

JIGSAW INTERIM



DAVID ALYN GORDON

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JIGSAW INTERIM

February 1, 1944
International Evangelical Hospital
Voltri, Italy

Noah's condition was unchanged. His face remained fully covered in bandages from the surgery following what happened at the Operation Corvo lab. Lavonia had brought him to the abandoned hospital nearly three weeks before—following events at the Villa Delle Brignole—and he had yet to regain consciousness. The hospital itself had been bombed in 1942, and then deserted. But the bombs hadn't destroyed everything, and what remained provided an ideal environment for Dr. Vincente D'Ambrosio to care for Noah.

D'Ambrosio and Lavonia took turns watching over Noah. Elisabetta had become increasingly annoyed with the whole situation. "He'll get us all killed," she said on more than one occasion. Each time, Lavonia reviewed the letters from her future self, and then reassured Elisabetta that Noah would come around soon.

On February 1, 1944, at 3:20 p.m., Lavonia made a point of being in Noah's room when Dr. D'Ambrosio came to check on him. For the first time, Noah rolled over in bed. He woke a moment later, and screamed. An instant after that, he was full of questions. "Where am I? Why is it so dark? Why can't I see?"

“I’m here, my love,” Lavonia replied. “You’re going to be fine.”

Dr. D’Ambrosio prepared a sedative, just in case.

“Lavonia,” Noah said. “What’s going on? Why can’t I see anyone? Why does my voice sound different?”

“You were injured at the Villa,” Lavonia told him. “You’ve been unconscious for almost three weeks.”

“Three weeks,” Noah repeated. “Is Mona here too?”

“No. You need to relax.”

Noah tried to touch his face, but found it covered with bandages. “What happened?”

“My Love,” Lavonia said, and took his hands. “I need you to calm down so I can explain.”

Noah took a deep breath and squeezed Lavonia’s hands. “Okay...”

“I’m going to have Dr. D’Ambrosio take off the bandages. Go ahead, Dr.”

D’Ambrosio started with the bandages. “Keep your eyes closed until I tell you to open them,” he said. “Do you understand?”

Noah nodded, and D’Ambrosio removed the last of the bandages. “Now open slowly,” he said. “Give your eyes time to adjust to the light.”

Noah followed the instructions, and focused on Lavonia’s face. She smiled at him. “You’re the most beautiful person I could open my eyes to,” Noah told her.

Lavonia kissed him. “I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Lavonia looked to D’Ambrosio. “Can you please excuse us for a few minutes?”

“Of course,” he said, and stepped from the room.

Lavonia kissed Noah again and hugged him. “I was so worried about you. I thought I’d die if I lost you.”

“Everything’s fine my love,” Noah said. “Tell me what happened.”

“I’ll explain in a minute,” Lavonia said. “Do you think you can walk?”

“Sure.”

“Walk with me to the sink.”

“Okay.”

Lavonia stood between Noah and the mirror above the sink, struggling for the words to explain his situation. “Now, you need to know,” she said,

and paused for a moment. “Your face and throat were burned. Cohen took you to the future for reconstructive surgery.”

Noah was silent for a moment. “How bad was it?” he asked at length.

“Very bad,” Lavonia told him. “That’s why your face had to be bandaged, and why your voice sounds different.”

“All right,” Noah said. “I don’t look like something out of Scarface or Frankenstein?”

“Well, you do have a scar. But it’s really not that bad.”

“Thank God.”

“Do you remember what happened to Pitto at the villa?”

“No,” Noah said.

“He’s dead,” Lavonia told him.

“But that’s impossible. He can’t be dead. We met him, after.”

“Trust me when I tell you. He’s dead.”

“But that would create a... Wait a minute. The Pitto I met had a scar.”

“Yes,” Lavonia confirmed.

“Oh God.”

Lavonia stepped aside, and Noah saw himself in the mirror. “*Holy shit! Where’s my face?*”

“My Love. I need you to focus and listen. You’re Pitto now.”

