

The background of the cover is a lush, green forest. A waterfall is visible in the center, cascading down rocks. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of trees, creating a bright, dappled light effect. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

# The MPs' Tales

Enhanced Print

Austin D. Torney

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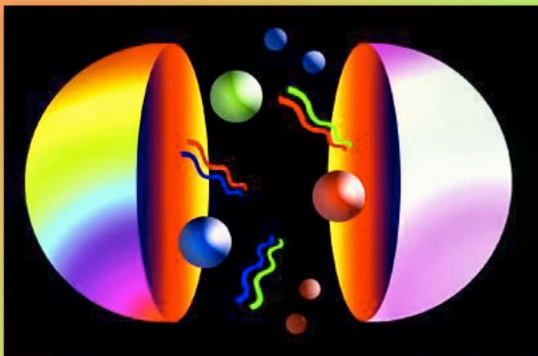


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CHAPTER 1

# Now and Then

Filmed by Universal Creations Studio





Towards the Mountain Retreat



Inside the Retreat

## Chapter 1: Now and Then

### MOUNTAIN FOREST CAVE, OAHU

Juliet, the MP Combat Unit Sergeant, looks about the flowered cave. I, Patrick, the MP Combat Unit Captain, ride my motorcycle down the trail, through a bamboo mountain forest, towards the cave entrance. The sun is setting, my motorcycle headlight is on, and the birds seem to note these goings on. We envision ourselves standing atop the cave, on a cliff, holding our weapons, in a combat scene.



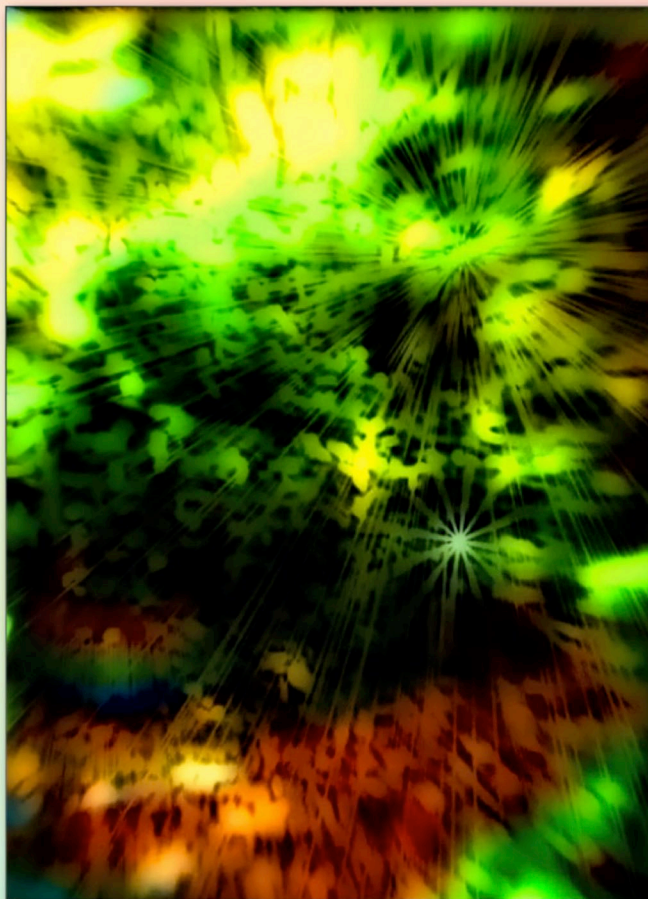
### FORT SHAFTER

The MP waves me through the gate again, the same man, six months later, although I don't need to use the gate; however, if it's open I use it, for it's a shorter and smoother way to the mountain retreat. The other MP stays inside the hut, a good practice. I spend half the year in Oahu. Here is Palm Circle, a ring of palms surrounding a very large, grassy area, and then all the offices and posts, across the road. I head up the mountain path to the retreat. Juliet from Jamaica has been taking care of the place, on and off, and all is found to be in order. No one can find us here.

Long ago, near the end of my Army term, I became the temporary Captain of an MP unit for three months. It was a rare MP combat unit that had returned from Vietnam/Cambodia. MP combat units guard convoys and other times forward installations. My new job mostly amounted to keeping track of them, their needs, and their pay, although there was an interesting incident which I may get to later. I deployed them around Fort Shafter and Schofield Barracks, as many thousands of troops were returning

during the Paris Peace Accords. MPs were always needed. If the Army had only two troops, then one would have to be an MP. There was no Major, so I reported to the Colonel. I had an outside office, during the day and part of the evening, a four-posted open shelter with a thatched roof.

An MP has a lot of power. An MP can arrest a General, even inside the Pentagon. Of course, they'd better be right or have probable cause. Who, then, watches the guards, as one always wonders? Well, it's the Judge Advocate General's corps. And who watches them? No one, really, for they are an end unto themselves. The Uniform Code of Military Justice rules all. The MPs police the internals of the army, mostly, wherein there are even more problems than in civilian life, while the DIA focuses on externals, yet here I was, doing both, due to a shortage of MP Majors. My old friend, the CGUSAPAC—Commanding General USA/Pacific—was gone, having just retired, and so there was a new one. I would probably have to arrest him one day, on the last day of my term, which was another reason for my new assignment made by the former General, now retired in Tahiti.





