read his predecessor's notes in the Presidential Book of Secrets, Eisenhower was fully aware of the meeting Truman had with an extraterrestrial being, and was in line with Truman's initial precautions given what transpired that evening.

Given the evolving military trajectory of Classification Falcon Sweep, and due to what was surmised of the military and technically advanced Intel that came of their research, Eisenhower watched as this once noble endeavor manifested into a diabolical plot with many thorns. Those

thorns were so deeply embedded within the tactical arms divisions of our nation that not even the power of the presidency could stop it. One such thorn was code-named the Aneman Project—an unsanctioned experiment aimed at developing a superhuman armed force using the men and women of our armed forces.

So it was that Eisenhower's farewell address to our nation was as prescient as it was bold in its delivery—a targeted warning to all Americans and the peoples of the world when he stated, *"In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military industrial complex."*

With President Eisenhower's address seeming to fall upon deaf ears—maybe because of the unusual heaviness of his words at that particular time in history—the strategic military experimentations that took place after the Roswell incident persisted without pause, and ultimately led to the November 22, 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Behind the assassination lay a vast conspiracy, well-hidden within the complexity of a massive bureaucratic spider web that *we the people* have come to believe and accept. In fact, Project Aneman was the mainspring of our president's demise.

This is what happened, and I know it will be an extremely hard pill to swallow, but it must be told. Project Aneman reached an evolved testing phase and needed a war. Vietnam was that war. Kennedy was in the way.

Jim Marrs, author of the critically acclaimed book *Crossfire*, published in 1989, made one of the most important statements ever concerning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which I believe you should take into consideration when it comes to my story: *"Do not trust this book. In fact, when it comes to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, don't trust any one source or even the basic evidence and testimony. In the case of the JFK assassination, belief and trust have long been a part of the problem."*

As a pragmatic author of fact-based fiction, and one who believes that almost everything in Stanley Kubrick's film "Dr. Strangelove" was true, I present the totality of what I've discovered not only through the covert council of my anonymous source and an extremely rigorous research process, but in a fashion that demonstrates the unfettered draw of speculative fiction. Simply put, I present my story as a warning wrapped in a lie in order to tell you the truth.

Mark Twain may have been writing about this very project of mine when he wrote that truth is stranger than fiction, because "fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities; truth isn't."

~ A.K. Kuykendall, Author

DEDICATION

In memory of my niece – forevermore – Hilary. You may have exited the party sweetheart, but your presence will stay visible, evanescent, never from either my memory or my heart. My second regret was that I wasn't there to say goodbye. My first regret, however, was that you didn't live to see another tomorrow. I miss you. I love you.

IMPERIUM HEIRS



**A “Conspirator’s Odyssey” Thriller
Book 1**

A.K. Kuykendall

OPENING QUOTE

“Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, no matter how improbable, must be the truth.”

~ *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

PART I - THE EMERGENCE?

CHAPTER 1

At 4:38 PM, President Truman had just completed his meal for the evening when he received an urgent call from General Roger Ramey, as he had requested should there be any new Intel to report. He'd given this order based on the preliminary reports he received from the Pentagon after the electrical storm that took place the evening of July 3, 1947 over Roswell, New Mexico.

"It was more than a blip on our radar screens that we witnessed yesterday evening, Mr. President," the general reported.

"Classification Falcon Sweep is signed, General! There's no room for error. Disinformation and concealment agents have been mobilized to piggyback the ruse that has already been established, and you are to carry out your orders under the umbrella. Is that clear?"

"Yes, Mr. President!"

"At this time, neither our security sections nor members of my cabinet, from the Vice President on down, will be privy to this discovery —"

"Oh my God!" the general shouted.

"What is it, General?"

"Mr. President, contact has been made. We have living alien subjects in our possession."

Taken aback by the unbelievable news, Truman leaned back in his chair, momentarily out of breath, his eyes wild. He then called for a staffer using the emergency line.

The staffer hustled into the room with a look of urgency about him. "What is it, Mr. President?"

"Ready Air Force One."

"The destination, sir?"