“What? I can’t be Pitto.”

“You always were,” Lavonia told him. “Pitto was killed at the Villa... The lab console equipment blew up in your face and gave you this scar... Think about it. You met Pitto as an old man. He had the same scar you have now. You knew he was married to me because he made a point of telling you when he gave you and your friends a tour of Genoa. It was you I married, not Pitto. His past is your future.”

Noah staggered from the bathroom and sat on the bed. He took a moment to process things, then reached out for Lavonia’s hand. She took it and sat beside him. Noah shook his head in disbelief. “I never put it together...” he said.

“I know,” Lavonia said. “But I have something that may help.” She took an envelope from a pocket and handed it to him.

“What’s this?”

“A letter you haven’t written yet,” Lavonia said. “It’s how I knew you’d wake up, and when.”

Noah opened the envelope and read the letter, over and over, absorbing every word. When he finished, he handed it back. "This means I can't go home."

"My love," Lavonia said. "You are home."

March 12, 1945

The seaport of Swinemunde on the Baltic Sea
Germany

Dr. Franz Steiner, a rocket engineer attached to the V2 program, climbed from the *U-1118* submarine at the seaport of Swinemunde. A staff car took him to the Peenemunde Army Research Center's command building. Steiner made his way to the office of Colonel Wolf Richter and presented his papers. An aide took him to see the colonel.

"Dr. Steiner," Richter said. "It's good to see you again. How can I help you today?"

"I have orders from SS General Kammler, and need you to act on them immediately, Colonel." He presented the sealed orders.

"Please sit, Doctor," Richter said, "while I look this over."

"Thank you. Have you received your evacuation orders yet?"

"Not yet," Richter said. "But I know they'll come soon. We don't want the Russians getting their hands on the technology we have here." A few minutes later, he gazed up from the papers. "These seem to be in order, Doctor. I'll have my men get the rockets to the U-boat at the seaport."

"Thank you, Colonel," Steiner replied. "Time is a factor. Can your men hurry?"

"Absolutely."

Steiner returned to the dock to await delivery of the two V2 rockets. Half an hour later, crewmen loaded them on the submarine. The *U-1118* was a prototype for the Prufstand XII Project, designed with V2 launch capability. Steiner thanked the lieutenant in charge.

"I hope you use these on Moscow or New York," the lieutenant told him.

"I welcome your enthusiasm," Steiner said. "For the Fatherland."

“For the Fatherland,” the Lieutenant replied.

Seconds later, the port’s air raid sirens went off. “Allied bombers,” the lieutenant said. “You need to get out of here, sir.”

“Right,” Steiner said. “Good luck.”

Steiner turned to run back into the U-boat as the crew prepared the sub for diving. A car horn sounded behind him. Steiner swung around to see Colonel Richter’s vehicle skidding to a stop. Steiner slid his right hand into a pocket.

The lieutenant looked to Richter, confused.

Richter walked toward Steiner. “I Just heard from General Kammler,” he said.

“And how is the general?” Steiner asked.

“Surprised you’re here,” Richter said. “He was also astounded when I repeated the orders, he said he did not sign. Can you explain that?”

“I can’t”

“I didn’t think so,” Richter said. “Lieutenant. Arrest Doctor Steiner and have your men board the sub and take custody of the crew.”

Steiner drew his own revolver and shot Richter and the lieutenant.

One of the crewmen from the U-boat opened fire on the lieutenant men with the deck gun, killing some and forcing others to scatter.

Steiner hurried onto the deck. “Let’s quickly get the hell out of here!” He and the other crewmen rushed into the sub as it pulled away from the dock.

Five minutes later, Allied bombs destroyed the port. One of the trailing bomber pilots spotted the fleeing sub, and turned to intercept. A second plane followed. Both unloaded on the diving sub, but the bombs went wide. They swooped down and strafed the sub with machine guns, shooting up the conning tower and the deck gun before the sub vanished beneath the waves.