The Outside Office



The Older Portion of the Fort

CHAPTER 2

# The Weapons Case



Readiness



The MP Unit



The Road Around Palm Circle

## Chapter 2: The Weapons Case

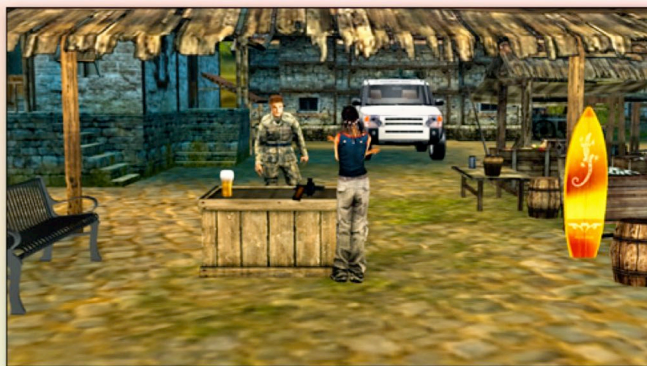
Troops are coming home from Indochina by the thousands, passing through Honolulu, Hawaii, and Oakland, California, mostly, and so the MP Combat Unit that I had just become the Captain of has been retained to bring some order to the revelry. There are more than the usual drinking and the associated problems to which we bring some peace, but with only one eye open, for these are mostly happy and excited warriors, yet still trained to fight. It is a big Saturday night.

My Sergeant, the shapely Juliet Bailey, knocks and quickly enters my office, wherein I am sorting the paychecks.

"We've got a dead soldier, sir; HPD just filled me in."

"What's the story, Sergeant?"

"Well, sir, it seems that a biker's motorcycle was knocked over by someone outside Cathy's Lounge, which is just outside our fort, on Kahili Street, after which a fight ensued, during which the soldier, Matt Riley, was shot in the heart and the head by someone with a 9mm—could be military, but the weapon wasn't around. Unfortunately no one seems to have seen a thing, and the biker is nowhere to be found."



"So..., a big fight and no one was even interested in watching it!"

"They might be unwilling to say anything, sir. Why get involved and all that."

"Yet, although that place is packed with soldiers eating Teriyaki with Korean girls sitting on their laps, and so the deceased is one of their own, yet no one has anything to report. Strange."

"I know Riley, sir, although not very well; he's, well, not real friendly."

"OK, Sergeant Bailey, let's you and I go to the scene, and then you can ID Riley at the morgue."

"I'll be happy to, Captain, and I can drive us."

This Sergeant was going places, for she had no hesitation over blood and guts. Even volunteered to drive, which was fine, since I didn't have a car.

"HPD is still on the scene," I note. "I'll inquire."  
"Any information?"



"We got nothing from the customers, and most of them already left. Is this Riley?"

"That's him all right," she replies.

"Well, then, you MPs can go about your business here," the policeman says as he nods and leaves.

"Captain, let's look around the ground for clues."

"Well, at least we can skip the morgue. I'm estimating where I would have parked a motorcycle... Hey, here's a small piece of glass. Looks new, showing no weather. Perhaps it had been thrown when the bike fell and then bounced along several more feet."

"Could be something. Can't find anything else."

"Maybe, maybe not, but the bike was knocked over. Let's go inside."



Regular Soldiers do not like the sight of MPs and so they all freeze as we enter, and then look away, but for one, O'Neill, whose crew cut identifies him as a soldier.

"Anyone see the fight or the shooting?" I ask, but no one replies.

"The silence is deafening. No one is saying 'no', and so that tells me something."

Most of them say 'No' or shake their heads, and get up and leave, but for O'Neill, who'd looked back before. We walk over to his table and sit down.

"What happened?" asks Juliet, gently.

"I'm O'Neill."





### Questioning O'Neill

"I'm Irish, too," she says.

O'Neill looks perplexed, giving her the once over.

"But you're African American."

"It was on my grandfather's side. Dublin. Did you see anything?"

O'Neill remains silent.

"And so is Riley Irish and a soldier like you, a double bond, but he's dead now."

O'Neill appears to have mixed emotions, then looks down. We remain silent, too. Best not to push too hard.

O'Neill finally looks up and over to us. "We didn't like what he did to the biker, plus he's always been a little bit crazy, and a redneck, too. Turns out the biker saw him do it, and so they got into an argument, which the biker said should best be taken outside, and so they went out. After a bit of scuffling, Riley pulled out a knife, and so then the biker pulled out a pistol and shot him dead."

"What did the biker look like?" I ask.

"Big and burly. Full beard, jacket and pants with shiny silver buttons, like most bikers."

"Which way did he go?" she asks.

"I don't know. I ran back inside."

She adds, "But you heard the sound of the motorcycle roaring off. Which way went the sound?"

O'Neill pictures the biker and his motorcycle.

"North."

"Thanks, we'll be in touch," she concludes, as we walk outside.

"I agree; best to keep moving while the trail is hot."

"Thanks, Captain."

"And I thought you just had a tan."

