

Preview The Patriot's Gift

The Patriot's Gift: A Novel
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Prelude

Millions in the American nations mourned the removal of the Statue of Liberty to make room for The World Peace Monument. The U.S. press strongly touted the “new great lady, the Goddess of Peace, Eirene” or Irene, an ancient Greek goddess holding in one arm the infant Plutus, the god of wealth, and in the other arm an olive branch with a cornucopia at her feet full of the good fruits of Mother Earth.

The new statue was a gift from the European Union to the United States. However, the French objected because the Statue of Liberty was historically a gift from France and some in France did not want their gift supplanted. The U.N. declared the new statue as magnificent and representative of all that is desired by modern mankind. New lighting pilings were created in New York harbor to hold powerful new lights to illuminate, to bathe, the new statue in a golden glow throughout the night in spite of the constant power shortage in the Northeast of the United States.

The Texican liberty broadcasts had been ranting against the “pagan monstrosity” for months when they began to raise money for a duplicate Statue of Liberty to be constructed in Galveston harbor. The broadcasts were quick to point out such inconsistencies between the god Plutus, the god of wealth, held by the goddess of peace and the horrifying poverty in the wasted cities of the United States which came about after that country rejected the free market system of a true republic. They also pointed out the difference between the cornucopia at her feet full of the good fruits of mother earth and the vast acres of farmland which produced nothing but weeds as a result of the federal government's control of agriculture. There was also the comparison of the false cornucopia at Eirene's feet full of the good fruits of mother earth as contrasted to the broken chains of tyranny at the feet of the Statue of Liberty which the statue of Eirene replaced.

Amazingly money poured in from around the Texican Republic and from the Southern Confederation, the Central Alliance even sent some, but there were donations big and small from around the world. It was obvious that the children of American liberty in other lands were stronger than liberty in the old U.S. itself. The Texican liberty broadcasts touted this as universal support for the historical American concept of liberty.

The only debate concerning the duplicate in Galveston was how big to make it. The original Statue of Liberty in America was immensely larger than the two copies in France. From the base of the statue itself, not counting the foundation under it, was over 151 feet to the top of the torch. It was over 111 feet from the actual heel of the statue to the top of the head. The entire height including the foundation was over 305 feet. Which made the pedestal about 154 feet high.

The new “pagan monstrosity” at New York was exactly 3 feet higher than the old Statue of Liberty had been. The decision of the Republic on the replacement in Galveston harbor was not to play the height game with the United States. The new Statue of Liberty would be 240 feet high, pedestal included, which was still twenty stories high. It would be constructed of aluminum and painted light green to match the copper patina of the original. The dedication in Galveston Harbor included a magnificent fireworks display and extensive media coverage. It was the party of the decade, the new Fourth of July. This one act represented what they had come to. Now to begin the long road back.

Stephen Hampton had just closed the door behind him.

“I’ve got everything ready for a quick bite, honey...” she began.

“Why?” he asked. He was unusually tired.

“Here, I fixed you a pick me up,” she said handing him a strong cup of coffee. He took the first sip.

“There was a call from the Governor's office. He’s coming here to see us with “two other gentlemen” in, uh, 20 minutes. Just said it was important. I told him it would be convenient.”

“Why didn’t you call me?” he asked.

“It just happened, well, almost just. I’m glad you got home. No sooner had his assistant hung up, Annalaurie called.”

Stephen had never seen Alicia this excited.

“Calm down, sweetheart,” he said as he gave her a quick hug and turned to go to put on a fresh shirt and tie.

“Don’t you want to know why they’re coming?” she asked.

“Yes, yes, what did Annalaurie say?”

“The Governor is going to appoint you to complete the term of Representative Cummings, he’s been sick you know.”

“The Governor’s been sick?”

“Now, don’t tease me, Stephen. Cummings has been sick and has asked to be relieved which you know quite well. You told me about him just a few days ago. Say, did you maybe expect this?” she asked poking him in the ribs as he tried to tuck in his shirt.

“No, not really. I was hoping a little, but nothing had been said,” Stephen said.

“Nate had made just a slight mention.”

“Ah Hah! So that’s why Annalaurie knows. So she tipped us off.”

“Annalaurie knows more than Nate, She always does. She probably knows more than anyone with the possible exception of God Himself,” Stephen said.

“There’s a limo. I’ll greet them. You hurry on out. Do I look O.K.?” she asked.

“You look positively edible,” Stephen said as she scurried to the door and answered as the pretty serene wife everybody expected.

The meeting didn’t last long. Stephen accepted and began his duties the next Tuesday in the Texican Congress. There were 19 months left on Cummings term. Stephen would run for the seat at the next election and win.

Chapter 1

Origins

On Tuesday, January 20, 2032 Clifford C. Laurence was inaugurated as the forty-eighth President of the United States. This was his first and only term. The Republicans ran him as a compromise candidate. Many said that “compromise” was his middle name. All the tracks had been greased by former administrations for what he was about to do.

On Wednesday, May 12, 2032 President Laurence sent the all-inclusive treaty with the United Nations to the senate for approval, complete with the five-year implementation plan. It was approved on Thursday, May 13 with plenty of votes to spare. The fat was in the fire.

The primary issues in the treaty included: The Federal Reserve was to be phased out in favor of the World Bank. The dollar and the euro would exist side by side for the first four years, then the dollar would be eliminated. All existing and future American corporations would have to file an expansion

plan with the office of the U.N. Trade Commission and agree to pay massive fines for plan violations.

The U.N. General Assembly would control the foreign policy of the United States as it did the other member nations. Nations were allowed to have a Defense Force but incursions into other nations would be controlled by the U.N. Security Council. All national armies including troop strength and equipment would be subject to the approval of the Security Council. Militias at any level would be illegal.