"Roswell, New Mexico."

Truman refocused his attentions back on the general as the staffer quickly left the room to see to his order.

"General, no one is to know that I'm enroute, nor of my arrival."

"Affirmative, Mr. President."

Upon arriving, President Truman was greeted by the General on the tarmac. They traded quick salutes, their movement towards the hanger never breaking stride.

"Welcome to Roswell, Mr. President. As ordered, we've taken every precaution to shield your visit. You —"

"General, I didn't fly here under the cover of night to have smoke gently blown up my ass. You sent me a pressing telegram shortly after Air Force One took flight, reeling on about a message one of the visitors divulged to you. As your telegram omitted the details — I'm sure because of the sensitivity and needed secrecy — what was the message, General?"

"You have to hear it for yourself, Mr. President."

In the area where they kept the visitor, the general positioned Truman at a safe distance from it.

"Mr. President," General Ramey said, "the other visitors have taken ill, and our doctors say they may be dying. This one before you seems to be in good health, and he's the one with the message. We've named him EBE, short for extraterrestrial biological entity."

The being, EBE, looked at him curiously before it took a step towards him, staring at him rather intensely.

Truman felt rather uneasy during this moment of silence, and felt the need to speak. "Uh,

I'm President Harry S. Truman, the premiere representative of the United States of America. I wish—"

"Humanity!"

Without warning, the thing's thoughts suddenly rung in his head. The general and he traded a quick glance, and instantly he knew the general heard it too.

"Well, I represent a rather large proportion of our world's human inhabitants, but if there's a message you're looking to divulge to our world's peoples, I can assure you, you're speaking to the right person. What is it you're trying to convey?"

"War is upon you!"

He stepped rather stealthily closer to the glass enclosure that held the thing, and spoke directly. "War!" he shouted. "What do you mean, *war*?"

Truman paced back and forth in General Ramey's office.

The general stood at a distance from him and seemed to be impatiently awaiting his orders. "Mr. President," the general said, interrupting his thoughts. "Per your expressed orders on this matter, and given the core parameters of Classification Falcon Sweep, I'd be remiss in my duties if I didn't inform you that time is of the essence, sir."

For the first time in nearly half-an-hour, he stopped pacing the floor. "General, you heard what that *thing* said?"

"I did, Mr. President."

He sighed long and deep before getting into the general's face. "Immediately, you are to gain preliminary Intel from this disclosure, with a prime focus on military and technically advanced application. You, and you alone, will then spearhead the agenda, bringing it to the attention of our National Security Council no later than the 5th of next month with your recommendations.

"By July 28th, I want to receive an outline of your findings so that I may officially brief the NSC on the matter. Be so advised that the power of the presidency will be flanking your every move, General, assuring unlimited funding for such a brazen endeavor."

"Mr. President, given what the EBE told us, we're completely outmatched—outgunned in every way." He sighed. "Sir, what it described to us was an invasion!"

This reality came over the president like a wet blanket. He was petrified at the notion, and he knew the general was too, but, as he peered into the man's eyes, he wanted to convince him that he had it together, that he was the Commander-in-Chief and the strength of this nation.

In that moment, he told himself that he was the 33rd President of the United States of America and, like the heroic characters so often found in the comic strips, novels, and film reels that he'd been in love with since his childhood, *he* was meant to be the hero in this story. He would be the one to protect the human race, by any means necessary, from a malevolent force bent on our destruction.

"Tell me something I don't know, General."

"What's the overall objective of this endeavor, Mr. President?"

"Survival!" He placed his right hand on the general's shoulder. "*Humanity's* survival!" he emphasized, channeling the type of trademark directness he'd used when he led men during his 37-year tenure in the United States Army.

CHAPTER 2

PHELON PROVINCE 560 LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH PLANET YATTRHA MEETING OF THE CEL'JUL HIGH COUNCIL

"I'm no fool, Councilman Tos'illlcoo!" General Eisenhower stated firmly before the council and the gathered squadron Commanders of the Royal Galactic Alliance. "I'm very much aware of the reasons this council saw fit to allow this human a representative role on the Council of Galaxies."