"Yeah, sure. Well, my grandmother was European."

"The pistol will be in the gully beyond the ferns."

"What gully? You've been to this dive?"

"Yes, many times, with my Korean-American sweetheart, so-called, and I know O'Neill, too, but he didn't know I'm now an MP. Maybe he is shocked."

"And here I thought I'd gotten something out of him."

"And I'm sure you did. He was on the verge of clamming up."

"So, the weapon was the biker's."

"Looks that way. At first I thought it might have been taken from the soldier, but O'Neill was an eyewitness. And weapons can't be taken outside of the fort. This is not a war zone. They have to be checked back in."

"Never bring just a knife to a gunfight."

"Let's head down into the gully to look for the pistol, Sergeant."



### Into the Gully

We look about for a while, she then finding something.

“I found it. Sure enough, you were right.”

“They usually get rid of it right away.”

“Look, it’s military. Now we have some jurisdiction. The Army has a weapons’ leak. Looks old but refurbished. We’re going to have to audit the Quartermaster, all three shifts.”

“What about the biker?”

“HPD will have some nearby checkpoints set up, but the license plate number isn’t known.”

“He’ll go through the mountains, then, and wait on the other side.”

“Good idea, Captain.”

“Since we’re working together, let’s just use ‘Juliet’ and ‘Patrick’.”

“Aha, Patrick, then you’re Irish, too.”

“Dublin, as well. We could be fifth cousins or something.”

We drive toward The Koolau Mountains.

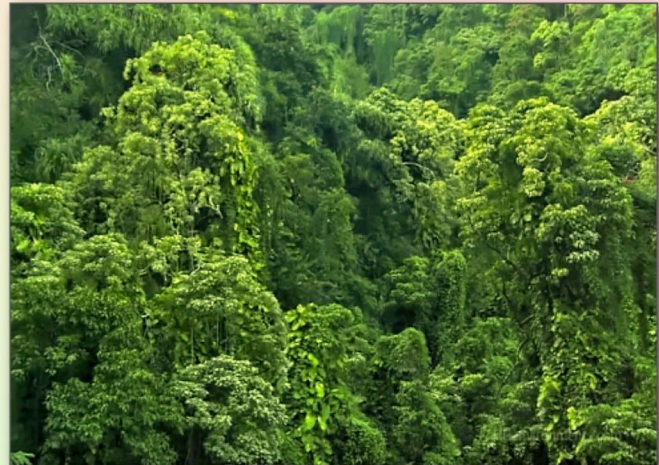
I suggest, “Let’s circle wide around the Range, up toward Schofield Barracks and the North Shore, then cut east, and scan the bulk of the mountain mass as we go along, and then stop and wait for him. Maybe we’ll get lucky.”

“Aye, aye, Patrick.”

We drive ten miles, looking at the mountains.

“We’ve gotten ahead of him,” she says, but we should expect him soon.”

We slow and then stop. Twenty minutes pass. We talk.



“...And that’s my life story, Juliet.”

“I see flashes of light,” she says.

“He should have kept it off; there’s a good moon tonight.”

“Guess he’s a careful biker.”

“More sightings of light, sloping downward.”

“Let’s drive to where we think he is headed, and wait there for a while.” We wait.

“Nothing. I think we’ve lost him for good. He’s probably gotten back to his biker camp, where all is now lights out.”

“We’ll come back tomorrow, in the daylight, and have a good guess at where the camp is.”

“OK, Patrick, and we can follow some bikes there, perhaps.”

“OK, let’s go see the quartermaster.”

We make no announcement, and go about checking the records.

“The records look fine,” Juliet assures.

We approach the quartermaster, Sergeant Kohl, and I ask, “How do you handle the scrap?”

“Every Saturday night, we send a container of scrap metal to the Myogi Works in Pearl City to get melted down. The driver, Jim Morris, stays there until they go into the furnace.”

“And this scrap metal contains discarded weapons?”

“Yes, about half, those that are old or not functioning well, along with other metal that we break down from artillery pieces or whatever. Morris just left about a half hour ago in our truck.”

I look at Juliet. “This is a good and lucky Saturday night, but it could be a long one. We need to drive really fast and catch up to Morris. His truck will not be that speedy.”

“It’s still a lot of time to make up, and it’s late, meaning little traffic, but he stays there a while.”

Juliet turns out to be quite a speedy driver, taking turns at such a high speed that I have to hold on. I look at her, but say nothing about it for a bit.

“You’re quite a race car driver. This is the night to go for it, for the suppliers might get wise from the biker and back off their routine for a while.”

We pass a diner.

“There’s a diner. I’m starving.”

“I’ll buy you dinner later.”

“They’re already almost closed. It’s one in the morning.”

“So much for Saturday night way out here.”

We drive on.

“There’s Morris’s Army truck outside,” notes Juliet.

“It’s truly amazing Morris is still here. I did the math.”

“I drive faster than arithmetic.”

We rush inside, getting strange looks, out of surprise. The workers are wheeling the container toward the melter.

“Stop!” she says. They all seemed dumfounded.

“Military Police interception of shipment!”

“Let’s weigh it first. You guys have a scale?”

“Sure,” says Myogi, and the workers get the container on the scale.