All organized religions would be placed under the U.N. Department of Religion. State religions would be allowed in member nations and the states which are a part of those nations. Immigration between contiguous countries would be liberalized. All borders on the North and South American continents were declared open and employment had to be offered on demand. Dual or multiple citizenship would be allowed upon 'simple' application. The executive powers of the President of the United States would, in most cases, equal or surpass the powers of the Congress and the Supreme Court.

All of these changes were to be implemented in five stages over the five year period between 2032 and 2037 inclusive. It was sincerely believed by the U.N. that the implementation of this treaty would usher in a new era of unparalleled peace and prosperity for the world. Although willing acceptance of this treaty was not expected by even the most optimistic one-worlder, the aftermath which would follow surprised them all.

Chapter 2

Reactions

On February 10, 2035 with an absolute unwillingness to be a part of the U.N. takeover the state of Texas with Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Arizona declared the Independent Texas Republic and declared war on the drug cartels. The U.N. Security Council met and condemned their action. These former states of the United States had amassed a significant arsenal to stand against not only the United States but the cartels and even U.N. intervention. In addition to their well-armed land forces which included thousands of heavily armed high tech helicopters, troop transports, light tanks and artillery there were countless land-to-land and land-to-air missile batteries.

The Texas Republic had also secretly brokered a deal through Brazil to purchase one of their two recently purchased air craft carriers which had been bought from the United States. These were fully functional recently refueled

nuclear carriers with a full complement of 70 fighters plus other aircraft. It was soon suspected by every nation in the hemisphere and the U.N. that Brazil had bought one of the carriers for the Texans. The Texas Republic renamed their carrier the "Dallas" and promptly moved it from the Brazilian harbor of Rio de Janeiro to the Gulf of Mexico where it patrolled between Florida and Texas in good range of all five of the Texas Republic's states.

Although there had been considerable unrest for two decades, the actual separation movement began as a reaction to the drug cartels. Texas and Arizona were the most effected by the cartels. The cartels had acted like free agents promoting their own agendas at will. Texas and her neighboring states on both sides of the border were fed up.

The Republic of Texas had divided into three separate states in 2031 in order to fulfill the right that they had reserved when Texas joined the United States union on December 29, 1845. Actually they contended that they had the right to split into five states, but by 2031 for internal reasons they only desired to split into three states. The purpose of this split was primarily to triple the number of Senators from Texas in the United States Congress and by some maneuvering to slightly increase the total number of Representatives in Congress as well. It was not long before this strategy proved unsuccessful in changing the direction of the U.S. Congress and the three states of Texas began acting even more in concert with each other on every issue.

In early 2035 the three Texas states reunited into one Texas state again. Then the new Texas Republic declared all-out war on drug trafficking which was a logical escalation of their developed 'no tolerance' policy against the drug trade. The congress of the Republic declared that a state of war existed between their republic and all persons or nations that promoted the drug trade which effected their Republic directly or indirectly. They had amassed a large enough militia under the command of the Texas Rangers to enforce their demands.

The effect of this force was to dominate the four contiguous Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nueva-Leon and Tamaulipas bordering the Republic. The citizens of these states were relieved to be free of the drug cartels and considering the favor shown the Spanish language by the new Republic readily agreed in a public referendum to join in the formation of the Texican Republic.

These four Mexican states seceded from the nation of Mexico and with the addition of Missouri united with the Texas Republic to form the Texican

Republic in June of 2036. The southern border of these four Spanish states, and therefore of the Texican Republic, were an absolute barrier to drug traffickers.

In the Texican Republic the size of the Texas Rangers had been increased from 99 Rangers to 499 Rangers. All present Rangers who did not speak fluent Spanish were required to become fluent within 3 years and all new Rangers, which was soon the majority, had to be fluent in Spanish before they could be accepted regardless of their other qualifications. The Republic was legally made a two language nation by their congress which put Spanish on an absolute par with English.

A Field Magistrate had been created with special Texican federal judges who could pass death sentences in the field and the Rangers carried out these sentences on the spot. Also, in the absence of a Field Magistrate many drug cartel prisoners were being 'shot while trying to escape'.

The decision to establish the Field Magistrates had been made in haste and desperation. The situation had progressed to the point that action had to be taken. The Republic had to be formed before they could declare war on the drug lords. The United States had become totally ineffectual against the cartels and the United Nations was not going to bless the separation to form the new Republic, at least not the first breakaway. After Texas moved, the other areas were emboldened to separate and the U.N. was not reluctant to give them their blessing since Texas had started the movement by acting unilaterally.

By becoming an independent nation the Republic then had the authority to declare war on the cartels and to proceed against them without legal due process. The Field Magistrates were the only way to put their judges in the field so that the Rangers and the Militia could execute drug dealers on the spot. Of course there was a great outcry against these executions, but no one including the United States or the United Nations was prepared to do anything except to voice their complaints.

The Texicans had duly executed 937 drug dealers and cremated their bodies in the field. Also, by that time they had crossed their southern border into the four Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nueva-Leon, and Tamaulipas at the request of their governors and legislatures who were just as desperate to remove the horror show as Texas had been. The Rangers welcomed local militia from these states if they had a warrant signed by their governor. It was all over so quickly that no one including the United States or Mexico or the U.N. ever had the inclination nor the chance to intervene.

Drug traffic between The Texican Republic and the only other contiguous Mexican state of Sonora was also impossible. The Texican California border was fortified to totally resist the enormous amount of drugs in that U.S. state. At the end of the crisis the Field Magistrates were not dissolved. They became less and less active and their total numbers were reduced from the war time strength of 33 to 14. This left a problem which would have to be dealt with at a later time.

This entire process was done without the prior consent of the United Nations General Assembly or the congress and government of the United States of America or Mexico. The people of the Texican Republic stood shoulder to shoulder in their resolve to form this free state and for some reason, unfathomable to most people, no one forced them to back down. Some said that the U.N. and the U.S. lacked the fortitude to go against the determined Texicans. Others cited the significant buildup of the manufacture and storage of arms and munitions that had occurred in Texas over the previous decades. And some simply said that it was an idea whose time had come. No matter what the reason, it was done and there was considerable concern that other parts of the United States would follow suit. This concern was not unfounded.

