

## 1 Awakening

General, Terán, Mexico

The cold chill throughout her body interrupted her sleep. Elizabeth sat up on her bed trembling, it started again. She knew her body started the Awakening process again. The process started a couple of weeks ago and would continue off and on for the next couple of months. It always started with the cold chills, then the hot flashes, but the worse was a splitting headache. It felt like her brain was being reshaped, moved around, and squeezed. Margaret, her mother, could not help her or counsel her, she is an Earth woman. Earth women do not have the same experience when they reach puberty. Elizabeth is half-alien she is in her late sixties but had the appearance of a twenty-year-old woman.

She and her mother have been living on the run hiding for sixty-years. It has been a tough life, but it is going to get a lot tougher. Elizabeth thought she was sterile like many women on her father's planet, she was wrong. Her body is awakening and preparing for childbearing.

Elizabeth left her room, walked into the living room, and sat on the floor in the center. She started to meditate. Meditation helped her with all the turmoil going on inside of her, she needed to relax. Elizabeth did

not know which emotion troubled her more. Was it stress, fear, excitement, depression, anxiety, nervousness, or anger she didn't know? She never thought she would experience motherhood. She had reached puberty, and she had a fertile egg in her womb getting ready to receive someone's DNA. Her father Charlie told her the Awakening process prepares a woman for life's greatest miracle.

Having a child is going to make it much more difficult living on the run. Margaret is ninety-years-old, and it is already a problem. If her baby is like her and her father, hiding her child is going to be most difficult at least for the first three or four years. She understood exactly how difficult it would be. When she returned to Earth with her parents, she was still a baby in an accelerated state of growth. She was fifteen-months-old, but she had the appearance and the mentality of a six-year-old child.

If the baby is like her Earth mother things would be a little easier and not as stressful. The baby would grow at a normal rate like Earth children. The uncertainty of her life hiding with a child worried her. She had to put the running and hiding thoughts aside. The current priority is to let nature take its course let her Awakening process finished.

The half-alien future mother continued sitting on the living room floor in deep meditation. It was a cool December morning yet sweat ran down her face. Her body was changing and her mind was still developing. Electrical impulses caused millions of neurons to enhance the six brain lobe functions in her brain. Dormant brain cells in her head woke up. Memory templates opened and became part of her. It had been years since

she had experienced such activity in her head. This time it was different not as terrifying or painful as it was when she was a child.

She will never forget the day her father was killed. It was a memory that she tried to put behind her with little success. The old memory caused her eyes to water. Tears ran down her cheeks and mingled with the sweat on her face.

She was a six-year-old still too young, but the situation forced her father to perform his mind transfer. Elizabeth watched her daddy helping Sheriff Kollaus. The hurt Sheriff laid on the sidewalk. He had suffered a head injury from the car accident, but his condition worsened. Right there lying on the sidewalk in front of all the people - he had a heart attack. Charlie was doing his best to save the Sheriff when she heard a loud gun blast behind her. The bullet struck her father's upper back. The sight horrified her. She was close to her daddy; his blood splatted on her face. The gruesome sight of seeing her father shot and bleeding paralyzed her. Her young innocent mind and heart did not understand why there was so much violence. Charlie reached out to her knowing his life would end soon. He grabbed her head and pulled her to his forehead.

There was no time to waste; Charlie had to transfer his knowledge to his daughter. It was not the appropriate time; she was still too young. He knew the process had to be gradual and performed over a period of several years. Too much at once was dangerous and could overwhelm a young fragile brain, but Charlie had no choice. His end of life was fast approaching. The alien father hoped he could transfer his life's knowledge to his daughter before he died.

Once their foreheads touched the vibration and electrical impulses began. Charlie's brain transferred sequences of electrical patterns. Knowledge and memory templates burned into Elisabeth's young brain. When the last sequence template finished Charlie's lungs released his last breath, and his body went limp. Charlie from Nadin, The Third Linked Plant, died of a gunshot wound on the planet Earth.

The shock of seeing her father die in front of her overwhelmed her. The mind transfer had left her unconscious slumped over her father's body.

Elizabeth regained consciousness hours later and found herself alone locked in a small room. Her heart was pounding and her throbbing head clouded her thoughts. She sensed her mother not far away, but she was alone in the small room. Six-year-old Elizabeth was drenched in sweat. Her head felt like it was about to explode like an over-inflated balloon. She never noticed when an armed soldier opened the locked door to check on her.

Elizabeth rolled from side to side, on the cot, holding her agonizing head. Electrical impulses bombarded dormant brain cells in her six brain lobes. Billions of neurons started generating electrical signals between the lobes of her brain. The activity between all the brain lobes worked themselves into a frenzy. The temperature in her head and body increased, causing her to sweat even more. Elizabeth clawed at her pounding head searching for the painful nails embedded in her forehead, but there were none. The pain was deep inside and she couldn't make it stop, and yelling didn't help.

Images flashed through her mind non-stop faster than her brain could process them. Sleeping brain cells had awakened giving her greater psychic

and telepath abilities than she already had. What confused her the most was the memories, sensations, and knowledge that she acquired. Elizabeth remembered places she had never visited. She knew how to configure a transport chamber. She remembered the taste of fruits and food she had never eaten. The distant subtle voices she used to hear were gone. The voices were now loud, frequent, and numerous.

Charlie had warned her more than once about the rebellious voices on Nibe. After that day, it became so clear to her. The harassment of the voices was most frightening, and she struggled with ways how to ignore them. There was no way of shutting the voices off. Deep sleep was her only retreat. The rebellious spirits are everywhere, and there is nowhere to hide. The small room felt crowded and she could hear the voices all over. Some of them were even speaking to her.

"They murdered your father; make them pay." A voice behind her said.

"Turn their guns on each other; you can do it." The voice came from her right side.

"Make them pay for what they are doing to your mother." Another voice to her left side said.

The young child looked around in all directions looking for the people who talked to her but no one was there. She heard them and felt their presence, but she couldn't see them.

"As long as you stay on Earth, you will hear our rebellious bother's voices. The voices will stop when you return to Nadin." Elizabeth remembered hearing her father's words, or was it part of her father's knowledge transfer, she did not know anymore. It was confusing to her

young mind, all the things she thought. She didn't know if it was her memories or her father's.

After so many years, her brain still has problems understanding her memories and thoughts. For a half Nadin woman, she was still very young and started going through puberty. The average life expectancy of her father's people on Nadin is 340-years.

Elizabeth continued sitting on the floor, meditation did not come easy for her. Even now the voices harassed her. The rebellious bothers took every opportunity to suggest terrible things. Her father's memories and how he died stirred the rebellious spirits into a flurry. Elizabeth ignored them. Dealing with her father's death that happened many years ago had been difficult. She was still dealing with it. She had grown, matured, and her body was Awakening. The thought of becoming a mother was a powerful wonderful experience.

Elizabeth wiped the sweat and tears from her face, continued to breathe, and succumbed to the changes happening in her body and mind. She was not like her mother. The majority of Earth women can have many children. She would have one child in her lifetime and she was fortunate at that. Many of the women on Nadin can't have children and the women that can have only one child. The women that can have a child are called The Chosen One.

She knew she was one of the fortunate women experiencing Awakening; her body and mind prepared for childbearing. The next step is to get DNA to start the process for her already fertile egg in her womb. The DNA she wants has to be the purest possible DNA sequence. She remembered a boy she met forty-two-years-ago; he had a pleasant aura and had good thoughts.

Jacob Andrews's aura hinted of his strong natural immune system. His DNA was not perfect, but better than most she had ever met. She made up her mind and planned the trip to the United States. She wanted Jacob's DNA.

## 2 Second Thoughts

FBI Academy Quantico, Virginia

Gary Hurst sat alone in his room at the FBI academy. The dormitory was now eerie quiet everyone had left three days earlier except him. He sat on his bed shaking his head as he stared at the new 40-caliber Glock model-23 pistol, in his hand. His mind was going wild. He was nervous, excited, worried, and angry with himself. Gary turned his attention to an open box of Federal hollow point bullets on the nightstand. He reached for a box of ammo but his hand fell short.

*Shit, how in the hell did I get here,* he reflected as he tightened his lips and shook his head. The new FBI agent had second thoughts on his new job. His psychological reasoning told him his emotional baggage caused him to mess up again.

He remembered someone said, "We are the architects of our own destiny." Gary never understood that, but he was starting to accept it now. His education, experience, and the twenty-eight years he walked on Earth made him a believer.