Juliet looks. “217 pounds, just as chalked on the container, next to today’s date.”



“OK, let’s open it up!” The workers open the container. I look in. “There are a few weapons, but it is mostly miscellaneous metal.”

“Outside,” she points and says.

“Be right back, guys. Hold tight.”

Juliet is holding a piece of paper. “This is the shipment record from the quartermaster’s office.”

“I didn’t see you take that.”

“I’m quick. The container weighed 215 pounds when they sent it shipping.”

“And here I thought they might be taking a few usable or fixable weapons out somewhere along the way, and now it looks like they’re adding some in.”

“The scale couldn’t be two pounds off.”

“No, not in this man’s Army.”



“Plus a few weapons removed here and there would be small time.”

“It’s a small time island.”

“They are destined for the mainland, Patrick. No customs to go through. Easy.”

“You’re on the ball, and so am I, I hope. Let’s have a look at the truck.”

We go over to look into the Army truck, me to the front, and she to the back.

She says, “There are two more containers in the back.”

“And but a takeout box in the front seat,” I answer.

We walk back inside, and I command, "Let's weigh the other two containers."

The two containers are brought in and weighed in turn, and I note, "They match their chalk marks." We head back outside.

"Patrick, both containers are one pound over as shipped, according to the shipping paperwork."

"That does it. Let's go talk to Morris."

"Jim" I ask, "did you make any stops on the way here?"

"I'm not allowed to."

"That is not exactly an answer," Juliet interjects.

"Sometimes I have to go to the restroom."

I continue, "You are being evasive, not wanting to be known for breaking the rules, but I have you. You stopped at a diner, one that we saw, which is why there is a takeout box in your truck. One has to eat, and I'll give you credit if you just come out with it."

"Yes, I usually have a short dinner there, for it would be closed upon my return trip."

"Don't worry, we're not going to turn you in. You and Myogi are both clean. Anyone else eating in the diner?"

"No, they were about to close, I guess."

"Any other cars or trucks in the lot?"

"A truck."

"Next to yours?"

"Yes."

I motion Juliet back outside, then say, "The other truck at the dinner wasn't the cook's, the waiters', or anyone's who works there, for they always park around back, to leave the good spaces for the customers."

"I knew that, but what's going on?"



"They switch the entire container, one or more of them, substituting their own, whatever is close to the weight, but it may not be precisely so. They read the shipping weight and try to match it, maybe put in some pieces or take some out. They can replace a container in a matter of minutes."

"How do we keep this quiet, to catch them at the diner next time?"

"We can't, for the jig is up. They've seen us; they're watching right now, just in case, being clever to the max, just as we've seem them to be so far."

Juliet turns and looks, and observes a small truck pull out of a blind, way down the road, and quickly drive away, toward an on-ramp to the expressway.

"You knew? We could have staked them out and followed them."

"Then they would know we knew. They're smart enough to evade a tail and they have access to weapons better than ours. Besides, I didn't really really know at that point."

"But we've lost them. They'll get off the expressway and drive other roads, changing often."

"I got their plate number on the way in. They just didn't look right."

"Juliet"

"Good one, Patrick."

"We'll close the pipeline. We've got the high end of the totem pole and the biker will give us the low end."

"On a real totem pole, the most important figures are at eye level."

"I guess I got it backwards, Juliet."

"Well, I'm forward; I wish we could fraternize."

"After dinner, I'll take you dancing."

"That's against the rules."

"It would be my rule-breaking only, as the higher rank."

"But, your sweetheart."

"It's a long story, but she is intent on my freedom. Time will tell, though. I own her. Tried to free her, and now she's reversing it on me."

"I'm not even going to ask."

We walk to the car and drive off.

"Time to head back to the fort and get a few hours of much overdue sleep."

"What a day and a night. I'll be ready, first thing."

"Meanwhile, send out the info, and so will I."

I arrive at Juliet's quarters on my motorcycle the next morning, and she comes out within a few minutes.



"I'll drive today."

"On that, a motorcycle? With me on the back?"

"It would be best. We're going to the biker's camp."

"Sounds, um, very close."

"We're only human."

We zoom along the roads and easily find the bikers' camp.

"Just where we thought it would be."

"We'll waltz right in and have breakfast with them."

We drive the motorcycle right into the midst of the biker's camp, then walk over to the breakfast setup, obtaining some startled looks upon our MP uniforms. We smile, and are then offered seats at breakfast.

A burly bearded biker sheepishly approaches, but says nothing. I shake his hand, saying, "The law is that property damage cannot be taken for retribution by killing, even if a burglar enters one's home in a surprising way, but threatening life directly is another matter. What do you think?"

"I never did like that law, the first part, but the second part sounds fine."

"Yes, a biker's bike is his life, for one, and, for two, the soldier pulled a knife."

"How do you know I did anything to him."

"Good answer, and you didn't even say you shot him, for that would have given something away."

"It wasn't me."



"That's another good answer, but I have a piece of glass that will nicely fit into your broken mirror; however, I've seen you at the lounge and you are a decent sort. You even took the fight outside to save the place from damage. The killing is also a civilian case; we're only interested in where you got the weapon. For me, a man has a right to defend himself from bodily harm, although you rather overdid it. The heat of the moment, I guess. And note that I, too, ride a motorcycle."