There was a lot of activity among the old line Southern states in the U.S. about secession but another area moved first as the North Western states of Oregon, Washington and Alaska joined with the two Canadian provinces of the Yukon and British Columbia to form the North West Federation in 2043 with the full prior approval of the United Nations General Assembly. The two Canadian provinces stood between Washington and Alaska and those Canadian provinces had been won over by the American states. The United States congress was so convinced of the claims of the new world government that it offered no objections to the formation of the North West Federation. Even though Canada was one of the Commonwealth Realms of England where the King is still head of state, the loss of Scotland to the European Union thus dissolving the United Kingdom had weakened England's resolve to object to the loss of two of her Canadian dominions. The world was changing.

The religious realm had also undergone quite a change. Muslims pressed the United States from many sides and the U.N. had become the protector of the U.S. in many ways.

The Mormon Church had experienced massive growth when Utah led in the formation of the Central Alliance of North America in 2047 with the full consent

of the United Nations after which the Alliance soon severed all associations with the United Nations. They gave the reason that such worldwide alliances were against their religion and it was allowed to pass. Utah was joined by Montana, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming as millions of Mormons occupied those states. Kansas City, Kansas was quickly made the capital city of the Central Alliance instead of Salt Lake City, Utah in an attempt to show that the Alliance was not merely the political arm of the Mormons. Salt Lake City was, however, the spiritual capital of the Central Alliance and the first President of the Alliance was also the president of the L.D.S. church.

The Central Alliance wasted no time legalizing polygamy in the Alliance. Other states had been calling for the legalization of polygamy so the Central Alliance decided to lead the way as the Mormons believed that their form of polygamy was a long time custom in their religion and that the Mormons would practice it in a manner that was most pleasing to God while other states seemed to have different reasons for promoting it. The Mormon form of polygamy, polygyny, would, however, be one of multiple wives of one man and not the other way around.

With all of these changes having taken place the Old South finally formed The Southern Confederation in 2050 with the approval of the United Nations. The Confederation included Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee. They did this mostly out of their undying loyalty to the old Confederacy which had gained considerable momentum and their absolute disdain for the Federal government of the United States. It was a bit of a stretch for them to warm up to the United Nations in order to do it, but when all the options had been weighed they swallowed hard and pushed ahead. At least Richmond was now their federal capitol instead of the District of Columbia.

The contiguous 21 states in The United States are in the Northeast. They are essentially another U.N. subsidized country. Most of the larger cities are bankrupt and many of those are wastelands where gangs rule square miles of territory. This is where the Deputized Retrieval Squads do their work. The four scattered states of the U.S. each have their unique problems. The earthquakes of the 2030's made 70% of California uninhabitable so the population fled, many of them to neighboring Nevada. The corruption in Nevada is legendary. Colorado is isolated between the Central Alliance and the Texican Republic and very crowded. It has a very diverse population and crime is high. Florida is also isolated below the Southern Confederation. Many

from California have made their way to Florida which is now one huge theme park. Any fantasy can be fulfilled in Florida and most of it is classified as "adult" entertainment.

Chapter 3

Stephen Hampton

Stephen George Hampton II was born in Charleston, South Carolina in the year 2040. When the Southern Confederation began in 2050, he was 10 years old. He had many vivid memories as he was growing up of his father's enthusiasm for the formation of the Texican Republic in 2036. Judge Charles Hampton had been a major force in forming the Southern Confederation. At first he had wanted the states of the United States Deep South to join the Texican Republic, but he was unable to convince his fellow southerners that such a move would be advantageous for everyone concerned. Stephen's memories were full of his father's enthusiasm.

Stephen's earliest memories of childhood went back to when he was about 5 years old. By 2045 both the Texican Republic and the North West Federation had been born. His fondest memories were of the South Carolina summers because that was when he could run all day in the sun and take off his shoes when his mother was not looking. In the summer he and his mother Suzanne Cooper Hampton, a great Southern lady, would go with their housekeeper to the family farm on the Santee River not far from Charleston. The summer would seem to fly by and it was time for Stephen to go back to school. His mother had wanted Stephen to go to a private school but his father Judge Charles Hampton, even though he was an ardent Episcopalian, disagreed and when the Judge took a stand, he could not be moved off of it.

"No, my dear," the Judge would say. "I want the boy to grow up understanding his fellow men and women. A private school like St. Edwards is just too exclusive."

"But you want him to be a gentleman and a scholar, don't you," Mother would plead.

"Yes, but he will also be a leader and a good leader is one of the people. The public schools will teach him how to be one of the people. Don't worry, dear, he'll go to college at The Military College of South Carolina. That will teach him about his responsibilities as a man and a leader."

Suzanne thought, well at least he will be right here in Charleston for college and we can go watch the parades and see him on the weekends. She satisfied herself with that.

Another strong memory that Stephen had about his parents was the Judge's good friend Nate Pearsall Sr. in Houston. The Judge and Nate would talk on Skype frequently and sometimes for at least an hour. It was obvious even to a little boy that the Judge envied his friend Nate and his new Republic, the Texican Republic. The Judge had wanted all of the South to pull out and be a part of the new republic, but the powers that be in the South East were more cautious than the Westerners and there was considerable disagreement on several important issues. Nate was a well-known attorney in Texas. He had once been the District Attorney for Houston and was well respected in that position. But he preferred private practice. His firm was one of the highest respected firms in Texas.

Stephen remembered visits from Pearsall. He remembered the big hat and the tall boots of this impressive Texan. Nate Jr. was about Stephen's age and sometimes the Judge would take him to Texas with him and the two boys played together.