The one hundred members of the Cel'jul High Council began to look over at each other from their seating, which towered high above the stage on which General Eisenhower stood.

"Is that so, General?" Head Councilman Tos'illlcoo said, rising to his feet and tossing his caped garb over his shoulder before beaming a cool stare at Eisenhower.

"That is so," the general replied confidently.

The room came to life with laughter. The only ones in the room with the same steely military disposition as the general were the squadron Commanders, who just looked upon the general with a calculated gaze. The roar of the council was quite deafening, but in that very moment, as Eisenhower glanced over at the squadron Commanders, he knew that they were of the same stripes as he himself.

They, too, understood that the members of the high council were nothing but politicians, cut from the same basic cloth as those from Earth, for which both they and the general had great disdain. Like all politicians, no doubt, spanning the furthest reaches of the universe, the Cel'jul High Council were oblivious to any reality beyond the power they wielded.

"Pray tell, General Eisenhower," spat Tos'illlcoo.

A cold grin formed on the general's face before he proceeded. "It was the demonstration of the United States nuclear strength over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan." An abrupt hush fell over the room, and Eisenhower fancied that he'd slapped the laughter from the thin orifices that made up their mouths. "This bold action on the part of the human race, which I represent, indeed acted as a counterbalance, and ultimately led me to assume a representative role on the Council of Galaxies." The hushed gathering held firm. "As I said, Councilman Tos'illlcoo, I'm no fool."

Head Councilman Tos'illlcoo, having slumped down in his chair, stared angrily over at Grand Squadron Commander Gilli'victcill and shouted, "Why did you bring this *human* before us, Commander Gilli'victcill, and without forewarning, as is accustomed? And to our home world, for that matter?" The councilman wagged his finger at the commander in a belittling gesture. "You clearly know that representatives of the Council of Galaxies are to meet on matters of importance on the planet – what these humans call an asteroid – Oo'lils, between Mars and Jupiter, in the neutral galactic quadrant of Zoosail'tcx?"

Commander Gilli'victcill appeared beside General Eisenhower to address the high council. "Councilman Tos'illlcoo, I brought General Eisenhower here for reasons that gravely go beyond the parameters of the Council of Galaxies. This business is of *our* species, and matters of the universe, in keeping with a promise General Eisenhower made to me in the Earth year 1942. At that time, on orders by this very council, my squadron leaders and I were to lay waste an American city in order to force the humans into divulging Intel that would lead us to the sovereign family, for whom this body suspected humans to know their whereabouts –"

"He's found them?" Councilman Tos'illlcoo shouted.

The entire council now appeared to be on the edge of their seats.

"It's much more complicated –"

"Complicated?" Councilman Tos'illlcoo shouted again, rising from his seat. "No, Commander Gilli'victill! It is not!" Taking his eyes off of the commander, the councilman stared menacingly at General Eisenhower. "Has he or has he not found the sovereign family?"

General Eisenhower spoke up. "Yes, Councilman Tos'illlcoo, I have found Queen Tili'kiloos and King Bosh'licolo."

A groundswell of voices arose from those gathered, like the roar of an angry lion.

Councilman Tos'illlcoo shouted, "Quiet!" As the concentration of noise died down, he asked, "What of the children, the heirs to the throne?"

"Your Grand Commander Gilli'victill, here, told me about two seedlings – Princess Tali'sislo and Prince Sisla'vul – that were lost to you in 1917. My Intel tells of two of your species from the downed craft who happened to escape carrying a package of sorts, but that is all I or anyone at the top echelons of the United States government knows of them, or of what they carried, as they were never found."

"Enough," Councilman Tos'illlcoo shouted. "Commander Gilli'victill, I hereby order you to retrieve our queen and king this instant."

"Councilman Tos'illlcoo, as Grand Commander of the Royal Galactic Alliance, who, by order of this very council is under a targeted fiat to ascertain the fate of the sovereign family by any means, I believe it to be in our best interest for General Eisenhower to lead this campaign, and for us to retrieve our queen and king in solidarity."