On the sub, Steiner made his way to the officers’ quarters and opened a door. Pilo sat behind a desk, gazing back at him. “The rockets are on board, My Lord,” Steiner reported. “And we’ve escaped the Allied bombers.”

“Excellent, Franz,” Pilo said.

“I feel awful,” Steiner said. “I just killed two German patriots for doing nothing but protecting my country.”

Pilo produced a bottle of brandy and poured two glasses. “I understand. Sometimes, great sacrifice is needed to promote one’s cause.” He handed

Steiner a glass, and raised his own. "For Novus Ordo."
"For Novus Ordo," Steiner repeated.

September 27, 1930
Yankee Stadium
The Bronx, New York

As Garth explained things, interns had to complete three training missions before being certified as a Senior Temporal Guardians. The first mission involved recording an historical event for the Global Foundation archives. The purpose of the second mission was to ensure that a required historical event occurred the way it was meant to happen. The final and most challenging mission was to work on a temporal cold case file and solve an unsolved police case.

For their first training assignment, Mariah and Connor found themselves sitting along the left field line at Yankee Stadium in 1930.

Baseball is boring, Mariah thought. She, Connor and the rest of the crowd waited for Negro League Star Josh Gibson to come to the plate for the Homestead Grays. The Grays were playing against the home team New York Lincoln Giants, a Negro League Team that leased the stadium when the Yankees were out of town.

Josh Gibson was considered the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues. Even so, there was little newsreel footage of Gibson or the other Negro League stars. The newsreel footage of the all-white Major Leagues was almost as scarce. But none of that mattered to Mariah, who found the whole assignment dull. "They could get any intern to do this assignment," she said. "And I can't stand baseball."

"We *are* interns," Connor said. "And why don't you like baseball?"

"I like the two minutes of highlights on the baseball channel," Mariah said. "As opposed to three hours of boring game time."

"Shhh," Connor said. "You don't want anyone in this crowd to hear you."

"Like they'd know what I'm talking about."

"I think these assignments are fun," Connor said. "We're about to document history. Imagine fans going to the Baseball Hall of Fame one day to see these films. I can't wait to watch Ruth hit his sixtieth home run next

week. He didn't need steroids like McGwire, Sosa, and Bonds to hit that many."'''

"You don't have to go on that assignment."

"I want to," Connor said. "That's why I volunteered to help out."

"I'm surprised you didn't volunteer to go back and get a video of Lon Chaney's lost *London After Midnight* flick."

Connor was silent. Mariah looked at him. "You didn't."

"I did."

"Unbelievable."

"You don't know how many silent horror classics have been lost," Connor said. "Even Doctor Who has missing episodes from its first six years."

"I guess those would be nice to find."

On the field, Josh Gibson took his place at home plate. Connor set his recording device—disguised as a scorebook—to get a wide shot of the pitch.

"He looks older than 18," Mariah said. "Kind of like the Partisans in Italy."

"We grew up more comfortably than they did," Connor said

The pitcher threw, and Gibson smashed the ball toward the left center field fence, 460 feet away. The ball flew over the left field bleacher, landing near the back end of the ballpark.

"*Wow*," Mariah said, impressed with the loud crack of the bat and the ball's trajectory.

"Jesus," Connor said. "Did you see that shot? He almost hit it out of the fucking ballpark. That had to go six hundred feet."

"Please make sure you got it," Mariah said. "I don't want to fail this assignment."

"I got it," Connor said, still recording as Gibson rounded the bases. "We now have archival proof of one of the greatest baseball players in history, hitting one of the longest home runs in Yankee Stadium."

"That's great," Mariah said. "Be sure to filter out our discussion before you turn the recording in."

"Right," Connor said. "We can go now if you like."

"Let's wait until the end of the inning," Mariah said.