The formation of the Mormon dominated Central Alliance when Stephen was 7 was the topic of conversation for months in the Hampton household. Now only the South East was deeply dissatisfied with the government of the United States of which they were still a part.

From time to time Stephen's father, Charles Hampton, would fly into a lecture fit and rail against the evils of modern America. His family and the state legislature endured most of his railing before he refused to run again to devote his full time efforts to promoting the separation.

"It's not just the economy or our place in the world that I'm talking about," he said. "It's, well, doesn't anybody have any values these days? I mean, everything goes now. We've been through the same sex marriage thing. Then there was the pedophiles, then bestiality, honestly having sex with a dog or a sheep? And then there's devil worship, and on and on it goes not to mention professional liars in government and professional thieves and confidence men and women in business. Doesn't it ever occur to them that there might just actually be a God and that he cannot put up with this indefinitely? We have to pull out if we don't want to receive judgement ourselves."

He would go on: "The North Eastern states and California and Florida are all the same. There is nothing but filth and fantasy and unquenchable lust. There is no fit place to take children on vacation. We've formed private schools to shield them from the public school cesspools."

"So now we have three, three mind you, new nations which have seen fit to separate from the United States. The Southern Confederation must be next."

When Stephen was 10, the Southern Confederation was finally formed. In a way Judge Charles Hampton believed that the Deep South had settled for second best because a Texican Republic which included the southeast would have been more powerful no matter what name it finally adopted. "I just can't get them to budge on this, dear," Judge Hampton had proclaimed to his wife, Suzanne. "We need the ambition and drive that the Texicans have. And they need our settledness and, yes, our traditions."

Suzanne Cooper Hampton was a wise and outgoing woman. At first glance she merely seemed to be an empty headed southern belle, but underneath was a sharp mind and memory and God help anybody who betrayed any member of her family. She worked slowly and methodically with the weapons available to her to reduce the life of such a foe to a pile of very miserable rubble. She had destroyed the political progress of many of Judge Hampton's critics and they never knew what had gone wrong.

When the Judge saw that his people were much more likely to form their own nation than to join the Texicans, he doubled his efforts. He paid numerous visits to Houston and Dallas for conferences and by the time Stephen was seven years old he took him along. He maintained an apartment in Columbia, South Carolina for his many meetings there even though it was less than two hours away from Charleston. He turned down several opportunities to run for public office to devote his time to the cause of the new Confederation.

"Of course, it would have been better if we could have joined the Texicans," he would admit in confidence. "But this is the next best thing and we can maintain a close alliance with them as we both move forward."

This was the atmosphere that Stephen grew up in. When the Confederation pulled out and formed its own government, it was a day of great rejoicing in the Hampton household. Many adults were amazed at how well informed the ten year old Stephen was on all of the issues of the new nation. He was a smart boy and he had been trained in every detail by his father. His life was planned for him. He would attend and graduate from The Military College of South Carolina in Charleston and then attend law school.

"When the new flag of the Confederation was raised over the capital in Richmond, Virginia on July 4, 2050, little Stephen's heart soared. All of his teenage years were filled with trips to Richmond, Columbia, Houston and Dallas.

Stephen's father had encouraged him to know his own mind and not to depart from his own beliefs and convictions. By the time Stephen was a junior in college he had hatched his own plan which he told to no one, not even his father. He would graduate from the prestigious Military College of South

Carolina and attend law school not in South Carolina but in Texas. By his junior summer he was pre-enrolled at Baylor Law School, the oldest law school in Texas, and a part of Baylor University. Using his father's own concepts about maintaining a strong relationship with the Republic it was still a minor hurdle to convince the Judge regarding Stephen's change in the plans.

The University Of South Carolina School Of Law in Columbia, South Carolina had been the Judge's choice for his son, but Baylor was close enough for Charles Hampton's purposes. The next hurdle would be more difficult, but it was an integral part of Stephen's plan. Stephen intended to move his residence and citizenship from the Southern Confederation to the Texican Republic. As an attorney in the Republic Stephen intended to become a notable statesman, not a politician, to marry well, and to help bring about the union of the Texican Republic and the Southern Confederation. This was his dream and his calling. And there were already hints on the horizon regarding his life partner.

The North American Nations In 2050

The United States (Old Federation) 1776

Capital: The District of Columbia which counts as a state. Total: 24 states.

The Texican Republic 2036

Capital: Houston, Texas. Total: 10 states.

1. Texas
2. Oklahoma
3. Missouri
4. Arkansas
5. New Mexico
6. Arizona
7. Chihuahua
8. Coahuila
9. Nueva-Leon
10. Tamaulipas

The North West Federation 2043

Capital: Seattle, Washington. Total: 5 states.

- 1) Oregon

- 2) Washington
- 3) British Columbia
- 4) Yukon
- 5) Alaska

The Central Alliance 2047

Capital: Kansas City, Kansas. Total: 8 states.

- 1) Montana
- 2) Idaho
- 3) Utah
- 4) Kansas
- 5) Nebraska
- 6) North Dakota
- 7) South Dakota
- 8) Wyoming

The Southern Confederation 2050

Capital: Richmond, Virginia. Total: 9 states.

- 1) Virginia
- 2) West Virginia
- 3) North Carolina
- 4) South Carolina
- 5) Georgia
- 6) Alabama
- 7) Mississippi
- 8) Louisiana
- 9) Tennessee

Hawaii joined the Pacific Nations in 2040.

This story is told looking back from 2080.

The Patriots' Gift 246 pages \$14.95 eBook 7.95
Fiction/Alternative History.

The Patriots' Gift is a novel in which The United States has divided into five nations by the year 2050 A.D. Each of these nations has different convictions and beliefs. The Texican Republic was the first to leave in 2035. They were followed by The North West Federation, The Central Alliance, and The Southern Confederation. The United States also continues. This story follows

the efforts of one family as they strive to reunite these nations. Stephen George Hampton II was born in 2040. When The Southern Confederation began in 2050 he was 10 years old. Stephen's calling and mission is to reunite The Texican Republic with The Southern Confederation.

