



# The Man Who Stole The Sun

## by Jay Jacob Wind

### PART ONE

#### LONG BEFORE SUNRISE

5:00 AM, Saturday, October 29

Long before sunrise, Leo Louche opened his eyes.

He rolled silently out of bed, hoping not to awaken Leslie. In the dark, he felt around on his night table for the yellow button embossed with a black asterisk. He pushed the button once, then paused, then pushed it again four times. The lamp in the bathroom turned on, a sliver of light visible under the door.

He looked back at his most practical invention – an eight-foot long bed, long enough for his head not to hit the headboard and for his feet not to dangle over the end, with temperature control and pressure control, all managed by one yellow button with a black asterisk, and a set of sensors that recorded every heartbeat, every breath, every body heat change, every toss and turn, a data collection he reviewed every day for just a moment so he could optimize the controls. At two meters tall, he needed every centimeter of that length.

Leslie quietly slept. She had her own controls for her side of the bed.

Rising and stretching his legs, Louche walked to the solid-blank double-thick drapes, parted them by one centimeter, and peered through the eastern sky into the deep darkness over the Pentagon and Potomac River, where the Sun was thinking about rising.

“Tomorrow, my 21<sup>st</sup> Marine Corps Marathon,” he whispered to himself, “but today is the day. Today is the day I steal the Sun.<sup>1</sup> I can do this, darling,” he whispered, barely making a sound. “All I ever hoped for, all I ever dreamed. I shall bring light to the world.”

He walked into the bathroom, closed the door tight, and rolled a towel at the base of the door so no steam could escape. He closed his eyes tightly. He bit his lower lip, almost hard enough to draw blood. “The bastards never thought it could be done,” he whispered. “*Time Magazine* said fusion energy is 30 years away and always will be.<sup>2</sup> Well, today, it's one day away. Today is the day.”

He felt around on the sink for the yellow button with a black asterisk, pushed it once, paused, then twice. Instantly, the drains closed at the bottoms of the sink and the shower, hot water streamed out full blast from the sink and the shower at exactly 55° C, and steam began rising. He loved the warmth of being in a steam room before he did anything else each day. In the steam, he washed his hands,<sup>3</sup> and eyes still closed, he reached left and pulled a hand towel from the rack. He turned back to the sink. He soaked the cloth in hot water and brought it to his eyes. Carefully, painfully, he washed the crystals out of the folds of his eyes. Slowly, cautiously, he opened his eyes. He felt around the vanity until he found his eyeglasses and put them on. Now he could see the world. He designed those eyeglasses himself, in high school, 25 years ago, before the retinitis pigmentosa<sup>4</sup> got real. At 26.00 diopter, his eyeglasses were eight times more powerful than the puny 3.25 diopter glasses commercially available. With the glasses on, he could see well enough to read small print, to see the detail in pictures, and to identify stars. With the glasses off, he couldn't even see his fingers.

He looked through the eyeglasses at the unfolding dawn. He recalled their story and what happened next.

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The eyeglasses were his first invention. His Evanston Township High School chemistry teacher, Dr. Harry Halstead, gave a lecture about the diffractive properties of various nanoparticles, most notably gold, which yielded multiple colors<sup>5</sup> in medieval stained-glass windows – colors that had not faded even after hundreds of years being bombarded by ultraviolet radiation.<sup>6</sup> That lecture gave Louche an idea. From his optician, he obtained four lenses of 3.25-diopter shatterproof glass. From Merck, he obtained 10 grams of gold nanoparticles of various sizes, one-thousandth the thickness of a human hair. He used the high school's mailing address to avoid any questions of why a student would order nanoparticles. He didn't tell his parents that he used his bar mitzvah money to pay for the gold. In the biology lab, he used a powerful microscope painstakingly to deposit gold nanoparticles of various sizes between the lenses, layer-by-layer, sufficient to diffract light in every direction. His first experimental glasses, with two 3.25-diopter layers on each sides, yielded 6.50 diopter total.