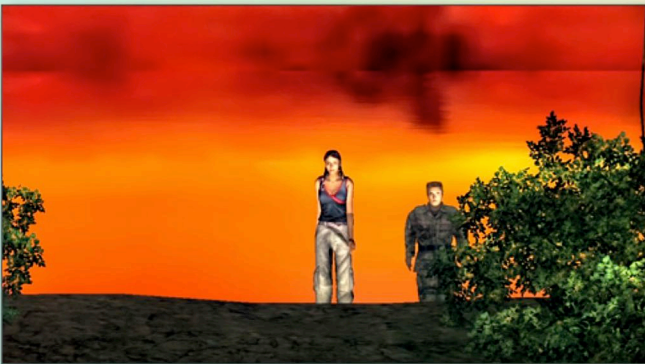
"How do I know this won't come back to haunt me?"

"You have my word as an MP and a biker. The soldier was out of line. And I brought a biker girl with me, too."

The biker thinks of her riding.

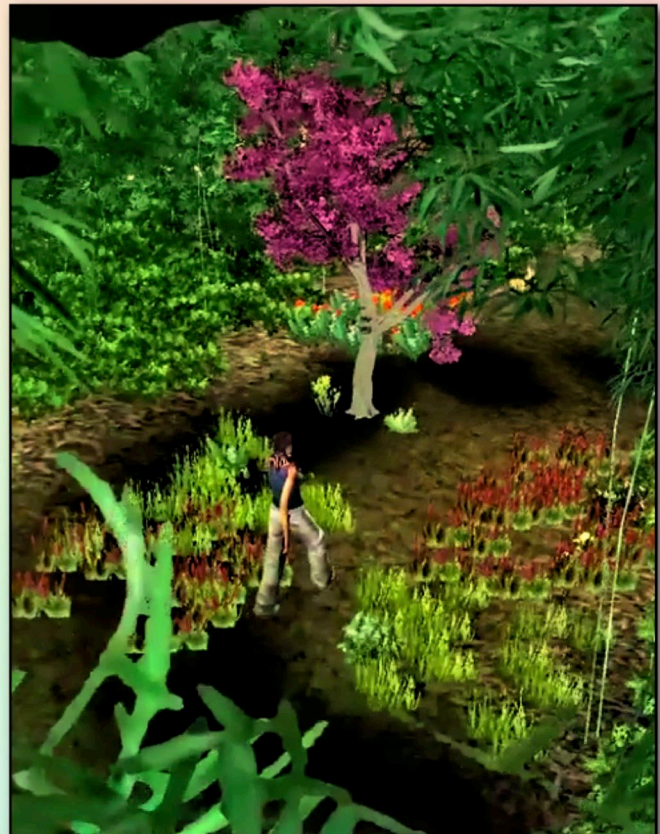
"Ask for Norman at the T-bar in Pearl. He sells weapons out of his trunk."

"Thanks."



We finish breakfast, and then drive off on the motorcycle, zooming through the Waimea Valley, into the warm wind, she holding tight. There are large sugar cane plantations. Far off, we can see the mountains rising behind Fort Shafter. We feel many and

good vibrations, seemingly more than those coming from the motorcycle.



CHAPTER 3

# The Raid and the Consummation



The Raid to Come

### Chapter 3: The Raid and the Consummation

Juliet goes inside the MP Unit and comes back out, relating, "My hand-picked man has gotten the address for the bad guys' truck and has assembled a team. I called ahead."



"You're the best. We'll raid the home or the building and search it. This will give us and the unit some real action."

"It is both a building and a home. Live where you work. That kind of business. And I just told them to get ready, as I suspected you would raid it soon."

"OK, we're off to the weapons house." The MP unit heads out.

"We'll wait down the road as look-outs. The raid will begin within the hour. Juliet, there's one thing I don't get. How is it that these guys have access to Army containers to substitute?"

"I was thinking of that, too. I'm afraid there's someone on the Army inside of this."

"Only the Colonel or his superior would have the means for this, which is why I haven't told them anything yet. There's a new General, too. I feel alone without my friend, the former General."

"I know what you mean, although I might add that we are together."

"Dinner and dance at the end of this."



"And more."

"Indeed."

We hug, and then I say, "It's not the Colonel. I just know it. But I'll consider it."

"And old Myogi must be getting blind. There was only low grade scrap metal in those containers, with but a little good stuff on top."

"No more dining out for Morris."

"He can eat good old Army food on the base before he leaves."



"Hey, Juliet, the MPs just blew the doors away."

"And the bad guys are reacting in the wrong way, drawing weapons galore."

"But the MPs are ready, and they are reacting in the right way, taking them out instantly, with no hesitation."

"Two of the injured are talking, and many papers are being gathered. Should we go in?"

"We'd better remain here, watching for escapes."

"A car is screaming out of the garage!"

"Blast them with the machine gun."

"Well, we sure shot the hell out of it; they hardly even got down the road. Blood and guts all over."

"That should do it."

"OK, have the MPs clear out as soon as they can. I'll call HPD right now."