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/151927730X>

Chapter 7

Newlyweds

Austin is the capital of the State of Texas and Houston is the capital of the Texican Republic. The prestigious law firm of McGregor, Abbott, Calvert, and Pearsall had an historic home office in Austin and a branch office in Houston, although the branch office was bigger than the home office. Stephen was readily accepted as a junior member of the firm and rapidly rose to be a partner. It seemed that being the son of Judge Charles Hampton of South Carolina did nothing but contribute to Stephens rise in the firm.

Judge Hampton and Nate Pearsall Sr. had been friends in various patriotic organizations for a long time and their sons were about the same age. Stephen and Nate Jr. were childhood friends. For the first year Stephen didn't think about anything outside the office except Alicia. Those around them seemed to understand and gave them the customary year of relative privacy. After their first anniversary there were a lot more interruptions to their love nest and Stephen and Alicia had to learn to adapt.

To make up for the pressures of work Stephen would plan a complete getaway for himself and Alicia every month or so at a place where no one could find them. He had purchased an isolated beach house near Galveston on the "Texas Riviera." Actually he had arranged to purchase it in Alicia's maiden name using her middle name as well. It was officially the property of Marie Johnston. The whole maneuver was made possible through the connections of Alicia's new friend and confidant in Texas, Annalaurie Calvert Pearsall, the sister of Edward Calvert IV and the wife of Nate Pearsall Jr. Annalaurie was a tall attractive blonde and one of those people who "knew absolutely everybody." The most unique thing about Annalaurie was that she never told anything about anyone she knew that was in anyway harmful or that would hurt their feelings. If Annalaurie spoke to someone about you, it was a sure thing that she convinced them that you hung the moon, unless you had blatantly attacked one of her special friends. In this regard she reminded Stephen of his mother.

Annalaurie took a special liking to Alicia. She looked on Alicia as a much loved younger sister and was always fussing over her. The thing about this which surprised Stephen was that Alicia liked it. Alicia had never had a sister and Stephen had always considered Martha Johnston, Alicia's mother, to be somewhat of a 'cold fish.'

Annalaurie also had a lot of women friends who were in real estate all over Texas. Since it was generally considered that married women in real estate did not have good marriages, they constituted an unofficial and exclusive women's club and none of their unofficial members would betray another. This code was in existence mostly because so many of them were having affairs that they could not risk breaking the code and betray one another. It was a strange kind of woman's morality. They would all have affairs, but they would never betray one another. Affairs were something that Alicia Hampton did not have.

Annalaurie found Alicia and Stephen their beach love nest, arranged the private sale to a Ms. Marie Johnston, and took care of them in many quiet and personal ways. It was known by the exclusive women's set in Houston that to slander or harm Alicia or Stephen Hampton in any way would be very costly. Stephen, being a man of the world and an attorney, did not entirely trust Annalaurie at first. But eventually Alicia's trust for her rubbed off on Stephen. Stephen came back to the beach house from the grocery one afternoon to find Annalaurie with Alicia. This was not a surprise because Annalaurie's red jaguar was impossible to miss in front of the house. As he entered, arms full of grocery bags, paper grocery bags as Stephen would not accept groceries in plastic bags, Annalaurie was just hugging Alicia goodbye. Alicia was a full head shorter than her friend and Annalaurie always kissed Alicia on the top of her head when she departed. Annalaurie quickly helped Stephen with his burdens, kissed him politely on the cheek and said her goodbyes.

"O.K. Sugar," she told Alicia. "You need anything else at all you just call me, Ummmmm! Love you so much! Bye Stephen, you haaandsome man!" All of Annalaurie's spoken sentences ended with exclamation marks. It was then strangely quiet as if a minor hurricane had just departed.

Paige Martha Hampton was born on May 24, 2064, 8 pounds, 9 ounces, with a strong voice. Alicia was only in labor for 5 hours and Stephen and Alicia were thrilled with their new daughter. They were in for several months of near sleepless nights as Paige took her time coming to the place where she slept through the night. Suzanne Hampton had to compete with the other grandmother, Martha Johnston, for time with Paige.

A woman named Geneviève Marsh in their social circle took an intense disliking to Alicia. Right after their daughter Paige was born, Geneviève made a loose remark to Caroline Bolt, the first lady of the Republic. She said that Paige was most probably not the child of Stephen Hampton. Being a consummate southern lady Mrs. Bolt ignored the remark, but there were a few wags that heard it and the rumor spread. When Alicia challenged Geneviève directly in public, the response was a vicious attack on her and on Stephen. Annalaurie was one of the onlookers when this occurred.

“Oh, Stephen, I just made it worse by confronting her. What is her problem anyway? I hope and pray that this passes before Paige is old enough to understand it,” Alicia said. She was on the verge of tears.

Stephen took her in his arms. “I am afraid,” my sweet Alicia, that this goes with the job. Politics is a messy business even in the Republic. But things like this are almost always like a storm in the desert. It comes up fast and passes quickly.”

Not long after that Annalaurie came by with yet another gift for little Paige. She could tell that Alicia was still troubled over the entire Geneviève matter. Within three months somehow Geneviève’s husband found himself suddenly unemployed from the tech company he worked for and Geneviève was shunned by virtually all of Houston society. They soon moved to Colorado. They were not missed.

It became known in the Republic that Annalaurie was Alicia’s avenging angel.

Chapter 8

Families

Stephen and Alicia had been very impressed with the Mormons after they first arrived in Salt Lake City. They had a suite in a very nice hotel which was part of a chain owned by the L.D.S. church.

“You know Stephen,” Alicia said. “It is really properly called ‘polygyny’ because there are no multiple husbands.”