His father often told him, "If you don't reach your goal, within reason, of course, it is because you didn't want it bad enough. The person

stopping you, from succeeding, is you?" Gary saw how true that is. He would hear people bitching all the time about how hard life is, or how unfair it is, but they would not do anything about it. The sad truth is, "We are where we choose to be." He questioned himself, was he an FBI agent because he planned it or because of something else.

Gary wrote a college paper for one of his Psychology classes. He researched that in general, people are able to control eight-five percent or better of their destiny. The remaining fifteen percent are situations that happen beyond their control. He realized he was an FBI Special Agent because he put himself there. It was not by chance, fate, or coincidence. Gary knew that somehow, it had something to do with his parent's divorce; feelings from his mother played a major factor.

He had mixed feels about his new job. Gary was not sure he wanted a law enforcement carrier. He never gave it a thought about working for the U.S. Government carrying a gun and badge. It was not the same as in the Air Force. He put in his six years and got out.

*Thousands of people apply for an FBI job, and only a few are considered and here I'm a special agent,* Gary thought as he looked at his shiny new pistol.

He psychoanalyzed himself to determine how he managed to get where he was. He often did that when things got weird, and this was one of those times. He had no one to blame, for being there. All he had to do was to look in the mirror to see the guilty person. He knew his parent's divorce was one of the reasons he was there. He was pissed off because he knew his emotional baggage caused him to make the wrong decision again. His self-evaluation and psychology studies told him his mother screwing around had

screwed him up big time. He was trying like hell to get his mother's promiscuous past behind him and to fix his screwed up mind. Gary felt like a dumb ass, he felt like he was seventeen all over again.

He became interested in Psychology because he wanted to know why people do the things they do. He wanted to figure out what happened to his family, why his mother did what she did, and figure out how to fix his issues with women.

His parents, Lenard and Linda, divorced when he was a junior in high school. That was the last time his family had Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, and vacation together. There are so many events in a family life he took for granted. The divorce caught him by surprise because his parents seemed like they had a good relationship. He never saw anything that showed otherwise. Both his father and mother showed affection for each other all the time, and he never heard them argue. He knew they had their arguments but they were trivial and they ended with hugs and kisses. As far as he could remember, he heard his mother tell his dad she loved him. He must have heard "I love you" a million times.

Gary remembered the look on his father's face when he walked into his bedroom and told him they were getting a divorce. He had never seen his dad with that look before. He said he was filing for a divorce because his mother was seeing someone else. He did not have to go into details, but Gary knew what his father meant when he said his mother was seeing another man.

His young teenage hormone active mind went wild. He imagined his mother in bed with another man doing what naked men and women do to each other. The images in his mind caused his stomach to knot up, and he felt

anger, disgusted, and disappointment. Gary had his mother on a pedestal. He thought of her as the perfect mother, the perfect wife. After that day, his vision of a perfect mother crumbled. He did not think he could feel any worse, he was wrong. He hit rock bottom when his father told him she cheated on him before some years back. His dad explained his mother's cheating devastated him. His first reaction was to file for a divorce, but after giving it considerable thought, he decided to get marriage counseling. He needed help to deal with the betrayal. Besides, Leonard Hurst did not want his wife's boyfriend raising his son.

Leonard attended dozens of marriage counseling sessions and talked to several priests. His father made the decision to forgive his cheating wife. He figured it could have been him. The temptation to cheat on his wife had presented itself many times. The temptation grew stronger when several women propositioned him. Leonard had to admit and understand that no one is perfect. He knew everyone makes mistakes some big, some small, so he gave it his best effort to forgive his wife to make their marriage work.

It was not an easy task. He learned how to manage the anger, the doubts, and the mistrust but when he caught her, again he decided to file for divorce. One of the things that confused Gary was that she did not want to get a divorce even though she continued to see other men. She would say she loved her husband, wanted to stay together and wanted to work things out. His mother's remarks did not make any sense to him or his father. She pleaded with her husband to forgive her again, but Gary's dad did not want to deal with it anymore. The trust was gone forever, and he pressed forward with the divorce.

Gary's high school senior year was an emotional roller coaster ride. The divorce turned his life inside out. The house sold below market value. His mother wanted her share of the money quick. Father and son moved into an apartment soon after.

Gary caught himself crying often. It was too much for a seventeen-year-old. He often wondered how his friends dealt with their parent's divorce. Gary never thought his parents would divorce. He felt ashamed for crying but he could not help it. His father caught him once crying in his room.

"Let it out, son. A man needs to release his emotions," his father told him.

Lenard Hurst hugged his son and cried with him. Hurst senior did not cry for his ex-wife; he cried because he could not stand to see his boy cry. Linda Hurst moved across town with a girlfriend. Gary stayed with his father to finish high school. His dad took the divorce hard but he had gone through the emotional roller coaster a few years back. This time it hurt but not as profound, so he recovered much faster, unlike his teenage son.

Gary did not expect his parent's divorce would affect him that much, but it did. The Christian vision of his mother evaporated. He stopped going to church because of his mother. Not because he would see her there but because as far as he could remember his mother always got him up, to get him ready, for church. She talked about being a good Christian and she even taught Sunday school class for several years. The family life, the church, and his faith as he knew it disintegrated. He felt he had lived a lie. It was all a make-believe life, a con, or a bad dream. What little

faith he had in the church evaporated, thanks to his mother. He felt betrayed and had a profound disappointment, but he still loved his mom.

Seventeen-year-old Gary learned one could be disappointed at someone and still love him or her. From that day on, Gary saw his mother in a different way. She was not the Christian mother he remembered, she was something else, a walking breathing lie. Not only did she break her father's heart she also broke her son's heart. Gary no longer believed in her, the trust was gone, but he still loved her. Something snapped in him, no more like something broke deep in his heart, which made him suspicious of all women's feelings.

He was twenty-eight years old and had not had a serious relationship. He had his first sexual experience on his twenty-first birth and it was nothing memorable about it. Gary did not date much, and he kept himself busy with his college studies. Hurst took his military commitment seriously, and between college and the military, there was no time for girls. He was invited to parties often enough but work, college classes, homework, and research papers kept him busy. When he had time to spare, he worked on an encryption algorithm for sending secure files across the internet. He did not make the time to socialize much.

He shied away from women because he did not want to get hurt. He knew he was still hurting from his parents' divorce. He was suspicious of women's feelings or intentions. Finding a date was not the problem - women liked what they saw. His smarts, athletic build, and killer smile turned women's heads. Gary dated little and found himself keeping his distance from women. The girls he dated would get serious much faster than he liked. If they made the mistake, of telling him they loved him or were

falling in love with him, he ended the relationship. In his head, he heard his mother's voice saying, "I love you" to his father. Hearing a woman tell him those words scared the hell out of him.

He was smart enough to know he had a problem and was trying like hell to overcome it. The relationships that he saw around him didn't help. The vast majority of people he met in the Air Force were divorced. They were on their second marriage and many worked on their third. Gary concluded couples don't stay together for the long haul. Like they say they talk-the-talk but don't walk-the-walk. He knew his parent's divorce screwed him up in his head. Gary wondered why it affected him so much. His friends with divorced parents seem to deal with it fine. All he knew was that he had serious psychological issues he had to deal with.

When Gary's mother heard his dad was seeing a woman, it was serious and were planning to get married, His mother's reaction surprised him. They had been divorced for over a year yet she became un-glued and accused him of having an affair with her cheating on her when they were still married.

Gary opted to deal with his parent's divorce by keeping busy in a positive way. He enrolled in a Junior College after graduating from high school. He buried himself in his studies, took Psychology classes, and after finishing one year in college joined the Air Force.

Hurst knew he joined the military to avoid the emotions he faced from his parent's divorce. His mother moved in with her boyfriend. Gary hated visiting her at her boyfriend's house. He found it difficult deciding whom to visit on holidays. His mother wanted him for Christmas, Thanksgiving, and other holidays. His dad never pressured him, told him he could go

visit his mom whenever he wanted, but Gary still felt guilty as hell. He felt like he was letting his dad or his mother down. He felt like he was taking sides. It didn't matter who he visited.

His initial interest in Psychology was to help himself self-heal and understand why people do the things they do. Gary also wanted to understand why his mother did the things she did. He understood the long-term consequences children suffer from their parent's failures. Every one of his Psychology class referred to it and he was living proof.

Like most sons, he assumed his parents would grow old together. When he visited them, he would sleep in the room he grew up. Gary did not want to take sides but he felt he had to and a simple visit became a big problem. Deciding whom to visit ceased to be a problem when he joined the military. He had the perfect excuse he was far away serving Uncle Sam.