"I thought you were bored."

“I don’t want to draw any attention when we leave. We’ll blend in when fans go for food.”

“Good thinking. Who would have thought, when we graduated from high school, that we’d wind up here?”

“Yeah. It seems like a different reality.”

March 27, 2024

Falcone Foundation

**Annex Beneath Santa Croce Church,
Florence Italy**

Mariah paced the white meeting room, waiting for Garth and Ruben. She’d been trained on the intricacies of time travel, and had familiarized herself with the demands of temporal missions. Or at least the demands likely to be imposed on her, for the moment. Today, Garth and Ruben would take her on her second training mission, the object of which was to preserve the timeline.

Finally, Garth and Ruben arrived. “Are you ready for the next training mission?” Garth asked.

“Yes.”

“Your instructor agrees,” Garth told her.

“He’s been a very good teacher,” Mariah said. “What’s the mission?”

“*Pinocchio*,” Ruben told her. “Or *Story of a Puppet*, as it was sometimes known. We’re traveling to a point in time where the author, Carlo Collodi, has published the first fifteen chapters in *Il Gironale di Bambini*.”

“So what’s the problem?” Mariah asked.

“At this point in time,” Garth said, “he doesn’t want to finish the story.”

“What do you mean? Of course he finished the story. I read it as a kid.”

“You’re talking from our vantage point,” Garth said. “In 1881, Collodi wanted the story to end with the puppet hanging dead from a tree, as a message to children about what would happen to them if they misbehaved. So he stopped writing.”

“But that’s not how the book ends,” Mariah insisted.

“We know that,” Ruben said. “But we need to convince Collodi, or one of the most beloved figures in children’s literature will not achieve the

proper level of popularity. And that, believe it or not, will affect Italian and global history.”

“And we’re the ones who convince Collodi to write the rest of the book?” Mariah asked.

“Yes,” Garth said. “His papers were found after he died. There are references to people with our names, who helped guide him, giving him the spark to finish *Pinocchio*. Archivists and analysts at the Foundation discovered the documents among the contents of his small estate. They’re trained to look for such clues. Their work led to this mission.”

“So we’re responsible for the completion of *Pinocchio*?” Mariah asked.

“Yes,” Ruben said. “It’s called retroactive or future causation, depending on the intervention’s point of origin. We go back to ensure the event occurs. Sometimes we provide the means to achieve it.”

“Sounds exciting,” Mariah said. “When do we go?”

“Now,” Ruben told her.

“After we put on the wardrobe of the time first,” Garth said.

They went to the wardrobe department, and donned perfect imitations of late 19th century professional businessperson attire “I feel like an extra in a Sherlock Holmes movie,” Mariah said.

After wardrobe, they stopped by the mission briefing room, where Garth picked up a large folder and gave it to Mariah.

“What’s this?”

“Something to help convince Collodi,” Ruben told her.

Mariah peeked inside the folder, and smiled when she saw the sketches. “These could definitely seal the deal.”

They made their way to the teleportation room, and stood inside colored circles embedded in the floor.

A voice with a Scottish accent bellowed from the intercom. “Everyone ready?”

“Is this where you say “Energize?”” Mariah asked.

“Miss Fischer, this is reality,” Garth said. “Proceed, Mr. Scott.”

“His name is really Scott?” Mariah asked.

“Of course not. But we call him that anyway.”

A moment later, Mariah felt a little lighter. She could see the floor through her body as she disappeared. *Here we go again*, she thought.

December 7, 1881

Near Santa Croce Church Florence, (Firenze) Italy

Mariah, Garth and Cohen appeared in a local alley near Santa Croce. She scanned the area, and saw subtle differences from her time period. The shops and streets looked different, and the people who walked past the alley wore nineteenth century clothes.

“Okay,” Ruben said. “Let’s go.”

Moments later, they were walking up the outside stairs to Collodi’s one-bedroom studio apartment. When they reached the top, Mariah knocked on the door.

