

TRIUMVIRATE 2

Written by

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EXT. IRAQ/GREAT ZIGGURAT OF UR - NIGHT

Under the sparkling night sky, a four-wheel drive kicks dust from the dirt road as it approaches an empty car park.

Coming to a halt, MARILYN [36] and JANE [31] step out and approach the wooden path that leads to the silhouetted towering ancient monument.

Calmly, they follow the path till they reach the foot of the brick steps that lead to the top.

Silently they climb.

EXT. IRAQ/GREAT ZIGGURAT OF UR - MOMENTS LATER

They reach the top and scan the surrounding area.

Dark villages in the distance, dotted with lights from houses.

A soft breeze ruffles Marilyn's blonde hair and that of the auburn Jane.

They cross the dry dirt towards the remnants of a walled corner.

Stopping, they study the ground.

The two women pull out knives and slice their palms.

Blood drips into the ground.

They watch a whirlpool of blood grow as it drills into the ground.

The two women crouch down as they see the cylindrical BLACK SEAL OF THE SEVEN WINDS begin to appear.

Jane retrieves the carved black and gold artifact, with a winged face staring at them.

They rise and retrace their steps.

Suddenly armed security guards, AL-RASHID [35] and AL-FADL [32], appear at the top of the steps, their torches blinding the two women.

AL-RASHID
You shouldn't be here.

MARILYN
We were just leaving.

The guards aim their guns at the women.

AL-FADL

What do you have there?

Jane holds out the artifact as they approach the guards.

JANE

This?

A pulse emits from the object.

The two guards turn to face each other.

Their guns slowly point towards each other.

The men try to resist as their fingers tighten on the triggers.

AL-FADL

Please.

The women walk past as the guns fire.

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL/WEST FRONT - DAY

ETHEN PREST [49] studies the artifact in his hand then slips it into his pocket.

He raises his head and smiles knowingly.

A lone bird circles high in the blue sky.

Ethen watches it. Then his attention returns to the ceremony.

Marilyn and Jane flank him, in front of rows of seated dignitaries, including grim-faced ex-President BILL HAYMAN [59] and his wife AVRIL HAYMAN [51].

Giant Stars and Stripes alternate with American Ultra Party flags, overlooking an immense crowd stretching beyond the National Mall. Those farther back watch on giant screens.

Ethen's gaze briefly turns to the autocue that has started rolling.

He presses a red button on the lectern and the autocue stops.

ETHEN PREST

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom—symbolizing an end as well as a beginning—signifying the American Dream will rise once more to bring opportunity to everyone.

The crowd applaud.

INT. ETHIOPIA/ADDIS ABABA/CAFE - SAME TIME

Shafts of sunlight cut across the room filled with people drinking and talking.

On the wall, a TV broadcasts the U.S. Presidential inauguration, watched by HAMIDI ABDULLAHI [36], CATHLEEN HENSHAW [38], wearing jeans and t-shirt, AJANI BEKELE [26], MAKDA TADESSE [26] and DAWIT MENGISTU [27] amongst the group of thirteen at the table.

Hamidi's eyes are fixed on the screen as he sips his tea.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW

Didn't you say he was trouble?

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI

He has the eyes of the serpent.

ETHEN PREST

As your president and leader of the American Ultra Party, I stand before you and promise that every man, woman and child will have a place to call home.

The audience applaud.

ETHEN PREST (CONT'D)

Unemployment will be eradicated within my first term.

The applause increases in volume.

Ex-President Bill Hayman glances quizzically at Avril.

ETHEN PREST (CONT'D)

In the first one hundred days, every law that restricts your rights to freedom of choice will be revoked.

The volume of cheering increases.

Flags in the crowd are waved in jubilation.

Cathleen turns from the TV to Hamidi.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
These are bold promises.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Which he will fulfil.

Hamidi sips his tea, then places the cup down, thinking.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)
But people need to be careful what
they wish for.

EXT. U.S. CAPITOL/WEST FRONT - DAY

Journalist GEORGE KELSO [38] watches Ethen on one of the large screens. Next to him is TRENT BINGHAM [65], PENNY GARDNER [32] and KELSEY MANNINGS [51] who wears an American Ultra Party t-shirt.

ETHEN PREST
The security of our great nation
will never be in doubt.

Ethen glances to his left and right. Marilyn and Jane smile with encouragement.

He nods.

ETHEN PREST (CONT'D)
And I will offer these same
guarantees to our allies.

As the crowd cheers, he gestures for calmness.

KELSEY MANNINGS
He's the man!

Ethen gazes up at the sky, his hands outstretched.

ETHEN PREST
Because there are those out there
who offer cheap gestures...

He clicks his fingers before staring down at the crowd.

Dark clouds begin to roll in.

ETHEN PREST (CONT'D)
 Sanctimonious lies that change will
 be the ruination of the west, yet
 they offer no alternative.

Drops of rain fall on his face as he studies the crowd.

PENNY GARDNER
 Did he do that?

George studies those around him.

TRENT BINGHAM
 Cheap theatrics.

Dignitaries begin to escape indoors as the rain gets
 heavier.

Ethen, Marilyn and Jane, saturated, do not move.

A clap of thunder booms across the city.

KELSEY MANNINGS
 I've seen him do this kinda thing
 before. A huge dust devil appeared,
 then just...poof...gone.