“I know sweetheart, but it makes me a little nervous. It’s not that I don’t understand their reasoning. One husband can keep several wives pregnant a lot of the time. And if their goal is to increase the population of the Central Alliance as much and as fast as they can, it is really a fundamentally moral way to do it. And look at all the free labor with multiple wives, and the children. They do refer to the Old Testament patriarch Jacob who had twelve sons and at least one daughter by four wives. But why do I feel so shaky about it. Is it

just culture shock? Or something more basic? I mean, could you share me, share my bed, with three or four other women, 'sister wives'?"

"No, I don't believe that I personally could. I would be uncomfortable and jealous." Alicia said, "But this polygyny is, after all, voluntary among them. We have met several monogamous couples and they seem to fit in well."

"I notice that it's the older generation that is monogamous. The polygyny seems to be catching on among the younger ones. Most of the older ones were used to monogamy," Stephen said.

"Of course, you realize that we are getting the 'grand tour' because I am an official visitor from the Texican Republic," Stephen said.

"Yes, and I suppose that the tour is just beginning," Alicia answered.

Sure enough, the next morning, the tour was on with the typical punctual speed and courtesy for which the Mormons were well known. A new limousine arrived at 9:00 A.M. They were given a choice of where they wanted to visit first: the great Tabernacle or one of their model farming cooperatives. They chose the cooperative.

The headquarters barn for this immense farm included the central office. They were introduced around. To say that the people were friendly would be an understatement. Stephen and Alicia agreed later in the privacy of their room that it was genuine.

Alicia did ask, "Do you think this room is, er, monitored?"

"You mean 'bugged'?" Stephen asked.

"Yes, and I ask for more than one reason. I don't particularly want our love making recorded."

"Me either. But I don't think it's their style. They have a lot of respect for family and such," Stephen assured her.

They were transferred from the limo to a late model four wheel drive vehicle and were shown the endless fields of wheat and other abundant crops. At one of the threshing stations it was harvest time. They asked if they could walk among the people. A break was called and they circulated freely talking to the men and women about lots of things. Alicia was particularly bold in the regard.

"So, Aaron," Alicia said, "this is your wife Mary, but Irene, and Naomi, and Abigail, and Deborah, here are also your wives?" Aaron was the only man there.

Aaron grinned broadly, "Yes, and good wives they all are," he said. He gestured to all the children, "And these are our children." Then he proceeded to name all 14 of them. They all smiled at Alicia in turn as they were introduced.

“We are not familiar with multiple wives,” Alicia said. “Tell me, do you all get along.”

Aaron looked at Mary who was obviously the first wife.

“Yes, we do,” Mrs. Hampton,” Mary said. “I love all my sister wives and they love me.”

Alicia intentionally looked straight at Abigail who she guessed was the youngest, newest wife.

Abigail answered after a quick rather stern glance from Aaron. “I do love all of my sister wives, and I am sure that they love me,” Abigail said as she offered a somewhat weak smile.

This only pushed Alicia on. Stephen was beginning to get uncomfortable but he didn’t want to mimic Aaron’s stern look.

Alicia looked at Naomi who was the most outgoing and talkative of them all.

Naomi needed no urging from Aaron to speak.

“You ask if we get along,” Mrs. Hampton. “We do get along and we do all love each other. My sister wives are dear women and our husband is loving and fair. Now, we wouldn’t want you to get the impression that we are perfect, that we never disagree or have a little spat from time to time.”

Aaron was still smiling. Naomi continued. “But we have standards, rules, and when we have an honest disagreement, we talk it out and look for the wisest solution.”

“And if, in the end, you don’t agree?” Alicia asked.

“Then our husband decides and we all obey,” Naomi answered.

Alicia was looking very intently at the other wives as Naomi answered. She could tell from their expressions, no matter how hard they tried to hold a neutral smile, that there was some deep feelings in each of them about this. Alicia promised herself to continue to talk to the women about this.

Aaron promptly called an end to the break. All the women hugged Alicia and Aaron shook Stephen’s hand vigorously. There seemed to be so much harmony among them. As they drove away, Alicia noticed how attractive this family was as they worked hard sweating in the sunlight. It would have made a great portrait. One powerful man and five beautiful women with their adorable children around them. A beautiful sight. But Alicia wished she could see inside. Her intuition told her that there was more and that there was no real liberty here. After several years of marriage Stephen had learned to trust her intuition. They moved pretty much as one.

“Of course, when they first began, there was a need to grow their church as fast as possible and just like in the Old Testament multiple wives was the way to do it. One man can keep multiple women pregnant, but it still takes nine

months to produce a baby. Plus in an agrarian culture it provides lots of farm workers.” Stephen said.

“True,” Alicia answered. “But somehow it still makes a woman who is one of four wives have one fourth the value of a single wife.”

“Never thought of that,” Stephen said.

“Because you’re a man, my love,” she said as she straightened his hair. “My own beautiful man, but alas, still a man.”

Stephen just smiled.

“And,” Alicia continued. “No amount of belief or theology can control a woman’s feelings. There are still bound to be negative feelings, jealousy, pain, for a woman who is a part of a pool of wives for one man. No matter how hard she tries to be politically correct in her own culture there has to be some pretty rough feelings way down deep even if they don’t show it.”

“I have no doubt that you’re right on that, love,” Stephen said. “Still, the majority of these men are monogamous by choice.”

Alicia and Stephen had finished with their visits to the Central Alliance before Alicia started to show with Connie. But Alicia’s family zeal had been encouraged by being with the Mormon families. Constance, Connie, Suzanne Hampton was born on September 10, 2066, 8 pounds, 5 ounces. She was a quiet baby. She was sleeping through the night soon and Paige was fascinated with her new sister.