An event in one's life can steer you into an unknown direction sometimes for good and sometimes not. Gary suspected his parent's divorce had something to do with the current state, in his life. If his parents had not divorced, he would not have left home to join the military. He imagined going to college, meeting a nice girl, getting married, and saw himself having a couple of kids of his own by now. The divorce steered him into an unplanned path and, in addition, he acquired a psychological issue with women.

Gary put his memories aside and reached for the box of bullets, grabbed a dozen rounds, and began to load a magazine. He continued to analyze his situation trying to figure out the choices he made that lead him to that point in his life. The marbles in his head continued to bounce around and the rush of emotions had not subsided. He was still feeling

dazed, nervous, worried, and a tad scared. If he had wanted the FBI job from the start, he would have felt better. He was still coming to terms becoming a badge carrying, gun carrying, FBI Special Agent. He was not a NAT, New Agents in Training; anymore he was the real thing now. Gary continued loading the pistol magazine, contemplating how he got there.

The graduation ceremony was two days ago. His mother and her new boyfriend attended as well as his father and his wife Monica. His father and Monica congratulated him, hugged him, and told him they were proud of him. His mom reaction was different. She treated him more like a kid, told him to be careful.

The twenty-week intense fast-paced special agent training kept his mind busy. So busy that even up to the graduation, ceremony it had not occurred to him he was a full-fledged FBI Special Agent. It was his nature to embrace a challenge and that he did at the academy. It had not been his desire or goal to become a special agent but that did not stop him from giving it his best. All his classmates admired his ability to learn fast. He came across as a bookworm, a nerd, but a likable handsome one.

There was a friendly competitive atmosphere at the academy; everyone tried his or her best to be the top man or woman. Gary excelled in all the classes especially the shooting requirements. That pissed off a couple of ex-army and marines because he shot better than most of them. An embarrassed NAT, an ex-marine, asked him where he learned how to shoot so well.

Gary told him when he joined the Air Force he could not hit the side of a barn. He was discouraged, wanted to do something about it. Several of his coworkers recommended contacting the range master, Master Sargent

Yates, for help. Yates had earned a reputation for being one of the best handgun experts around. He had been competing for years. With Master Sargent Yates training and lots of practice, he became proficient.

"Proficient my ass! You're a damn dead-eye shot!" The ex-marine commented.

Gary Hurst had a graduate degree in Information Technology, a minor in Psychology, a recent graduate of the FBI academy, but it did not feel right. He was not sure if things had turned out, as he wanted. The first issue was he had not planned to look for a job, at least not for six months or up to a year. He wanted to travel and take it easy. The second issue was most disturbing because he had not planned a career in law enforcement.

During his six-year military commitment, he continued taking college classes. He took online classes, night classes, and spent all available free time studying, doing homework, and doing research. His friends in the Air Force would always tease him about spending so much time taking classes and studying.

Gary started a six-year tour, in the Air Force, as a pencil pusher, an administrative job. He finished his military commitment working for the OSI (Air Force Office of Special Investigations) as a Computer Analyst. He finished his bachelor's degree in Information Technology and minor in Psychology while in the military. His CO (commanding officer) liked Gary and thought he was an exceptional sharp man. He wanted him to sign up for OCS (Officers Candidate School) after he graduated from college. His CO knew Gary would be a damn good officer and would have a bright future in the Air Force. Gary told his CO he did not plan to reenlist which did not

go over well. His CO wanted him to stay in the military because he was sharp and smart as hell.

Gary wrote an encryption text application that the NSA, National Security Agency, had not been able to crack. His CO did not want to lose his talent and brains. After his military obligation was up, he continued going to school, for his masters. Hurst put his social life on hold for years, and he was due for a serious vacation, time off, and with luck make the time for a girlfriend or two. He had plans to take some time off after getting his master's degree. Traveling across the United States and Canada before jumping into the corporate world. A job could wait for a while and he felt confident his education and military experience would open a few doors. Psychology and Information Technology intrigued him. He couldn't decide if he wanted to pursue a Doctorate in Information Technology or Psychology.

At the university, Gary did not want to go to the job fair. He changed his mind after getting a call from his mother. She wanted to visit him for a few days. He had a gut feeling she would show up with yet a new boyfriend and he did not want to deal with it. It was her fifth or sixth boyfriend since her divorce that he knew of. Every time he saw his mother with another man, his mind went wild. The mental images of his naked mother in bed with the man gave him the dry heaves. To avoid the situation he told her he was going to be busy that week at the job fair.

At the job-recruiting fair, he interviewed with Microsoft, Motorola, and a couple of software companies. It never occurred to him to seek employment with a law enforcement agency. Lance Macomb, an FBI recruiter

staffed a booth at the job fair. Macomb was one enthusiastic, well-informed FBI Special Agent gifted with a skilled tongue.

*This guy would make one hell-of-a car salesman,* Gary thought and grinned as he listened to the enthusiastic agent. He told him how great it is to serve your country and how FBI work is so exciting that many agents did not want to go home at the end of the day. When the FBI recruiter discovered Gary's job history, educational background, and his interests he moved in for the kill. He started, with the FBI is looking for computer geeks sale's pitch. Cyber warfare captured Gary's interest. Computer virus attacks from other countries and homegrown Cyber terrorists got his juices going.

"I still have a year before I graduate-" Gary hadn't finished talking. The FBI recruiter had the perfect comeback.

"Perfect, you have time to complete the application. You have plenty of time to get a physical. It takes some time to make all your interviews. Since you have an active Security Clearance I'm sure there will be no problem. If all goes well, you will receive an acceptance notification before graduation." Lance said in one breath.

According to Agent Macomb plan, "A" was to enroll in the FBI academy and become a special agent. If Gary was not a good fit at the academy he would fall back to plan "B". Macomb said plan "B" was working at the Cyber Division at FBI Headquarters in Washington. The slick talking recruiter knew how to sugar-coat crap. He meant to say if Gary washed out, did not cut it, or failed to meet the agent training requirements he would get a job at the Cyber Division.

The gung-ho FBI recruiter volunteered to help him fill out the academy application. The hard pushing recruiter said the Bureau needed IT professionals to move the agency into the future. Macomb told Gary the FBI without a doubt would consider him a good candidate to serve America and have a great career. He had a near perfect skill set the FBI was looking for. His education, his military service, and his Top Security Clearance was a great foundation.

Some of his friends got job offers at the job fair. The smartest computer geeks end up working for software gaming companies. The software companies pay the big bucks, unlike Uncle Sam, and provide a casual relaxed working environment the computer geek's love.

Gary left the job fair thinking about working for the FBI combating computer attacks from foreign countries. The thought of fighting Cyber-crime intrigued him. He went and took his physical exam, his polygraph exam, and went to all his interviews. Hurst did not expect to be accepted into the academy. Agent Lance Macomb called him several times to inform him of the status of his application. That made Gary wonder if the recruiter worked on commission. Shortly after Gary's graduation, he found himself at the FBI academy at Quantico, Virginia. Once again, time off, traveling, relaxing, and finding a girlfriend had to wait. Not only did Gary make the cut at the FBI academy plan "B" never came into play.

Gary graduated in the top five percent. The only time he had fired a weapon was in the Air Force and only once a year to qualify. In the Airforce, his initial shooting qualification was pitiful. He challenged himself to improve his shooting skills and ended qualifying as an expert shooter with the Beretta M9 pistol. He also received a sharpshooter ribbon

with the Colt M4 carbine. At the academy, he learned how to fire and clean various types of weapons. The BIO (biochemical) gas mask training he received in the Airforce came in handy at the academy.

In the Air Force, he attended BIO training several times. All the Airmen hated going to mandatory biochemical training. The Air Force Airmen would walk into a large tent, the tent door closed, and the instructor would throw a gas canister in a brick pit in the center of the tent. In less than sixty seconds, the gas fumes filled the large hot uncomfortable tent. The next part was hell, the instructor waited until the fumes were nice and thick. When everyone was beginning to gage and turn blue, and only then did he give the order to put on the gas mask. Putting on the gas mask in the air-conditioned classroom was a cakewalk, simple, and easy. In a sealed hot tent full of iterating pepper gas putting on the gas mask took on a completely new meaning, it was a bitch. A fraction of a second to put it on seemed like forever. Gary never thought he would have to go through BIO training again.

He was wrong; at the FBI academy, his experience with gas chemicals was much worse. This time it was more close-up and personal. The instructor gave him a strong dose of oleoresin capsicum—a substance known on the street as pepper spray straight into his face. To pass the test, NATs had to keep their eyes open while a fellow NAT attempted to take his or her weapon. Keeping the burning eyes open, struggling with a fellow NAT, and not losing your sidearm was not fun at all.