"Hello HPD. I am anonymous, but with National Security. Something interesting for you at..."

All the MPs quickly clear out, and we all get back on the road, and I offer, "We were never there."

The building is on fire. HFD and soon HPD arrive. Meanwhile, HPD sends someone non-military-looking to buy a pistol from Norman at the T-bar. They enlist a biker, or at least a good imitation.

“Patrick, I got CID involved earlier, and they’ve traced the weapons intermediary to the new General.”

“Good going.”

The Colonel, the Juliet, and I go off to arrest the General, but only the Colonel goes inside.

He comes back out quickly, saying, “It’s solved, but my methods of interrogation are classified. See you later.”

Juliet and I walk back to the MP Unit, and I tell her, The Colonel is recommending you for Officer Training School.”

“Wow!”

“It would seem that, after three months, I am still heading for another life, overseeing the new military cryptographic computer unit.”

“Are you? Perhaps you will reconsider tomorrow.”

“Yes, time for the dinner, the dancing, and the celebration! Imagine that.”

“Heavenly. Let’s use our imaginations, for now, or else I will have to tell you about it.”

“OK, and you can tell me about it, too, beforehand. So, now we have no General and still no Major. Then

the Colonel will move up to General and we will have no Colonel. This kind of leaves us in charge.”

“I’m deep into imagination.”

We ate at Cathy’s Lounge, then danced in Waikiki, and consumed each other for hours. For this first encounter, only, I beg to refer the reader to this novel’s movie.

Juliet and I arrive for work the next day at the MP Unit.

“Here are our travel vouchers, Juliet.”



“What! Where are we going?”

“Both business and pleasure. We’re going to the states to follow the paperwork. The raid that destroyed the plant that refurbished the stolen weapons somehow didn’t make the news. A part of our

MP Combat Unit has been given an early out, just one last duty to perform, and they’ll forget to wear their uniforms again.”

“Bring it on.”

“Here’s a bottle of Bailey’s Irish Creme.”

“Now, Patrick, I already know that you make your own.”

“As you fill our glasses, I note that you already have two buttons undone on your top, and so I’m catching a glimpse of your treasure chest as you bend over the desk.”

“I want you again right now, right here.”

“I’m glad you brought this to the attention of my desk, or, I could bring out the cot. How about in ten minutes, after we consume our drinks?”

“Seven minutes, and the desk will be a fine symbol of this usage. FTA.”

“Not according to regulations.”

“Since when do you heed regulations, authorizing that raid on your own?”

“There was no time. I had to use my judgement.”

“True, and the probable cause came out just fine.”

“And, by a stroke of luck, the stolen containers are now on a three-day cruise. The bad guys went straight from the diner to the docks at Pearl Harbor, while Morris finished his fine dinner, then some of them came back to watch Myogi’s place.”

“So, we’ll be there when they unload.”

“San Francisco. Our team is already in place. We also have the final destination. It’s Chicago, central to everywhere. A team is there as well. The former Colonel has approved it, so, no sweat. And he didn’t even inquire about our whereabouts here.”

“It never happened.”

“That’s what we always say. MP combat units really shouldn’t operate on American soil, but, there was and is no time to wait.”

“You’re DIA.”

“I am, but you never heard it. How did you know?”

“You kept coming up with things.”

“Inspired by your things. We could only have done this together.”

“And you didn’t take any notes on the weapons case, like any policeman would, although you did on the minor cases.”

“DIA leaves no paper trail.”

“I’ve been offered OCS. You played me up to the Colonel.”

“You didn’t need playing up. You had the small time to the big time thing, and much more.”

“Thanks, the Army is my life, I guess.”

“We still need the MP unit here for quite some time. After I leave, we will have no Captain. You will become a lieutenant, acting MP Captain, reporting directing to our new Colonel-now-General.”





Bubbling Over With Passion

“Great!”

“Yes, small time, big time opportunities; however, you might think about another career in a few years when the troop reduction is complete.”

“I can do it. I’m going places now.”



“I knew that before we became an item. DIA is on offer, too, if you want it.”

“You bet I do. The former Colonel is DIA, too, Patrick.”

“It wouldn’t be good of him to tell me that, and he hasn’t; he’s too high up to let that out, if he is. And I can’t tell him that I am, in case he isn’t. How do you figure?”

“If he’s DIA, he’d know that you are, too, as the higher ranks must be informed of a chain. And he

didn’t question us, as you said, about our information sources or the raid; so, he knows you were authorized, making him DIA, too, and, besides, we didn’t get the paperwork on our teams going to the states, not even some fakery as a cover, so, he initiated it on his own, which is more than his just approving it.”

“See, I knew you had the right stuff.”

“And I’ve already packed for the states.”

“I knew that.”

“The seven minutes are up. This is going to be the start of the best three months you ever had.”

“So I see. I’m retaining my DIA connection. I’ll be back and forth a few times a year at first, concerning the crypto thing.”

“Then those will be the best of times as well.”

“I see that you are taking off your shirt and pants. Hey, you are not wearing Army regulation underneath. Well, let me sweep the papers off my desk, all of them going flying, an old cliché now brought back to life. They are just the shipping records from Pearl.”