Chapter 11

Rescue

When Stephen's home videophone tweeted, he touched the control to find his father waiting. The Judge looked serious so Stephen took his cue from him. It was going to be one of those ‘get right down to it and decide on a solution’ calls.

“Stephen, your mother has just had a rather frantic call from her sister Charlotte in Charlotte,” the Judge began.

This was an old joke within the family, that Suzanne’s sister Charlotte should live in Charlotte, North Carolina, but Stephen had already received the message that this was no time for levity.

“Yes, sir.”

“Here, I’m going to put her on.”

Stephen motioned for Alicia to join him.

“Hello, Darling,” Suzanne began. “Oh, there’s Alicia, Hi!” Suzanne waived.

She was one of the few people Stephen knew that waived over the videophone. “Charlotte says that her granddaughter is in a terrible fix, well, probably. You know your cousin Agnes’ daughter.” She waited for a nod or a

grunt from Stephen. He nodded. He also knew that this was no occasion to grunt at his mother, to grunt at the Judge would be all right, but not to the great lady.

Suzanne continued, "Well, sweetheart, you may remember I told you that little Kim fell in love with some welder or something in Chicago and they finally got married. Now they have a little boy about four, Clifford of all names, they call him "Little Cliff." Well, the father, his name's Bill, got into trouble with some reaaaaly bottom shelf 'business men,' if you get my drift..."

Susanne always blinked very rapidly when she was saying something that she really didn't approve of saying, then there was a pause. Stephen and Alicia waited patiently. "Well, Stephen, they're gone, all three of them, just gone." "Gone where, Mom?" Stephen asked.

"We don't know. Charlotte doesn't know. Agnes lives in Colorado now. A neighbor, God only knows how trustworthy she is,..." more rapid blinking, "says two men in a gray van picked them up three days ago and they have never returned. Kim had asked this neighbor to call Charlotte if anything like this 'evaah' happened. Well, I'll tell you, Charlotte is beside herself and Agnes is even acting somewhat concerned. I told Charlotte not to marry that Healey boy. Agnes is just like her father was." Suzanne paused for a breath.

Judge Hampton appeared back on the screen with his arm around his wife. "Stephen, I'm thinking if we can't find out anything promising within the next forty eight hours, you and I might have to go up there and find them"

"I think you're right, Dad," Stephen responded. He knew that the Judge would have some contacts.

"I'll call a couple of my friends and get back to you. If we have to go, we can meet at the Memphis airport and go right up to Chicago. Say Son, do you think one of those Deputized Retrieval Squads would be of any help?"

"No, Dad, No, let's leave them out of it," Stephen said with a note of alarm in his voice.

"Well, you would know best about that, I just remembered that you went on a mission with them once before."

"Yes, Sir, and they eliminate much better than they retrieve," Stephen said.

"All right, then, I'll call you tomorrow and the next day with updates. You be ready to go."

"Yes, sir," Stephen said, "We'll be praying," Alicia added.

"Thank you, sweetheart," Suzanne added.

Twenty four hours yielded nothing. Stephen packed a back pack with several handy articles. As a Congressman of the Texican Republic he would check the bag to Memphis under a diplomatic ticket. As an honorary Under Secretary of State for the Southern Confederation the Judge would do the

same. There would be a few surprises in their luggage that might come in handy.

Forty eight hours and still nothing. Stephen used his reservation to Memphis. They connected easily to the Chicago flight and to their surprise they were met at O'Hare Airport by a diplomat from State Department of The United States Of America and two men in black suits. Stephen had to work hard to properly ignore the two men, He kept wanting to smile. The Judge was all business. Stephen whispered in his father's ear, "If we allow these men to 'help' us Bill, Kim and Cliff could end up hurt or worse."

"We're just here on some family matters," the Judge said in his most official voice. "Really nice of you fellows to meet us, but there's nothing to bother you with."

The Diplomat smiled and showed them to the waiting limo. It was a long quiet ride to the Drake hotel where the Judge had made reservations. They passed through two police check points and one army checkpoint. At the army checkpoint Stephen noticed several fires to their left and so did his father. No one said anything. It certainly looked like a dismal 'no man's land' out there and both Stephen and his father knew that was the direction they would have to go to find their three lost relatives.

The next morning they both put on informal clothing with extra coats and lace up hiking boots. It was early March in Chicago and still quite cold. The Judge had reserved the suite for two weeks. They took a cab as far as they dared to a point just outside the worst of it. The cabbie got them past two police check points but balked at attempting the military one. They got out to walk and gradually walked back to what seemed like a war zone a hundred years in the past. Stephen had brought a machine pistol for himself and his dad. He was forced to use his earlier than he wanted to. He fired close but not directly at the gang members who fled right away as they had nothing like it. There was an extreme shortage of firearms in the United States.

When they had finally rooted them all out, it gave away that they had such weapons and they would be marked from then on. Before this was over they might actually kill some people. Since they were in an area where Retrieval Squads were used, that would not matter much. If worse came to worse, the Judge would call the number the diplomat had given them on his satellite phone and request an immediate military rescue and pay the diplomatic price later. One thing was true, this was a family matter.

Starting with Kim's neighbor and moving on, within seven hours they had bribed four people and been led to an 'abandoned' warehouse where Kim and her husband and baby were supposed to be hiding. But they were nowhere to be found.

They decided to 'camp out' on the top floor of an abandoned office building. It was a six story building and with no electricity the elevator was not working. The Judge kept up well with Stephen on the stairs and they chose the room at the top of the stairs and checked that floor to be sure that they were alone there. As humans they were alone, but there was an abundance of scurrying 'varmints and critters' as Suzanne loved to call them. From this vantage point Stephen could guard the stairs and his father could keep an eye on the streets below through the windows. They slept lightly on and off and were both awake just before dawn. They ate some of their rations and were back on the street as soon as it was light enough to see.