Most of his cowboy classmates, as Gary often called them, were ex-military or police officers. They tried to outdo each other at the gun range and simulators. There were also a couple of college professors, a

biologist, and two lawyers in Gary's class. One of the NATs was a lawyer that had resigned from a prestigious law firm in Dallas, Texas to join the FBI. Gary wondered what motivated the lawyer to take a considerable cut in pay for a job that paid much less and was by far more dangerous. The NAT lawyer was a gun enthusiast and owned a small arsenal of weapons enough to arm a small army.

*Typical Texan cowboy,* Gary thought.

All the trainees tried to out-shoot each other at the gun range and simulators. Even the female agents in training got into it at the range and wanted bigger guns. Some NATs asked if they could buy their own sidearm and asked what firearms the FBI Authorized.

Gary's roommate a biologist from UCLA opted to buy his own weapon instead of the issued FBI Glock model-23. He talked about the superior man stopping power of the 45acp caliber. He showed Gary his new full-size pistol, a Glock model 21 chambered for the 45acp.

"This is a real man's caliber," he kept repeating. Gary rolled his eyes every time he brought up the subject.

One day, the range master informed the class the FBI decided to drop the 40-caliber bullet and change to the 9-millimeter. Detailed requirements had been written up for the new FBI service pistol chambered for the popular 9-millimeter. The trainees acted as if the Pope was seen wearing shorts or something. Gary was shocked how his class reacted to the news. Some were pleased, others did not like the idea, and others commented the FBI should have gone back to the 10-millimeter. A few would have preferred the 45acp caliber. Hell, it was worse than discussing

politics or religion. Everyone had their own argument for their choice of caliber.

Gary didn't care about bullet calibers. As far as guns were concerned all he cared about was passing the FBI's firearm shooting requirements. The other classes interested him more like interviewing, investigation techniques, Bureau operations, intelligence collection, ethics, and law. He especially liked behavioral science, Psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive, and forensic science. He often told his cowboy classmates to go play with their guns so he could play with his computer. He was looking forward to working at a nice comfortable office. Gary thought his new job was programming sophisticated subroutines. Gary wanted to detect, track, and defend computers from hackers. It was like playing chess, but more interesting because the opponents were faceless and unknown.

Gary picked up more bullets and started loading a second magazine. The dormitories at the academy were all but empty. All his classmates got their first assignment and had left except him and that bothered him.

*Shit, I feel damn weird about all of this, he made a face.*

During the graduation ceremony, all his classmates told the audience what had been their chosen location. Not one got their wish they announced what their assignment was. He felt like an ass, he chose Honolulu, Hawaii and he had to say his field assignment was undetermined, all the class laughed. He did not think it was that funny. Kennard Baits, the academy director, had informed him his first assignment required final approval. He had to wait until Monday morning. Gary hated the idea of waiting the weekend and not knowing but had no choice.

Gary looked at his watch and in and less than an hour he would find out what his assignment was. He would find out why all his classmates got their assignments except him. He finished loading his second magazine, got up, and walked out of his dorm room. Outside he noticed his car was the only one left in the parking lot. The groundkeepers were busy shoveling snow off the sidewalks. He walked several blocks to the academy administration building. He could tell the administration building was fulling staffed by the full parking lot. He was a few minutes early but decided to make his presence known anyway. He wanted to get it over with.

### 3 Morning Mass

December, General Terán, Mexico

The old woman draped a shawl over her shoulders and watched as her daughter meditated in the middle of the living room floor. She regretted returning to Earth with her daughter. She should have left her behind, but that was the past. It was a bad decision that cost Charlie's life. If she had left Elizabeth behind, so many things would be different. The countless what-ifs still haunted her, even after so many years. She was tired of living on the run, but she knew there was no other way.

Margaret opened the front door of her small rental house, stepped outside onto the narrow sidewalk, and took a deep breath. The cool, morning December air carried the delightful aroma of fresh-baked bread coming from a bakery a couple of blocks away. The sun's orange-glow began to creep over the distant horizon. The old woman turned to close the door. She paused for a moment, hoping Elizabeth would change her mind and join her for seven o'clock Mass. She continued to meditate on the floor. Margaret saw she would go to Mass without Elizabeth. She closed the front door, but not before taking a quick glance down both sides of Benito Juarez Street.

Living on the run for more than sixty-years taught the old woman many survival skills most people never acquire. She was watchful for changes and paying close attention to detail had become instinct and a way of life.

Margaret Hoffman observed several women sweeping the sidewalk and street curbs in front of their houses. Two blocks away she recognized *Sénior* Gallegos riding his burro in the middle of the street. In General Terán, México, burros, horses, horse-drawn carriages, and modern automobiles shared the old, narrow, uneven paved streets.

Satisfied that everything looked normal, nothing out of place, same as yesterday and the day before, Margaret locked the front door. She headed for the Catholic Church, Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, a short block and a half from her house. It was less than a ten-minute walk.

She walked straight and kept a steady pace. Her long, dark-brown skirt almost covered her black tennis shoes. She knew the tennis shoes looked tacky with her attire, but she did not care. The shoes were comfortable and helped her tired old feet. The black shawl draped over her shoulders helped keep her upper body warm and made her short, thick white hair stand out. A little on the thin side, Margaret could use a few more pounds, something a good taco diet could fix. Other than her lightweight and the glitches old age brings she was in great health for a ninety-one-year-old woman.

One of Margaret's neighbors liked sweeping her sidewalk every morning while listening to the radio. She placed the radio on the windowsill, leaving the window open, and set the volume on high, so the music reached out onto the sidewalk and street. The women outside enjoyed the sunrise

morning music and listened to Ranchera, Mariachi, or Cumbia music playing on the radio.

As Margaret passed by, a well-known Mariachi singer named Vicente Fernandez came on the radio singing the song "El Rey." The song is popular in Mexico, South America, and Central America, as well as in the United States' Hispanic and Latin communities. Several of the women began singing along with the radio. One young housewife could not contain herself, and she gripped her broom close to her and began dancing to the music. Margaret stopped to observe the young woman and watched how graceful she moved, dancing with the worn old broom. The sight brought a girlish smile to the old woman as she remembered her mother.

She recalled a time over half a century ago when she was a six-year-old child living on a ranch in Socorro, New Mexico. Margaret remembered hearing loud music coming from the kitchen of the small farmhouse where she lived with her mother and father. The loud music heightened her curiosity, and as fast as she could, she ran into the kitchen. There, the radio played a country-western waltz.

Little Margaret's eyes and mouth opened wide. Being a devoted six-year-old Baptist, she had to ask her mother, "Mama, you dancing?"

Margaret's mother did not miss a beat. "'Course not sweetie, can't you see I'm sweeping the kitchen with a little rhythm? Now grab the mop over yonder and help me," Margaret's mother answered, pointing to the mop beside the refrigerator.

Her mother looked like she was having so much fun sweeping the floor with a little rhythm, Margaret giggled with excitement and joined her. She

rushed to grab the mop. Mother and daughter swept and mopped the kitchen floor.

"Sweetie like this 1-2-3, 1-2-3, and 1-2-3," Connie Hoffman said showing her daughter how to move her feet.

They soon 1-2-3ed their way into the living room, not because it needed cleaning but because there was more freedom to swing the broom and mop around.

Margaret had so much fun and couldn't wait for her daddy to come home. She paced the small living room waiting. She wanted to tell him all about sweeping and mopping with a little rhythm. She was curious what her daddy, Arthur Hoffman, would say. She wanted to go out and look for her daddy around the ranch but decided to wait for him. The wait seemed to last forever.

Arthur Hoffman was a large muscular man. Margaret often saw him grip steers by the horns, twist their heads, and wrestle them to the ground so the other ranch hands could brand them. When he rode a horse, the horse underneath him seemed smaller. She thought he was the ranch foreman because he was the strongest and biggest man. That was not the case. Her father was a good worker, skilled in the ranching business, and knew how to run his boss's ranch. All the ranch hands called him Art. Earnest Wilkerson, the ranch owner, called him Arthur or Mister Hoffman. Margaret's mother called him Dusty.

It was close to sundown when Margaret's daddy walked into the house. The anxious six-year-old bolted for her father. The big cowboy swept her up into his large, muscular arms, and kissed her. Margaret removed his sweaty, dusty cowboy hat, and threw it on the couch. She grabbed her

daddy's cheeks, made eye contact, and with an enthusiastic giggly voice told him all about sweeping and mopping with a little rhythm.

Her father smiled, held her close, and whispered into her ear, "Guess who taught mama how to do that?"