"Solidarity? These *humans* have taken, and might I add, held hostage for eighty plus years, our queen and king – the heart of our collective universe – setting off a series of events that may have permanently crippled our standing and given unfettered rise to the Imperial Reptilian Voli'icill."

"It's solidarity, Councilman Tos'illlcoo, or it's war with the humans, in which we will *all* surely perish. Need I remind you that the signing of the treaty was an event of immense importance, negotiated in good faith by both our species? It was a daunting task led by General Eisenhower himself, and which greatly benefits the universe in whole. No doubt the Imperial Reptilian Voli'icill has manipulated certain factions of the human race, bringing us to where we stand today, but the fact remains that the general is not only a staunch advocate for his species, he stands as a grand ally of ours. This reality is one I, unequivocally, can vouch for."

Councilman Tos'illlcoo sat back down and carelessly waved off Commander Gilli'victill, who returned to formation with his squadron commanders. "So, General Eisenhower, just what do you have in mind?" the councilman said reluctantly.

"As surely as it must be the case with your planet's politics," Eisenhower said, "I'm but a soldier, buried under the weight of a powerful bureaucracy that refuses to see the error of their ways. They will not, under any circumstance, release your queen and king, especially now that they know just who and what they are – and more importantly, their significance to your species."

"And I take it that *you* were the one who told them of our queen and king?"

"Yes, I told them, Councilman Tos'illlcoo. It was the only way I could prevent my government's science divisions from dissecting them and performing god-awful experiments, as my species is accustomed to doing when it comes to anything they do not understand." The general looked over his shoulder and at Commander Gilli'victill, who gestured for him to continue. "As spokesman for the human race, not to mention a member of the Council of Galaxies, I was naively optimistic in thinking that my position in advocating the plight of the

Cel'jul species would move them to atone for this grave error in judgment.

"However, seeing as it is your species that are the very Gods we humans, since the dawn of mankind, have worshiped from all corners of planet Earth – while we, as with the many other species that span the universe, are only products of a mere science project – and with the knowledge of your species being our creators, the bureaucracy I deal with just assumes that they've gained an upper hand on God himself and, therefore, refuses to let go.

"And, might I add, you didn't help yourselves a bit when, in the Earth year 1942, this very council flagrantly ignored the mutually agreed upon parameters highlighted in the treaty of 1939, when you sent an overt threat directly to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of your plans to destroy an American city –"

"Now that we've established the fact that you, General Eisenhower, like to hear yourself speak," the councilman said to him dismissively, "again, I ask you, just what do you have in mind?"

A well-calculated amount of seconds ticked by as the General looked upon the council members, confident he'd gotten their attention, as they seemed to be hanging on his every word. "You just can't, as was the case in Earth year 1942, when you abruptly and without a plan sent your destroyer and armada to Los Angeles, California, make another bold threat of laying waste an American city. A move such as that, with all due respect, council members, could only have come from politicians such as the one hundred of you in this body who know absolutely nothing of military strategy." The general's tone, though passionate, was sharp.

A wave of murmurs swept through the body of council members, but none dared to interrupt the general for what he spoke was a truth they couldn't dispute.

"I asked Grand Squadron Commander Gilli'victcill of the Galactic Royal Alliance to bring me before you. I wanted to personally make clear to this high council that this *human* is not only ranked General of the Army, a five-star general officer that is the second highest possible rank in the United States Army, but that I am a strategist of the highest order. I wanted to personally inform this body that my intentions are honorable, and that they'll yield the results for which your species has been waiting far too long.

"With your permission," he said with a cleverly disguised amount of disdain, "phase two of the mission both Commander Gilli'victcill and I have discussed will begin at 11:40 PM on Saturday, July 19th in this very Earth year 1952. Your royal brigades will begin their strategic maneuvering around Washington, D.C., with an even heavier presence around our U.S. Capital building – the location at which both Queen Tili'kiloos and King Bosh'licolo are being held. In January of this Earth year, I threw my hat into the ring for the presidency of my country, as phase one of this operation.