...



Fireworks



And Smoke

We lit up smokes. That was OK in those days. We enjoyed the aftermath for a time, the cooling fan whirling around overhead, dressed, and walked outside on the crushed stone path amid the tropical plants.

“The former Colonel’s helicopter is landing in Palm Circle, near our post, his privilege now as the new General. Let’s go. He has stepped out and is walking over towards us.”



“Get your packs,” the Colonel says. “It’s time. We’ve already successfully intercepted one call to the weapons refurbishing factory that you raided, and the weapons shipment arrives in the morning.”



We start back.

“Wait! I have some second lieutenant’s bars to pin on the Sergeant’s lapels. Congratulations. After OCS you will be promoted to first lieutenant, then acting Captain. I’ve gone over your record and you deserve it.” “Thank you, sir. I’ll do my best to move into it.”

“I know how it feels; I’m kind of an acting General now, but I’ll get into it after we wrap up this case. Then I want you two to take two weeks off, on vacation; together, in fact, and that’s an order. Lieutenant Bailey, assign someone temporarily to run the place while you’re gone. If this mission is successful, then to-be-Major Patrick Torney will look after you until his service is done. I thank you both. The Pentagon thought that something funny had to be going on somewhere.”

“We were stunned, Patrick, but we didn’t show it or say anything. That was our training ingrained. He knew about our ‘us’, which news is still rather new. He has to be DIA. There is probably nothing he doesn’t know about. He was probably already a DIA General while posing as an MP Colonel.”

“Yes, I agree, and now you seem as all joy and brightness warmed over.”

“I am, and now that we’re both officers, we can be seen together out of uniform.”

“Such as we just were, in my office?”

“Ha-ha. And you brought me some Irish luck, albeit from a dead soldier.”

“We’ll need it in San Francisco; they could be on to us.”

“Oh, they are, unless on that intercepted phone call we only had to say ‘Yes’ to ‘Did the shipment go out?’”

“And the arrival date.”

“Yes, but some code word might have been missing.”

“We’re bringing a large team, our best.”

“Now who am I going to get to run the place while we’re off and away?”

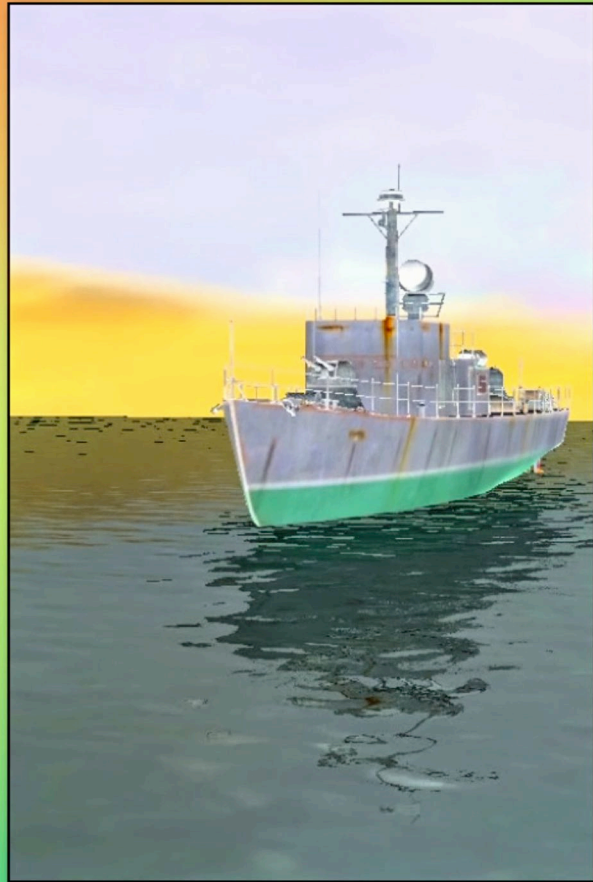
“It’s mostly routine, but for once a month, as you told me.”

“Hope so, darling.”



CHAPTER 4

# The San Francisco Clash



Action to Come at the Docks

## Chapter 4: The San Francisco Clash



“Our advance team has seen no unusual massing of personnel on the San Francisco docks, but it is ever busy, and these weapons would fetch a fortune in the states, especially any really high tech ones, which could even be sold overseas for our enemies to use or reverse engineer. Fort Shafter is really going to have to get an onsite disposal facility.”

“That’s for sure.”

“So, we’re walking into a trap, Lieutenant?”

“Yes, and I’m Juliet. You told me yourself they were clever.”

“We’ll expect the worst, then, as always.”

“Yes.”

“We’re hitting Chicago just as the shipment arrives.”

The Colonel now General thinks to himself a bit, perhaps trying to give the us some credit, but he probably already knows. “We couldn’t get the code word out of the injured; they claimed there wasn’t any. We even shot one of them dead in front of another; he would have died anyway. Yes, they’re onto us and so we hit Chicago already, for that was the main operation of concern. Got them all. Chicago PD then ‘stumbled’ on to it, and so our team there has already flown to San Francisco. And we have some SEALs who love to get wet. Anything more and we’d look like an invasion force.”

“Sir, if I may?” Juliet requests.