“Who’s there?” Collodi’s voice replied.

“My name is Mariah Fischer from Il Gironale di Bambini. Can we speak with you?”

Collodi opened the door and looked Mariah over. “How can I help you?” he asked.

“We need to speak with you about your work.”

“Come in then.”

The three visitors were struck by the studio’s simplicity. The only furnishings were a bed, a cluttered desk, a small table, a stove and a sink.

Collodi looked to Mariah’s companions. “Who are these men with you?”

“These are my colleagues with Il Gironale, Garth and Cohen.”

“My pleasure,” Collodi said, and shook hands with them. “What is it about my work that brings all of you to my door tonight I’ve never seen you people at the office.”

“We’re traveling salespersons for the magazine, Signore,” Ruben said. “We’re seldom at the office. We’re here to talk about more chapters for Pinocchio.”

“Go away,” Collodi said. “I told the publisher that the story should end where it does, with that little rascal hanging dead from a tree, to show little children what will happen if they ignore their parents and engage in mischief. So go back to the office. I have no interest in continuing the tale beyond that point.”

“I understand your feelings,” Mariah said “But it’s important for sales that you continue the story. Our sales people at the office think this is one of the best works they’ve ever seen.”

“You’re teasing me,” Collodi said. “Not even I think of this as my best idea.”

“Nevertheless,” Ruben told him, “your publisher and the sales department wants more.”

“I still can’t see it,” Collodi said. “And even if I wanted to, I wouldn’t know where to take the story.”

“Are you out of ideas?” Mariah asked.

“Frankly, yes. In my mind, the story is done and there’s nowhere else to go with it.”

Mariah pulled the folder of drawings from beneath her jacket. “May I put some things on the table, Signore? This could spark some new ideas.”

Collodi nodded.

Mariah laid out drawings from Disney’s *Pinocchio* adaptation. The pictures featured Jiminy Cricket, the Blue Fairy, Figaro the Cat, Pinocchio with donkey ears, and Monstro the Whale.

“What are these drawings?” Collodi asked.

“Suggestions for characters,” Mariah said, “from one of our illustrators at the magazine. Perhaps you can use them in a longer story.”

“Really.” Collodi said. “These don’t look like the earlier drawings I saw.”

“They’re from a different illustrator,” Mariah explained. “The one assigned to your story was ill.”

“Oh,” said Collodi. “The first illustrator was better. These are poor quality, but let me take a look...” He pored over the sketches, obviously intrigued. “I see,” he said after a moment. “Maybe there is... Pinocchio turning into an ass is an interesting possibility. The Fairy could perhaps be a godmother type... I killed the cricket, but maybe I can find a way to bring it back... I may not be able to fit all of this, but... Interesting. May I keep these a while and think things over?”

“I’m afraid the artist wants them back as soon as possible,” Mariah said. “I told him I’d return them in the morning.”

“All right... I’ll take some notes before you go.”

“We can stay for about half an hour,” Mariah told him.

“That should be plenty of time,” Collodi said. A half-hour later, he gave the sketches back and cleared his throat. “Tell the publisher I’ll think on this. I should be able to get something out in the next week or so. Is that satisfactory?”

“I believe so,” Mariah said, and shook his hand.

“Good. Perhaps I’ll see you at the magazine office.”

“Perhaps,” Mariah replied.

“Very well,” Collodi said. “Good fortune to you and your friends.”

They exchanged farewells. Mariah, Garth and Ruben headed back toward Santa Croce. “You did well,” Garth said, patting Mariah on the back.

“Thank you. It seems ironic that the ideas for the rest of the book came from a film produced decades after he died.”

“That’s time travel for you,” Ruben said. “It can get confusing as far as when and where the original ideas come from. Anyway, we didn’t just help Collodi get over writer’s block; we helped the future global economy.”

“You mentioned that before,” Mariah said. “How so?”