Margaret thought about her daddy's words for a couple of seconds. A light bulb switched on in her head, her eyes blinked a couple of times before her eyes went wide, and her jaw dropped in disbelief. She shouted to her mother in the kitchen.

"Mama - Da true? Papa says he shows you to sweep with rhythm?"

The six-year-old girl asked. She found it difficult to imagine her big, rough, tough, cowboy father sweeping and mopping with a little rhythm. Connie Odem Hoffman walked out of the kitchen smiling, shaking her hips, and doing a graceful 1-2-3 to answer her daughter's question. Margaret giggled aloud. She felt special because she had discovered something new about her papa and mama.

Father, mother, and daughter hugged each other in the small ranch house living room and savored the moment. After that day, mother and daughter often swept and mopped the small ranch house listening to the radio.

The memory touched the old woman's heart. She wiped the tears from her eyes. Eighty-four-years had gone by, it felt like yesterday since she, and her mother swept and mopped the small ranch house. With the tender memory fresh in her mind, Margaret turned to continue to her destination.

The young woman continued sweeping the sidewalk, dancing to the music on the radio. Margaret smiled wishing they could stay longer in the friendly town. A neighbor interrupted her thoughts.

"*Buenos días,*" a woman sweeping the sidewalk greeted Margaret as she passed by.

"*Buenos días,*" Margaret responded in perfect Spanish. The old woman had perfected Spanish to the point that she sounded like a native-born Mexican. Living in several Latin American countries had much to do with her Spanish language skills.

Margaret began learning Spanish from a woman named Marta. She was a live-in Mexican national that cooked for Wilkerson family. Earnest Wilkerson owned the ranch where she grew up. Never in her wildest dreams did she think she would speak fluent Spanish and live in several Spanish-speaking countries.

Seeing the women singing and dancing on the sidewalk made her think.

*Such wonderful happy people,* she thought.

She often wished her life could have been different with Charlie, her deceased husband.

Charlie's real name was hard to pronounce, it sounded something like Qumt. He could not go by that name while on earth. He decided to call himself Charlie. He watched a picture show of an actor that made him laugh. It was a silent movie featuring the actor Charlie Chaplin.

Falling in love with Charlie changed Margaret's life in more ways than she could ever imagine. She wished they could have stayed on Nadin, Charlie's home planet. Margaret missed the peaceful and harmonious society on Nadin. Their arrival on Nadin was a disaster, to say the least. Charlie arrived in critical condition and the people did not expect to see a real Nibian, an Earth-inhabitant-in person. It took her some time to get used to a new race of people and a different way of life. Charlie's

recuperation was slow which made it difficult for her, but after he recuperated life was wonderful. Margaret regretted returning with Elizabeth. She was a young, inexperienced mother, and lacked the wisdom that age brings.

Their troubles started when they returned to Nibe-what the people on Nadin called Earth, the fifth linked planet. A string of events happened so fast, a deputy sheriff killed Charlie, FBI agents captured them, and they were taken to a military base. With Elizabeth mental abilities, they managed to escape, and since then they have been living on the run.

Living on the run is not exactly living, but Margaret and Elizabeth made the best of it. She was tired of hiding from lost, confused, and evil people on Earth. It had never occurred to her to ask Charlie if there were other people like her and Elizabeth that left Nadin and return to Earth.

At the intersection of General Mariano Escobedo and Benito Juárez Street Margaret stopped in front of the plaza. She waited to cross the street allowing *Don Miguel*, the fruit and vegetable vendor, to pass. *Don Miguel* sat on his home-built wooden wagon pulled by Yanco, his nineteen-year-old horse. The wagon's automobile tires made for a smoother ride and helped the old horse pull the wagon easier. The forty-year-old fruit vendor appeared much older than his age. Years of hard work outdoors in the fields had darkened his skin and wrinkled his sun-baked face with deep creases. Elizabeth had told Margaret the poor man carried a heavy sorrow in his heart. His oldest son had gone missing.

*Don Miguel* rang a large old cowbell yelling in Spanish, "Juicy mangos, cabbage, fresh vegetables." The vendor repeated his announcement as the wagon slowing rolled by.

Some of the women sweeping the sidewalk had been waiting for Don Miguel as they did every day to buy the days vegetables for the family meals.

"*Buenos días Doña Consuelo,*" Don Miguel addressed Margaret tipping his ragged straw hat as he rode past her.

"*Hoy no gracias.*" Thank you not today, Margaret responded.

Margaret and Elizabeth sometimes changed their names when arrived in a new town. In General Terán Margaret Hoffman's alias was Consuelo Hernández Treviño and Elizabeth was going by the name Eloísa Méndez Valdez. Elizabeth had gone to the trouble of getting her mother legitimate documentation. She took her mother to the INE (Instituto Nacional Electoral) and obtained a legal voter's registration ID card. Elizabeth was preparing her mother to stay in General Terán to live out the last few years she had felt. Margaret got her picture taken and fingerprinted but she did not promise her daughter anything.

At the corner before crossing the street, Margaret took a quick glance to her left. She looked down General Mariano Escobedo Street looking for anything suspicious. There were several women sweeping and *Sénior* Gallegos with his burro. He had stopped to talk to a friend. She was about to look to her right when she heard a gunshot. The old woman almost jumped out of her tennis shoes. In an instant, she felt fear, panic, and saw the image of her husband shot again.

In 1951, Charlie knelt handcuffed beside the sheriff lying unconscious on the sidewalk. He was trying to help him when his deputy shot him. Elizabeth was five-years-old at the time and sat on the sidewalk

next to her father. Blood splatter on her face when the bullet ripped into her father's upper back.

Margaret shook the memory from her head and looked in the direction of the gunshot. It was not a gun shoot. It was *Sénior* Vera working on the carburetor of his thirty-year-old Chevy pickup. The engine backfired again. Margaret recognized the man. She had seen him many times reviving the old worn out truck. Elizabeth said *Sénior* Vera had a nice aura and had good thoughts.

With her heart pounding and her knees buckling, Margaret swept her eyes across the plaza in front of her. Several street vendors arrived pulling their mobile food and snack stands. Some of them used the sidewalk for their business; others parked their mobile makeshift food wagons on the street next to the curb.

The old woman crossed the street and entered the town plaza. The large oak trees whispered above. The cool, morning breeze brought the trees to life and birds sang in harmony on the treetops. Margaret stopped next to the gazebo at the center of the plaza.

In the evenings, the plaza came to life. Children played all around the gazebo. On Saturday evenings a group of old, musicians used the gazebo to play their musical instruments.

Elizabeth and Margaret liked to sit on one of the benches, listen to the music, and watch couples of all ages dance.

Margaret heard church bells coming from the other side of the plaza announcing seven o'clock Mass would start in a few minutes. The old woman quickened her pace so not to arrive late.

She had made friends with many of the senior women that attended the morning Mass and looked forward to socializing with them every day. Margaret entered the Old Catholic church looking for her friends. She spotted several of them sitting at their usual place and made her way to join them. Before sitting down, Margaret took a quick glance at the front entrance. She wanted to make sure no one followed her then her eyes swept the church for unfamiliar faces or anything that seemed different. The old woman shook her head and smiled as she sat down.

She thought it was funny and wondered what the Vatican would think if they knew, she attended Catholic Church. When they lived in San Juan de Manapiare, Venezuela, Elizabeth discovered two Jesuit priests were looking for them. The priests were Vatican intelligence officers ordered by Father Superior General, Black Pope, to find them.

Elizabeth discovered the Jesuit's intentions and they left San Juan de Manapiare. They knew the American government was looking for them and a European Pharmaceutical Corporation. The pharmaceutical corporation contracted a couple of mercenaries to find them. Margaret feared there were others looking for them that she or Elizabeth did not know about.

Margaret could not concentrate on the sermon. Her mind was elsewhere. She looked at a statue of the Virgen Mary standing to the right of the pulpit where the Father stood giving his sermon. She shook her head wondering why she went to church knowing she did not believe in any regions on Earth. Her parents raised her Baptist, and at the age of eight, Reverend John baptized her. However, she no longer believed in her church or any other. Never the less, she found herself attending different

churches depending what was close to their home or apartment. Margaret went by herself most of the time because Elizabeth did not like going.

Elizabeth once told her she went to church because she was looking for something. It is the social warmth and the spiritual feeling she experienced when she lived on Nadin. Margaret agreed with her daughter, but she still searched for it. Wednesday evenings, she liked to attend bible study at a Methodist Church, Iglesia Metodista El Mesías, three blocks from her house. There were times she felt that spiritual feeling but not often.