After avoiding several gangs they ran across a different looking young man on the deserted street. He was different looking because he seemed fairly civilized and clean. He was also very large. Stephen guessed that he was at least 6'6" and over 250 pounds. He even asked if he could help them.

"Yes, we're hunting for my great-niece Kim Collier and her husband Bill Collier. They have a little boy with them. Oh, by the way, I'm Charles Hampton, this is my son Stephen."

"My name's Paul," the giant said extending his hand. They both shook hands with him.

"Nice to meet you, Paul," the Judge said. "So nice to meet a fine fellow like yourself, ah, in a place like, ...well, ..."

"I understand, sir. It is a God forsaken place. I am, well, sort of a missionary here."

"A missionary. I see."

"Yes, a self-appointed missionary, but a missionary all the same."

"I'm from the Apostle's Church Of The Cross, we have a feeding station a few blocks away."

"I see. Well, I'm an Episcopalian and my son here has become a Baptist," the Judge volunteered.

"A Baptist, I know Baptists," Paul answered shaking Stephen's hand again.

"Can't say I've ever met an Episcopalian though."

"Well, there's not many around here," the Judge said.

"If you will come with me to our little mission, we will see if anyone has seen your folks," Paul said striding off down the street. Stephen and his father were hard pressed to keep up.

The mission was an isolated two story building next to what had once been a gasoline station. The streets all around were cluttered with trash and junk. There was several abandoned old cars and one burned out car. The little mission building was fortified with a variety of bars on the windows and even a few sandbag barriers.

"I learned how to secure a position in the army," Paul said.

"The United States army?" Stephen blurted. Then he realized that he may have made a mistake.

"Yes, you're not from the United States, are you?" Paul said.

Stephen decided quickly that he might as well come clean now. "No, I am from Texas."

"Yes, the Texican Republic. I've been there," Paul said.

By now they were inside the mission. There were at least a dozen people eagerly eating some soup and bread. A tall young woman quickly emerged and kissed Paul.

"My wife, Nancy," Paul said.

There were greetings all around. Paul motioned to a rather disheveled middle aged man to come over to their table and introduced him as Charlie. Paul chatted with Charlie quietly for a few minutes while asking Stephen to describe Kim and Bill and the child. Then Charlie moved away without ever making eye contact with any of them.

Paul leaned forward and talked quietly. "Your folks might be being held in a basement nearby," Paul said. "Now, I can't go with you. It would impact too heavily on my work here because we live here. But you have machine pistols, I believe, and you can probably get them out."

Stephen and his father exchanged glances. No use denying this. No use saying anything.

Paul began again, "But what I can do is drive you out of this area with your folks afterward. I have a good vehicle hidden here and I'll show you where to meet me."

"Stephen and Charles Hampton did not have to speak to each other about it. They both knew that if Paul was not the person they thought he was, they could all be captured or killed at the rendezvous. They also realized that they had little choice. Charles motioned for his son to make the decision.

"I don't know how we can thank you," Stephen said.

"No need," Paul said. "This is one of the many reasons we are here. Now, let me show you the location of the meeting place." Paul took out a flat carpenter's pencil and drew on a somewhat used paper bag that Nancy provided. The meeting place was only three blocks North and two blocks East of the Mission. In a few minutes Stephen and Charles were on their way. Stephen and Charles went straight to the outside basement stairs of the building after holding two scruffy looking guards at gunpoint and tying them up. They pushed through the shabby double doors with the machine pistols covering the entire area. They didn't notice anybody, the area must have been empty. They heard shouts of "help" from a room about 50 feet inside and Stephen shouted, "Kim!"

“Yes, here, oh, please hurry!” she responded. Both Stephen and Charles recognized her voice.

They found the door locked. So Stephen told them to clear away from the door and shot off the lock. But this made a lot of noise and they knew it was time to move very quickly.

Kim wanted to kiss and hug a lot. Charles told her that there was no time for that. Bill was walking with a limp but he still picked up his son and they all cleared the basement door, the steps and crossed the main street to a side street in a hurry where they rested for a short time. Stephen and Charles looked at the hand drawn map and saw what they must do. Stephen picked up little Cliff and Charles pulled one of Bill’s arms around his neck and they moved as fast as they could to meet Paul.

Paul was there. His vehicle was an ancient Hummer that had evidently been painted several colors over the years, but once inside they all felt safer. Paul proceeded quickly but carefully toward where Stephen and Charles had stepped out of their last cab into the no man’s land of the carcass of Chicago. They were far enough into the safer part of the city to find a cab.

“Charles gave Paul a large amount of United States currency and they all thanked him profusely. A cab returned them to the Drake hotel where several people including the doorman looked at Kim and Bill and Cliff disapprovingly. Security was called. Only Secretary Charles Hampton’s credentials kept them from being denied access. They went to their suite and the Judge actually ordered clothes for them all from a shop in the hotel over the phone.

They rested and ate and rested and ate. The house doctor cleaned up Bill’s foot and treated the infection. The next day they dealt with the next problem. They had no entry papers for their three relatives. The judge had brought some temporary papers with him for them so they could all fly to Memphis. Stephen had papers and a car waiting for them in Memphis to take them to Dalhart, Texas near the Colorado border so Agnes could visit her daughter and Bill and her grandson from where she lived in Colorado in the United States. Bill would work at the ranch of a friend of Stephen’s near Dalhart. It was good that these three refugees had powerful relatives.

“We did it together, son. We planned it and we pulled it off,” the Judge said on the plane to Memphis.

“We sure did, Dad.”

“When I was a child, the whole country was free and prosperous and open. Look down there. America the beautiful,” the Judge said.

“I hope and pray my children will have it all back,” Stephen said. “But,” he added, “it may take longer.

“I’m afraid so, son,” the Judge said.

“There’s so much to rebuild,” Stephen said. “The very concept of liberty. The economy built on free enterprise. The work ethic. The faith in God.”
“And they threw it all away,” his father said.

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