Kelsey turns to Penny.

KELSEY MANNINGS (CONT'D)
 Impressive, eh?

People in the crowd begin to run for shelter.

TRENT BINGHAM
 My dear, the man's a charlatan.

PENNY GARDNER
 All I know is I'm getting soaked.

Ethen clicks his fingers. The rain suddenly stops.

The clouds evaporate, restoring the blue sky.

PENNY GARDNER (CONT'D)
 Wow.

KELSEY MANNINGS
 See?

TRENT BINGHAM
 You think he's the saviour?

ETHEN PREST
But actions always speak louder
than words.

The crowd bursts into ecstatic cheering.

Kelsey smiles at Penny while Trent remains unimpressed.

Ethen smiles radiantly.

He raises both hands in the air as the U.S. Marine Band
plays *THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER*.

George raises his camera and snaps Kelsey and Penny cheering
while Trent walks away. He glances back dismissively.

INT. ETHIOPIA/ADDIS ABABA/CAFE - SAME TIME

Cathleen watches a waiter refill her cup then leave.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
So we know the target.

Her eyes meet Hamidi's.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW (CONT'D)
What's the plan?

Chatter around the table stops as all eyes fall on Hamidi.

He slowly places his cup on the table as he considers.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Ajani should accompany me to the
United States.

Cathleen's eyes widen.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
Whoa.

Beat.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW (CONT'D)
What about me?

DAWIT MENGISTU
Our brother knows -

Cathleen gestures for him to be silent.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I didn't join to enjoy the scenery
here.

She leans across the table.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
It is too dangerous for you.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I'm not spending the rest of my
life hiding...

Her mouth tightens.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW (CONT'D)
And out of everyone here, I'm the
one who knows the lay of the land
best.

AJANI BEKELE
She has a point.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
Damn right I do.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
But they will arrest you as soon as
you land.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I can deal with that.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
How?

Eyes around the table flick between Hamidi and Cathleen.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I have my ways.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Shoot your way out?

Cathleen's eyes narrow.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I saved your ass.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
You did.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
Then trust me.

Hamidi thinks.

AJANI BEKELE
I can stay with the others.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
Then there is someone you can visit
while I'm away.

He turns to Cathleen.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)
So be it.

Cathleen leans back and exhales.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI (CONT'D)
We leave tomorrow.

Cathleen rises.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I should go prepare.

HAMIDI ABDULLAHI
We travel light.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I know.

EXT. ETHIOPIA/ADDIS ABABA/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Cathleen casually walks through the busy street towards the
BLUE NILE HOTEL.

INT. BLUE NILE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

Cathleen approaches the reception desk where SELAMAWIT
MELESE [28] stands.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
I need to make an international
call.

Cathleen hands cash to the receptionist before a phone is
offered.

She begins to dial. It rings.

A click indicates DONNY HARLOW [36] answers the call.

DONNY HARLOW (O.S.)
Donny speaking.

Cathleen hesitates.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
Hey, stranger.

INT. DONNY HARLOW'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Children can be heard laughing and playing in the living room next door.

Morning sunlight fills the kitchen. Donny moves away from the open door as his wife, MIRANDA HARLOW [34], peers round.

Donny gestures all is fine and she returns to the kids.

DONNY HARLOW
(whispers)
You're the last person I expected
to hear from.

He checks his surroundings.

DONNY HARLOW (CONT'D)
You've got a nerve. Disappearing
like that.

Beat.

DONNY HARLOW (CONT'D)
Where the hell are you?

CATHLEEN HENSHAW (O.S.)
Listen, I can explain everything.

DONNY HARLOW
This'll be interesting.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW (O.S.)
When I fly into New York tomorrow.

Silence.

DONNY HARLOW
Tomorrow?

INT. BLUE NILE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Cathleen picks up the phone and moves to a quieter spot.

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
Tomorrow.

DONNY HARLOW (O.S.)
You're the number one pin-up at
every airport. You sure you want to
return?

CATHLEEN HENSHAW
That's why I'm calling you. I need
your help.

INT. WHITE HOUSE/OVAL OFFICE - LATER

Ethen leads White House Chief of Staff MIKE PEMBERTON [54],
National Security Advisor FELIX KELLOG [62] and
Communications Director HARIET WISLEY [45] along with
Marilyn and Jane, into the office.

Two Dobermans greet Ethen. On the wall hangs the painting:

THE RIVER TO HELL by *HIERONYMUS BOSCH*

Ethen feeds the dogs biscuits as the others sit around.

ETHEN PREST
What's the latest with the online
register?

HARIET WISLEY
Approximately forty million people
have signed up.

ETHEN PREST
Not bad. Almost twenty-five percent
of all adults.

MIKE PEMBERTON
With majorities in both houses and
the Supreme Court a given, there's
nothing stopping you.

ETHEN PREST
Almost.

Ethen pulls open a drawer to retrieve a folder which he lays
on the desk.

He flips it open. A photo of Hamidi.

Mike gets up and retrieves the photo. He studies it before
passing to Felix.

FELIX KELLOG
Who's this?

ETHEN PREST
Hamidi Abdullahi.

Ethen rises then walks round the table and helps himself to
a drink. The dogs watch him attentively.