The old woman stopped believing in religions, but she did believe in the First Father-what Charlie also called God. Charlie said the people on Nadin worshiped the same God as people on Nibe (Earth). Margaret believed in his Son, Jesus Christ, and the reason for her existence, but not on any faiths or denominations on Earth.

When Elizabeth attended church with her mother, she scanned people's minds looking for threats. The majority of people went to socialize, to be part of an organization, or to conform to family tradition. Few went to church with a sincere and a pure heart.

Charlie would say, "How sad, so many religions on Nibe when there is only one God." He said the rebellious spirits on Earth had much to do with it.

Meeting Charlie and living in Nadin changed her. The people she met at church were a way to socialize and have friends who attempted to live a more civilized life. Regardless of the reason for going, she figured it was better than not going.

She looked up at the faded, broken, stained glass windows in the old church thinking of Elizabeth's recent behavioral changes. She knew what was happening with her daughter. It started several weeks ago with sleeping problems, headaches, hot and cold flashes. She knew Elizabeth was experiencing Awakening, the path to a mortal's greatest miracle, childbirth.

Nadin women's reproductive system is not like that of Earth women. The people on Nadin experience Awakening, a process when a woman's body and mind prepares for childbirth. Charlie also referred to Awakening as a mortal's greatest miracle. On Nadin, women hold a special place in society's social structure. The men admire, respect, cherish, and spiritually address women.

Once the Awakening process has completed, a donor's DNA was needed to begin the process of the already fertile egg in the woman's womb. Margaret knew she would soon become a grandmother.

The thought of becoming a grandmother frighten the old woman, not for her, but for Elizabeth and her unborn grandchild. Elizabeth had a long life ahead of her. Having a child would make it more difficult to live on the run hiding from bad people and governments. With her advanced age, Margaret knew she would slow them down, and she knew in the not too distant future, she would leave Elizabeth to join Charlie.

*My God, how I miss my Charlie,* Margaret thought of her love. Margaret's daughter was not like her, and not like the women on earth. She is like her father. Her baby girl was Awakening.

*Pronto los vemos cariño,* see you soon, darling, the old woman thought of her love. They were together a short time but their love was eternal.

Not one day went by without Margaret thinking of her husband. Margaret often wondered if Charlie were still alive, how the differences in their aging process would have affected them as a couple.

The Father giving the sermon motioned the congregation to stand. As Margaret stood she noticed, one of her friends had fallen asleep. Her napping friend triggered an old memory.

When she was a child, she often attended a Baptist church with her mother. It was extra special when her daddy took time off from the ranch, to join them. It amazed Margaret how her tough muscular cowboy father could be so gentle with her. With the utmost care, Arthur picked up his daughter and placed her on his lap. He ran his rough, callused fingers through her hair. The sensation was a magical feeling. Within seconds, Margaret would fade into dreamland, on her daddy's arms. It was a peaceful, heartwarming sleep.

She would wake up during a hymn and listen to her mother and father sing with joy and conviction. For a cowboy, her dad sang well. After the hymn, little Margaret went back to by-by land and slept in her daddy's arms.

Even after so many years, the old woman could still feel her daddy's strong, warm arms around her. She missed her father and mother and wished they had lived longer. They did not have the opportunity to meet Charlie and Elizabeth. She knew her mother and father would have liked Charlie.

It had been many years since she felt at peace and safe. General Terán, Mexico had become more than a place to hide, it felt like home. The people welcomed them and treated them like one of their own, like family. The old woman did not want to think about it, but she knew General Terán

was a temporary stop. They would never have a permanent place to live. The troubled old woman knew that sooner or later, they would have to leave, to find a new place to hide. If not discovered by their pursuers, the local people would begin to take notice of Elizabeth and begin asking questions.

Margaret and Elizabeth learned that lesson well in Canada and vowed never to repeat that mistake again. They could not stay more than four or five years, in one place.

Morning Mass ended and Margaret did not have a clue what the sermon was about. Her mind was elsewhere. Margaret could not stop thinking who Elizabeth would select to harvest the DNA she needed.

## 4 The Message

General, Terán, Mexico

At church, Margaret kept thinking of her daughter and wondered what would happen next. The few people that attended 7-o'clock Mass were older people. Women always outnumbered the men ten-to-one. The younger working-age parishioners left immediately after Mass and headed for work. The young women also left to attend to their house duties and children but a few of the older women made their way to the back of the church to socialize.

Margaret's friends got up and headed to one of the side doors that lead to the courtyard at the back of the church. Ten senior citizen women gathered under a large avocado tree and sat on old wrought iron benches. The women took turns bringing coffee and *pan dulce*, Mexican pastry, for breakfast. They ate pastry and drank coffee enjoying each other's company. The senior citizen women met several times a week to take in the morning sun and chat about anything that came to mind. They talked about the price of bread, the price of tortillas, and the cost of living. They talked about their grand and great-grandchildren, and about their lost youth when times were simpler.

Margaret Hoffman was the newcomer to the group and enjoyed socializing with her friends. He was older than most but looked younger. Hard work and raising children aged the town women quicker making them look older than they were.

The first week after moving to General Terán, Mexico, almost five years ago, their neighbor invited Margaret to join them at the church courtyard. They met for morning coffee and a friendly chat. Margaret went most of the time. Elizabeth would go less often. The old women liked talking to Elizabeth.

"¿Porque no vino tu nieta?" One of the women asked wondering why her granddaughter had not come.

"Últimamente no a venido tu nena," your girl hasn't come lately, another woman commented.

When living on the run, lying is necessary. After sixty years of living on the run, lying had become second nature. Margaret hated deception especially to friends, but it was necessary to keep their identities hidden. The story changed from town to town. In Canada, Margaret introduced herself as Betty Summers. She introduced Elizabeth as, Katie Wagner, her niece recently widowed who lived off a modest pension and made extra money painting. In General Terán she introduced her as her granddaughter who worked as a writer to make a living and Margaret received a pension. They always rented a modest apartment or house to blend in with the people.

Margaret had to introduce Elizabeth as her granddaughter for obvious reasons. People would not believe the attractive twenty-year-old looking woman was in her late sixties. Margaret could tell them her daughter was half-alien born on the planet Nadin. Elizabeth id age but at a slower pace. They had to be careful and could not stay in one place too long. In Canada, they stayed too long and people began to notice Elizabeth was not aging.

Elizabeth aged at a much slower rate than the inhabitants of Earth. She had her father's DNA and genes. Before she was born medical technicians on Nadin altered, cleaned, and enhanced her DNA and genes. Nadin people start life at an accelerated rate. They mature at a rapid rate physically and mentally but as they get older their aging process slows down to a crawl.

Margaret like sipping hot coffee from baked clay cups and enjoyed eating *Marranitos*. It is a Mexican pastry, a gingerbread cookie in the shape of a piglet. As always, the morning conversations bounced around different topics. Sometimes it was serious and other times humorous. Margaret sipped the hot coffee and ate the pastry listening and participating in the conversation. All the women were born in General Terán or on ranches nearby and most of the time they talked about their life experiences.

Margaret was an American citizen born in New Mexico and had lived in half a dozen cities in the United States. Elizabeth and she had also lived in Panama, Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, Canada, and the planet Nadin, Charlie's home planet. The old woman could not talk about such places especially living on the planet Nadin.

The conversation had turned humorous. A woman began telling an old family story about a pet parrot her family had many years ago. It was a large, smart, beautiful, and colorful parrot named Panchito. The family needed to leave town for several weeks, and a neighbor offered to take care of their talking parrot while they were away. He told them he worked long hours and would take Panchito to his business to keep an eye on him. It never occurred to the parrot's owners what Panchito might learn at

their neighbor's place of work. When the family returned, two weeks later, the neighbor returned a well-fed, chubby, and talkative parrot.

Panchito's limited simple vocabulary had increased tenfold and not for the better. Everyone mouth dropped when they heard Panchito's new and colorful vocabulary. It was too much to handle and the family decided Panchito had to go.

It never occurred what the parrot might learn in a cantina. Panchito was a big hit at the cantina bar. The patrons gave the big bird constant attention and feed Panchito more than he should eat. The worst part was the vocabulary he learned. Panchito learned every word and learn to vocalize all sorts of profanities. The patrons thought it was cute and funny further encouraging the outspoken parrot. When the bird said something colorful all the men cheered the bird.

The family decided they could not keep their twenty-year-old parrot anymore. It seemed the parrot liked his new extended vocabulary and took every opportunity to make use of it. The family asked their neighbor if he wanted the bird. Their neighbor was more than happy to take the bird and accepted. Panchito was happy to go back to the cantina.