“After making many films,” Garth said, “Walt Disney decided to build two amusement parks, Disneyland in California in the 1950s, and Disney World in Florida, in the 1960s.”

“Sure,” Mariah said. “But how does *Pinocchio* fit in?”

“Well, it gets a little cloudy there,” Garth replied. “Somehow, if Collodi doesn’t finish *Pinocchio* as we know it, the story never becomes popular. Walt Disney never sees it and doesn’t produce it, so his company never has the money to build the parks.

“So we’re helping mega corporation’s now?” Mariah asked.

“No choice in this case,” Garth said. “Disney’s economics are a link in the temporal chain.”

“And that affects the local and national economies?” Mariah asked.

“Yeah,” Garth said. “There’s a lot of money in those Disney products.”

“Precisely,” Ruben said. “Not to mention the impact on Italian and global economic and literary trends.”

“A classic case of both causation and the ripple effect?” Mariah asked.

“Exactly,” Ruben confirmed.

Garth took out his TMD and smiled. “Ready to leave?”

“I’m ready,” Ruben said.

“Wait a second,” Mariah said. “What happens when he asks the publisher about us?”

“Oh, didn’t you know?” Garth asked. “We really do work as traveling salespersons for the magazine.”

“Since when?”

“Since we make our next stop to yesterday and the publisher hires us,” Garth explained.

Garth scoped the area for witnesses, but saw no one. “Let’s go get a job,” he said. “Vivoli’s Gelato is on me tonight.” He pressed the button on the TMD. A bright light engulfed them, and they vanished into thin air.

November 3, 2024

**The Falcone Foundation Annex
Underneath the School of Earth and Space Science, Arizona State University.**

Garth and Ferrara escorted Mariah to the teleportation room for her final test mission, an assignment from the Temporal Cold Files Division. Part of the Foundation’s own mission involved assisting law enforcement with unsolved mysteries. Occasionally, such assignments allowed the guilty to be arrested and justice to be served. Occasionally, a cold file mission helped exonerate an innocent on death row. Most of the time, they simply provided closure to victims’ families.

“Are you ready?” Ferrara asked.

“Yes.”

“You understand what you have to do?” Garth asked.

“Absolutely,” Mariah replied. “I photograph the criminals and any incriminating evidence, then teleport back here.”

“Any last questions on the Diaz case file?” Ferrara asked.

“No. It was so tragic. It happened close to where I grew up in Mesa. On Friday the 13th. I remember my parents watching the news about the murders on channel three. When the killers weren’t found right away, my dad joined the neighborhood watch.”

Mariah stood on the teleportation pad.

“Good luck,” Ferrara told her. She went to the teleporter controls and started the sequence. A moment later, Mariah disappeared.

She arrived on a sidewalk across the street from the Diaz house on Friday, August 13, 2010. . It was midnight, but still hot. *Global warming is a hoax my ass* Mariah thought. She positioned herself behind some bushes,

and settled in. The coroner's report said the killings took place between midnight and 3:00 a.m., and that the victims had been tortured.

And so Mariah waited.

At 12:23 a.m., a 1974 Plymouth Duster parked at the curb. Three men got out. Mariah took out her digital camera and photographed each man as they left the car and walked to the front door. One of the three picked the lock and was able to break through the front door.

After they broke into the house, Mariah stepped from the bushes and took a picture of the Duster's license plate.

A moment later, she was back in her hiding place, pressing the button on her TMD. Nothing happened. She hit the button again, waiting to be taken away from all this. But it didn't happen.

She heard a child scream inside the house. A little girl stared out from the living room window. Her gaze locked on Mariah, and she yelled for help.

Mariah froze. The girl was still looking at her. Still screaming for help.

Holy shit Mariah said to herself. *This wasn't in the case file.*

Everything in Mariah cried out for action. She found herself stepping from the bushes. She saw the girl react, hoping for salvation.