"Under the guise of the covert relationship I've had with your species since Earth year 1939, this will be the platform where I'll stand as I begin brokering the deal to prevent an all-out assault by your species on Earth. The overt threat Commander Gilli'victcill will make, to the United States' top military brass and echelons of government, will be that your intentions are to annihilate Washington, D.C. before your global strike. This provocation will be stated without any specific demands.

"During the purposely drawn out negotiations, your royal brigades will keep up their show of force until the talk's end, which Commander Gilli'victcill and I have planned to conclude on July 27, 1952. I will be, though covertly, hailed as a hero in the United States of America and around the world, and will subsequently and literally be gifted the presidency, where I will use the power of the office to shake loose your queen and king."

"You, General Eisenhower, will also be hailed as a hero here on Yattrha and throughout the

universe, if this plan of yours is successful," Councilman Tos'illlcoo said earnestly.

After a brief moment of sincere nods to and from the general and the council members, Eisenhower went on to say, "Once your queen and king are again united with your people, I have no doubt that you, using the weight of the Royal Galactic Alliance, will further seek the whereabouts of both Princess Tali'sislo and Prince Sisla'vul on Earth. I only ask that any amount of force as grand as what took place on 24/25 of February 1942 in Los Angeles, California, or the type of force I'm suggesting to be displayed with this strategic operation, will never again be visible to the inhabitants of Earth."

"Agreed!" The entire council said in unison as if they were one.

The general sighed deeply before saying, "There is one more thing I must mention at this time, for transparency's sake, and I ask of you *all* to hear me out."

"What is it, General?" Councilman Tos'illlcoo shouted.

"The highly coveted title of President of the United States of America, unbeknownst to any given citizen and/or candidate, is fraught with delusions of grandeur. Though the towering goals of these Americans, many of whom are mere activists seeking to use politics to move forward grand ideals, are admirable, they're misguided.

"All who seek the title truly believe they would have a hand in fundamentally shaping our nation, when, in fact, the tumultuous line of succession from one U.S. President to the next does not undo clandestine operations established beforehand, whether large or small, moral or immoral, of our world or beyond. Yes, the delusions of grandeur continue unabated, as the true history of the office is lost on the people it was established to serve."

"What are you getting at, General Eisenhower?" Councilman Tos'illlcoo was seemingly becoming wary.

"I'm not, nor do I wish for you to be, disillusioned as it relates to the power of the presidency. Upon a successful operation, and I become President of the United States of America, it will take a considerable amount of time before I'll be able to safely have Queen Tili'kiloos and King Bosh'licolo delivered to your people, as I must further wade through the bureaucratic waters of the U.S. government."

"How much time, General?"

"Councilman Tos'illlcoo, the definitive Earth year will be 1954, a little over a year after I'm sworn into office, and the location I've chosen for the transfer will be Holloman Air Force Base. Holloman is located in New Mexico's Tularosa Basin, between the Sacramento and San Andres mountain ranges.

"The base is about 10 miles west of Alamogordo, New Mexico, on U.S. Rout 70/82; 90 miles north of El Paso, Texas; and 70 miles east of Las Cruces, New Mexico. The base covers 59,639 acres and is located at an altitude of 4,093 feet. The locale, I believe, is quite fitting for such an unprecedented endeavor."

"General Eisenhower, you seem to have earned the trust of Grand Squadron Commander Gilli'victcill," Councilman Tos'illlcoo said. He stood, and the entire council followed suit. He then turned to the thick gathering of squadron leaders and asked, "Do you all feel the same?"

Again, Commander Gilli'victcill appeared beside the general with eyes affixed on the council head, and like a powerful wave, every one of the squadron leaders piled in behind them both in a premier show of solidarity.

Again, and speaking in one unified voice, the council members said, "General Eisenhower, you may proceed with this operation."

As the roar of celebratory cheers erupted out of the squadron leaders, General Eisenhower turned to face Commander Gilli'victcill with his hand extended. The commander, whose stature

towered high over the general, firmly took hold of his hand like any human would, and shook it.

"It is your bravery that I admire, General Eisenhower," he said.