Panchito's story had Margaret and her friends laughing at the top of their lungs. The laughter came to an abrupt end when a woman saw Margaret's facial expression changed.

A mental image flashed through Margaret's mind, it was Elizabeth. Margaret almost dropped her cup of coffee. The sudden image jolted her enough that all her friends noticed.

"¿Qué te pasa? ¿Te sientes bien?" One of her concerned friends asked her what's wrong and if she was feeling ill. Margaret's stomach knotted up

and her nerves went on high alert. She looked around the courtyard, at the front of the church looking for anything unusual. The nervous old woman then turned to the back looking at the church property looking for an escape route at the rear. It had been a long time since Elizabeth used her telepathic abilities to contact her, and when she did, most of the time it was not a good thing. Margaret waited for a moment expecting another telepathic message but it did not come. The lack of a second telepathic message helped ease her nerves, but she continued to feel uneasy. Margaret decided she could not stay any longer with her friends. She had to get back home and see what was going on with her daughter. Margaret got up and addressed her worried friends.

"Hermanas, me tengo que retirar. Las veo pasado mañana.", "Sisters I need to leave. I'll see you day after tomorrow." Margaret smiled to ease the tension in the group. For a ninety-one-years old woman, Margaret was in good health, but she was getting slow and tired quick. She did not know how much longer she could keep active and alert.

Elizabeth used her healing abilities to help her mother with her vision and hearing, but most important her heart condition. Margaret knew her body would get to a point that Elizabeth could no longer fix.

She left her senior citizen friends at the church courtyard and walked to the front gate past the church and onto the sidewalk. She crossed the street and as she walked, thought the town plaza she felt sadness come over her. She had hoped General Terán would be their last stop, a place where she could rest until it was time to join her departed Charlie. She had hoped, but deep down she knew they would not stay too long. They would have to leave like so many other towns before. Margaret

and Elizabeth moved to General Terán almost five years ago. The friendly town's people accepted them and made them feel part of the community. If they stayed too long in any one town, the people would begin to take notice of Elizabeth not aging.

The brisk walk tired Margaret so she stopped to sit on a bench, catch her breath, and rest a spell. She looked around for anything suspicious then looked back at the church wondering if she would ever see her friends again. She knew they would leave the town, and thought what she would say to her friends. She made a disgusted face and hated the thought of having to lie to them again but it was necessary. She was already thinking what lies she would say. Most of the time they would say Elizabeth got a job offer and needed to leave.

The old woman stood and turned an inch at a time making a complete circle. She observed the buildings around the plaza, people going about their business, and felt a knot in her throat. Tears poured from Margaret's sad eyes and in a low whisper, she said her goodbye to her town and her friends. She wiped her tears from her eyes and continued to walk home.

To make sure she was not being followed she decided to take a left turn and walk around the block first. She knew she was not important. Elizabeth is the target, but Margaret knew she could be used for bait, a way to get to her daughter.

Margaret did not know what to expect at home or what was going on with Elizabeth. When she opened the door, she found Elizabeth still sitting in the center of the living room floor meditating.

Elizabeth looked up at her mother, "Mama, I need to go back to America." Elizabeth words shocked Margaret. She expected to move to another town in Mexico, Central, or South America, but not return to the United States. Something in Elizabeth's tone told Margaret she would not be able to talk her out of returning.

"Mama I know how you feel about this place. You don't have to go. You can stay here and live the rest of your life in peace. We have enough money and I can always send you money when you need it." Elizabeth said getting up off the floor and waited for her mother's response.

She didn't have to wait she could read her mother's mind, but she would let her mother think about it. Margaret sat down on the couch and let Elizabeth's words bounce around her mind for a moment. Margaret knew she was slowing Elizabeth down making it more dangerous for her.

For the past several months, Margaret noticed Elizabeth's sleep pattern changed and she had become more restless. When she asked Elizabeth what was going on, she said she felt changes in her body and mind. Margaret also noticed it and thought it was Elizabeth reaching puberty, the Awakening process. She also knew her body and mind was maturing causing her father's inherited gifts to develop within her. The thought frightens her. Margaret thought of her beloved Charlie and wished he were with them. She did not know how to prepare for Elizabeth's changes. Elizabeth had not yet learned how powerful and extensive her inherited mental powers were nor how far they would develop. She used her mental abilities to keep them safe and get money to travel and hide.

Money is important to live and even more important when living on the run. Money is necessary for travel, for shelter, food, and to hide from

governments and individuals. Acquiring money had been easy thanks to Elizabeth's mental abilities. She used her gifts to take money from criminal types knowing they could and would not report their missing money, to the Authorities. Since returning to Earth over sixty-years-ago, Margaret and Elizabeth had lived on the run and never strayed too long at any given place. They had lived in the United States, Canada, Guatemala, Peru, and Colombia. Margaret was not thrilled about going back to the United States. Technology all over the world is advancing but more so in America and it is making it more difficult to evade detection. They had avoided capture several times over the years. She knew the US government, the Vatican, and a French pharmaceutical company was looking for them but knew there could be others. Each of them had their own agenda or reasons for capturing Elizabeth. For science, for profit, for power, for a longer life, for control, or for whatever other reason Elizabeth was not going to cooperate if she could help it.

A deputy sheriff, in New Mexico, had killed her husband and the United States government had detained them in a secret military base. The government took Charlie's body and planned to butcher it, to study the body and brain, in the name of science. Margaret knew nobody could be trusted. Elizabeth could not contact any governments either. The First Father prohibited interfering with Earth's trial.

Margaret turned her thoughts about her life on Earth. She regretted returning, to earth, with Elizabeth. The countless what-ifs still haunted her even after so many years. Her husband, Charlie, would still be alive and her daughter would not be hiding on Earth. The old woman was tired of living on the run hiding from her own people.

Charlie said that the planets Kut and Nibe attempt to live by the lower order. Both worlds are ruled by countless governments. They use borders to separate people. The worlds cannot function without currency. The people are further divided by countless traditions and countless cultures. They also practice individual ownership. Unlike like Nadin and Sudab who live by the higher order. The social structure of Nadin and Earth are the complete opposite of one another. On Nadin, there is one single culture, one race, one governing body, no borders, no currency, and no individual ownership.

Margaret recalled her husband, Charlie, saying, "Living amongst The Apostates is not good and is most difficult." The first time she heard him say that she was confused and did not understand what he meant. She learned things she could have never imaged. When Charlie told her, he was from a distant world called Nadin she thought he was kidding. She had no idea she would actually live there. Charlie explained many things and one of them was why his people called Nibe's inhabitants The Apostates.

In the beginning, everyone lived in a premortal existence in the presence of the First Father. This was before man had a body of flesh and blood, and before the creation of the five linked plants Kilu, Sudab, Kut, Nibe, and Nadine. All the spirits coexisted in peace and harmony in the presence of the First father, in the spirit world. The First Father wanted to know if his children would return to him if he removed all knowledge of heaven from their minds. God devised a plane to test his children's obedience by removing all knowledge from them and giving them free agency to choose on their own. The trial was to see who would return to his presence using an individual free agency. The plan and trial caused a great division and turmoil in the spirit world. Such was the disagreement that a war waged between two-thirds of the spirits.

One-third of the spirit sided with The First Father. Another third sided with a rebellious spirit son. The remaining third of the spirits chose not to take sides. God called them The Apostates because they remained neutral. They kept their distance, lacked the courage to stand

for good, and wished to not to get involved. The Apostates observed the conflict from a distance as the war raged.

The war in heaven angered The First Father. He expelled the rebellious general son along with all his followers from his presence to the lower heavens, the planets Kut and Nibe. The rebellious spirit son and his army would not take part in the trial of free agency and would not receive a body of flesh and blood.

The Apostates, the spirits that elected not to take sides and did not fight on the First Father's side felt shame, remorse, and disgrace. They wanted to make amends and restitution, for their lack of conviction, obedience, and support. The Apostates pleaded with The First Father to allow them to continue the fight. They would fight the rebellious spirit brothers on the planets Kut and Nibe. They wanted to continue the fight on behalf of the righteous spirits that supported The First Father's plan of free agency from the start.

Seeing that The Apostates were sincere, The First Father agreed. He warned them that continuing the fight against the banished rebellious spirits would be most difficult. They understood they would also take part in the original plan and trial of free agency. They would receive a body of flesh and blood and their trial would be much harder. With their minds whipped of all knowledge of the preexistence, they would have free agency to choose right and wrong. They would live amongst the rebellious spirits, on the planets Kut and Nibe.