Mariah stopped herself. She could not change this. That would alter the timeline. Change history.

Screw history.

But she could not. Because there was no way to know how that one change would ripple out across the years, decades, centuries. The Butterfly Effect...

She looked to the girl in the window, and heard herself say, "I'm sorry." She watched as a hand covered the girl's mouth and pulled her out of sight. Mariah tried the TMD again. Her last thought before she disappeared was, *Oh my God, what have I done.*

A moment later, she was back in the teleporter room, Garth and Ferrara at the controls. Bernadette—now eighty seven—stood in front of her.

"Aunt Mariah," Bernadette said.

"You still call me Aunt," Mariah said. "When you're in your eighties."

"How was the mission?" Bernadette asked.

Mariah bent down and threw up on the teleporter pad.

Bernadette rested a hand on Mariah's shoulder "It's all right."

Mariah felt the tears coming. "You don't know what I just did."

“I know,” Bernadette said. “You did the right thing.”

Mariah straightened. “What do you mean, you know?”

“There’s a little something we didn’t tell you,” Bernadette said. “You were in a simulation.”

“*What?*”

“Come with me to the meeting room,” Bernadette said. “So we can talk privately.” She led the way. Once there, Mariah had to sit down.

Bernadette cleared her throat. “The temporal cold file mission is *the* most stressful training exercise. Sometimes, Guardians are forced to make difficult decisions during real missions. Simulation is the best way to prepare for that, because incorrect decisions do not affect the real timeline. No harm is done.”

Mariah stared at her.

“Your performance,” Bernadette said, “demonstrates that you have the necessary judgment to become a Senior-Level Guardian.”

“I don’t know if that want to.”

“Right now, you’re upset,” Bernadette said. “And justifiably so. But you’ll get the hang of it, over time. Trust me on this.”

“At the cost of my soul?” Mariah asked.

“We all feel that way on the first cold file mission,” Ferrara said. “Even when it’s a simulation.”

“Everyone goes through the same simulation?” Mariah asked.

“No,” Bernadette said. “They’re customized. The Diaz murders were part of your childhood experience. So we used that.”

“Were those the real murderers?” Mariah asked.

“Yes. One of our more experienced Guardians went on the mission earlier today, and recorded the event.”

“Including the little girl at the window?” Mariah asked.

“No. That was your test. In real life, she never made it to the window. But we needed something for you to react to.”

Mariah glared at her.

“What if I’d saved her?” Mariah asked.

“You would have been classified as a mid-level Guardian,” Bernadette said, “and restricted to level-one and -two missions.”

“Who were the killers?” Mariah asked.

“Right-wing fringe nuts who hated Hispanics. The authorities have already linked them to other Latino murders in Arizona.”

“I still don’t know if I want this responsibility,” Mariah said. “I don’t think I can play God for real. Maybe I’d be better off recording old baseball games and finding lost movies.”

Bernadette went over to Mariah and gave her a reassuring hug. “You’ll be fine. I promise.”

“We’ll see. I need some downtime. Is there anything else you wanted to talk about?”

“Yes,” Bernadette said. “Garth and Ruben want you to join them in planning their next mission. They’ll be going in about a week.”

“What’s the mission?”

“You get to help some old friends in Voltri.”

Mariah smiled. “Thank you. I’ll look forward to that one.”

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Gordon has been a social studies teacher, principal, and the founding owner of the Grand Canyon College Preparatory Academy in Tempe, Arizona. He grew up reading and watching science and historical fiction. He is also a big baseball fan. He combined his various passions in the Jigsaw series, which focuses on time traveling teens thrust into major historical events—many of which never made the standard history books.

David was born in New York and now lives in Arizona with the love of my life Gwyn. They are both dog people, and enjoy travel and food—Italian, Asian, Middle Eastern and Indian cuisines in particular.

Please click on DavidAlynGordon.com and [join our mailing list](#).

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