"And from one soldier to another," the general said with a sincere smile, "it is your trust, Commander, which I cherish."

"With this being your first trip to our dear planet Yattrha, I would like to extend an invitation to feast with my squadron leaders and I to celebrate."

"I would love to, Commander Gilli'victill, but it is imperative I get back to my home world with all due haste. Given the intensity of the lightning and rain pelting the massive NATO exercise we're conducting in the North Atlantic, suffice it to say that all hell would surely break loose if the seamen of the USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* were to discover that their dear General Eisenhower was missing. Especially after that unidentified light show you and your squadron displayed before I was ferried away.

"For continuity, I left about four seamen on the deck who happened to, alongside me, witness your arrival. After receiving your signal, I informed them that I was going to check it out, and instructed them to forget about what they'd seen, before adjourning to my living quarters to change out of my PJ's and robe and into my uniform, in preparation for teleportation to your command vessel.

"Come to think of it, I never did get that cup of coffee I was hankering for. Anyway... I will say that it's quite difficult to initiate contact, as we did, during an active military exercise – especially during one of the largest NATO exercises in American history, involving 80,000 men, 200 ships, and 1,000 planes. Nonetheless, it was of vital importance that I personally speak to the Cel'jul High Council, given the all-important mission parameters we've discussed."

Commander Gilli'victill nodded his understanding. "What is the saying on your planet? *Rain check?*"

The general smiled. "Yes, Commander, rain check."

"Well then, General, let's get you back."

The two of them began exiting the council chambers, but paused.

Eisenhower patted at his left chest pocket and let out a subtle sigh of relief, then pulled out his pack of Lucky Strike cigarettes. "My friend, I'm going to need a minute before you put me back in that cryogenic sleep thingamajig."

"Is there a problem, General?"

"Not at all, Commander," he said with a chuckle. "I look at this nicotine habit of mine as nothing but a simple chink in the armor."

"Oh." The commander nodded. "We all have our vices, General."

"Indeed!"

After a moment of silence had separated the two, the commander leaned over and said, "I'm curious... just how did you know that the high council wouldn't piece together the fact that it's now September back on Earth, and that we'd already gone ahead with the second phase of the operation in July?"

"Well, Commander," Eisenhower said, pausing in his stride and looking over his shoulder at the now empty council chamber. "As is the case with politicians on my world, they continue to remain oblivious to any reality beyond the power they wield." He smiled, eyeing the sharp detail of his peaked cap before saying, "I used a strategy akin to stroking one's ego, regaling them with details so moving that even *these* politicians would want to be a part of it rather than be oblivious to it. Especially an operation of this magnitude and importance to the Cel'jul species."

“General Eisenhower, you may not care very much for the likes of politics and politicians, but you sure do have a knack for their arena.”

The general smiled.

“But, from one leader to another,” the Commander said, staring deep into the general’s eyes with a sudden and unexpected concentration of seriousness. “What you’re doing is tantamount to treason in undergoing this operation, whereas I’m wholly in line with my targeted fiat to ascertain the fate of the sovereign family by any means. My having not first brought the full details of the operation to the attention of the Cel’jul High Council is minuscule, in comparison to your actions against that which you serve and have sworn to protect.

“And though you haven’t, as I most certainly do, any operational boundaries to adhere to on this end of the universal spectrum, I do believe you have a code of conduct you are sworn to adhere to on your world—”

“Is there a question you want to ask me, Commander Gilli’victill?”

“General, you seem quite eager to go against the wishes of your command structure. And though my asking this of you is counterproductive to my overall objective... as your friend, I’m curious to know why that is.”

The General sighed and looked off in the distance, admiring the detailed magnificence of the grand council chamber, which reminded him of the imagery captured in *Odd John: A Story Between Jest and Earnest*—a 1935 science fiction novel by the British author Olaf Stapledon that the general very much enjoyed. He fancied that he was but a character playing out his part in a grand tale, one where he was meant to be the hero.

After a moment of silent contemplation, he turned his gaze back toward the commander. “I have my reasons, my friend.”

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**END OF SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW. THANK YOU.**