The Apostates knew their mortal bodies would have to fight against their rebellious spirit brothers. They understood their weak bodies of flesh and blood would fight against stronger rebellious spirits. The war

would continue at the lower heavens and on the planets where they dueled. The Apostates knew they would suffer great trials and tribulations. All because of their disobedience and lack of commitment, in the preexistence. They understood they would be fighting a stronger rebellious spirit army.

The righteous third that chose to fight with the First Father, in the beginning, would also receive a body of flesh and blood. Their knowledge would be erased, and have free agency to choose right and wrong. Their trail would be much easier because they would not be at war with their rebellious spirit brothers on the planets Nadin and Sudab with. The rebellious spirit armies could not dwell or interfere with the plants Nadin and Sudab.

"The end is approaching and the inhabitants of Nibe don't even know it. The few that suspect don't understand why" Margaret's late husband Charlie often mentioned so many years ago. He said Nibe the fifth linked planet is like Kut. Both worlds followed similar religion, social, and cultural structure. Kut is in the final stage of its existence, and the planet Nibe is following the same destructive path as Kut. Nibe without a doubt will suffer the same fate.

Margaret understood why Charlie called the people on Earth the Apostates. The inhabitants of Nibe are the descendants of The Apostates that lacked the devotion at the beginning, of time. The war that began in the presence of The First Father never ended, it continues on planets Kut and Nibe. It made sense to her why since the beginning of time so many innocent people suffer and why evil things happen all over the world. From the beginning, of Nibe's creation, there have been wars and will continue until the end of Nibe's existence. The Apostates understood without a

doubt their trial would be most difficult, a trial they pleaded for, and accepted.

Young Margaret Huffman never imagined she would meet someone, from another world. Not only did she meet an extraterrestrial but she also fell in love with him.

In the majority of the cases, the first attraction is physical. It is a Human nature flaw. In Charlie's case, it was something much deeper than that. It was indescribable beyond words. When the government men came looking for him, Margaret feared for Charlie and offered her help. She did not want him arrested and interfered with the G-men's investigation. Margaret did not know it at the time but Charlie had the ability to evade capture and did not know he was going to leave Earth.

Aiding Charlie complicated things for her. She escaped with Charlie into the desert to an underground facility and after that, FBI wanted her. Charlie had a huge dilemma; he also fell in love with Margaret. The hidden underground lab was scheduled to close forever. Charlie and his people would leave Earth never to return, but he could not stomach the thought of leaving Margaret behind to deal with the FBI alone. If he took her with him, he would be breaking a serious rule and The Council of Three, on Nadin, would not be receptive to the idea. The portal transport had already arrived and it had one travel chamber short, which further complicated things for him.

Nadin used portal transport vessels to travel through the vortex in space. The portal transport vessels travel to and from the five linked planets. The crew of the portal transport vessel uses travel chambers when the vessel travels through the portal window, in space. Without the

protection of the travel chambers, all cell-matter would distort causing death to anyone not inside it.

Charlie's first thought was to stay behind so Margaret could use his chamber and leave Earth. However, sending Margaret, to Nadin, without him was also unthinkable. She would have to depend on someone else, a stranger, to help her adjust, in a new world. He was responsible, for breaking the rule, he knew he alone had to address to The Council of Three. He decided, with the help of the science specialist, to reconfigure a travel chamber designed for animals. It was a good idea but it almost cost him his life.

In the underground base, Margaret and Charlie got to know each other even more and had long talks. She stayed out of the way while his people prepared to leave Nibe.

There were so many questions in Margaret's mind and Charlie answered whatever she asked.

Centuries ago, Nadin established three small bases on Earth with the blessing of divine guidance and The Council of Three. Their orders were not to interfere or establish contact with government bodies and to keep contact with the inhabitants to a minimum. Three science-specialist staffed each base, and a portal navigator. They had to operate unseen but sometimes ventured in public to get basic niceties such a food, water, and local transportation. As a rule they and to avoided communication with the inhabitants.

The primary mission goal was to harvest women's eggs and in some cases use their ovaries or womb to help build up Nadin's declining population.

Charlie was one of many that started life in an Earth woman's womb. After three weeks transplanted in a Nadin woman for the duration of the fetus's development. The Earth women never knew they had been impregnated. Nibians searched for women with the purest DNA sequence. It was not an easy task it proved time-consuming and difficult to find.

The secondary mission goal was to gather plants, seeds, and animal life to repair Nadin's devastated environment. A few thousand years ago a solar flare scorched Nadin's surface. It destroyed all-living form. If it were not for the inhabitants, seeking shelter deep beneath the planet's surface Nadin would have been considered a dead planet. Not all the inhabitants followed the warnings from The Council of Three to prepare themselves. The majority of the people did not heed the warning and turned to ashes along with all wildlife and vegetation on the planet.

Charlie's mission on Nibe was to stop operations on the three bases: the North American base, the South America base, and the Asian base. He had already closed the South American and Asian facilities. The underground facilities had been restored to their natural state as Mother Nature liked. If the underground facilities were discovered, no one would ever suspect people from another world had used the caves.

Their primary and secondary mission objectives had been completely successful. Charlie's people would leave Nibe never to return, let Nibe run its course, and not interfere with Nibe's destiny, which did not look good.

Margaret Hoffman grew up Baptist and not knowing what to say and without thinking asked Charlie, if he was Baptist. After the words came out, she felt like an idiot. She was still struggling with the fact that

Charlie was from another planet and doubted there were Baptists over there. He smiled and told her Nadin people worshiped the same God and the same Eldest Brother.

"Our history differs but we are the same people," Charlie mentioned often.

The extraterrestrial did not know if telling Margaret about his people on Earth was a good thing. Sometimes not knowing is best, but Charlie decided to explain how they were related and why they were the same people. He said Earth people were his people because the first brothers on Nadin were banished to Earth for their disobedience. The banished brothers joined The Apostates that already living on Earth. Other people from Sudab and Kul who had broken covenants were expelled to Earth to live their lives amongst The Apostates. Margaret found it difficult to understand.

"Your chronicles talk about my first brothers," Charlie reminded Margaret.

"If you're referring to Adam and Eve they were removed from the Garden of Eden," Margaret clarified with conviction.

"Exactly, they were removed from Nadin and banished to Nibe for their disobedience."

"The Bible doesn't say that," Margaret objected.

"It is omitted detail that is not important. What does it matter if the Garden of Eden was across the river, on the other side of the valley, on a different continent, or from a distant solar system?" Charlie said letting Margaret think about his words, for a second, before continuing.

"The message your chronicles, your bible, wants to point out was Adam and Eve were expelled for their disobedience. The distance or location of the Garden of Eden is not the point, is it?" Charlie said and knew Margaret was struggling with the information she learned.

"There were people on Nibe when Adam and Eve arrived. The Apostates were already here as well as some people banished from Sudab and Kut," Charlie continued to explain.

"The Bible does not say that and Reverend John never mentioned that in Sunday school," Margaret said. This time her objections lacked confidence. She was beginning to understand.

"More unnecessary omitted detail. Whom do you think Adam and Eve's children married? Your chronicles make references to their marriages and their children. For centuries, Earth people have been arguing over the chronicles, your bible. They cannot understand it and it seems everyone has a different interpretation. They can't comprehend simple things and more detailed information would make it worst." Charlie explained.

*The rebellious spirits have much to do with the chronicle's misunderstandings and confusion. Keeping the people divided is an effective strategy thus the reason for so many religions when there is only one God,* Charlie did not say.

It would take some time but Charlie knew Margaret would learn to understand that, as a whole humanity does not choose their religion. As high as ninety percent, religion is chosen for them at birth. Catholic parents raise their children Catholic. Baptist parents raise their children Baptist, and parents that practice Islam raise their children in Islam. Free agency the right to choose for oneself never comes to play.

Religion is imposed by tradition or culture and has been passed from generation to generation. The rebellious spirits of Nibe and Kut have succeeded in their goal. They divided the masses using religion, tradition, language, and culture. The best strategy to weaken an army is to divide it, and the rebellious spirits are masters of war and deception. The rebellious spirits also attack individuals using effective methods like greed, envy, pride, and lust.

It all started to make sense but Margaret was still confused. It was difficult to rewrite religion as she knew it, but it was not that much different. There is God, which Nibians call First Father, and there is Jesus Christ, which they call Eldest Brother. That had not changed but something did and Margaret could not put her finger on it. She thought it could be the understanding, the purpose of creation, why things were as they were on Earth, where she came from, and where she would go.

Elizabeth was her family, her daughter, and her best friend. No, Margaret would not stay behind. Elizabeth was her only family and she wanted to stay close to her daughter as long as her health and strength would hold up.