“Go right ahead.”

“If we meet a lot of resistance, then that means there is another distribution center besides Chicago. Maybe the alternate shipments go there.”

“Good thinking, Lieutenant; I’m glad I promoted you. We found nothing about another center, but then they would be autonomous, wouldn’t they?”

“Yes. And the previous shipping papers were no longer at Pearl; I checked. They have a cleaner there, but he was too late for the records we’d obtained.”

The General looks at Patrick, “That’s your Juliet, always on the job, even at the start of a new and glorious romance.”

Juliet perks up, “How did you know about us?”

“Better to hit them now.”

“They might warn San Francisco, or at least show a warning by not being able to communicate.”

“San Francisco already knows.”

“How come?”

“Because I have faith in your sizing up of them.”

“I did discuss it with the new General, but we’ll take it up with him on the flight. We’re helicoptering over to Hickam Air Force Base, where a jet awaits us, with SEALs in the back. We’ll soon be in the air, passing over Molokai and Maui.”

“The seat belt sign is off; let’s approach the Colonel, I mean General.”

“Sir, my Lieutenant here thinks they’re onto us, and I really have to agree.”



“Well, human nature, firstly, plus I was young once upon a time in this old Army, but really it was the way you two looked at each other when you were outside Cathy’s Lounge investigating the killing.”

“You were there? We didn’t see you, and we don’t miss much.”

“No one ever sees me when I don’t want them to. I was but twenty feet away, after I stepped outside out the back, after posing as the cook’s helper. I learn things that way, but the shooting happened so quickly that I couldn’t stop it.”

“You called in the incident to HPD and described it so well. No one else could have, for they all claimed to have seen nothing. I wondered about that a bit, but then forgot about it. We both missed that one.”

The General smiles. “Well, you guys are sharp, and when you get to live to my age, you won’t miss anything, but, as I’m hinting, you’ll do that while you’re still much younger than I.”

“Well, age or not, you still got one over on us.”

“And I saw what I took to be a bird, but its path was not that of a bird; so it was the gun being flung into the gully. You guys went into the gully and saved me from having to launder my clothes. The rest of your act was sheer genius on your parts. Even if neither I nor the pistol were there, you still would

have followed up, based on the bullet. As for your romance, the early signs were confirmed by how you held your Captain on the back of his motorcycle, your hands ever roaming.”

“You were there, too?”

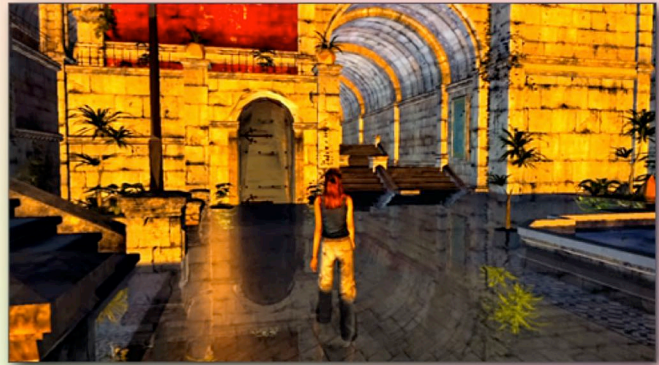
“No, but I have eyes everywhere, even in a non-combat fort. It’s an old habit.”

“From?”

“I can’t say, really, but I will, half-way. Ask Captain Patrick Torney about the person often quite affectionately referred to as ‘The General’, now retired in Tahiti, or not. He assigned me here himself. Said I’d be able to fill his shoes, although Cambodia is rather over.”

“Then we’re in good hands,” I add.

“That remains to be seen. We have our teams, but I’m holding us three in reserve, on the three towers. Your rifles and machine guns are in the back. I’ll take the tower by the exit. Stay down; expect the worst. They may have snipers or even people already up there, but our airship reports they are empty. Not anyone can just waltz in there, but we have clearance. The guard will wave you on.”



Taking Positions

We land, go to the docks, and take our positions, first going through a labyrinth from the rear. We see no one but the first guard, who waves us on. There is not even an MP in sight. We wait, testing our radios. It is night. The ship docks but, strangely, not in an available, closer berth. Juliet is positioned way down there, and comes on.

“They must have men on the ship, or why would it dock so far away? Yikes! Bad news. Loads of armed men are jumping off. Big huge shoulder-carried weapons. And its all of the sudden getting damned dark around here.”

“It was expected,” the General replies. One team is there already; we’re now moving the far team closer, and the further SEALs are swimming toward. Any other movement, lieutenant?”

“No... wait; I’ve got some soft sounds to the rear. There has to be a lot of them for me to be hearing it. They’ve got an army of their own coming in. We’re in big trouble.”

I add, “And now, more men, from the midsection of the dock, coming up from underneath it! Our teams will be surrounded!”

“With some of our own high tech weapons,” the General says.

I note, “Christ, the radio is going dead. Use the phone, Juliet.”

“For Christ’s sake, Patrick. We’ve got no radio and there are no SEALs in the water, as the General said, and not an MP in sight. If the MPs waiting in the building they’ll be blown to bits.”

“Hold tight, the General is calling me. I’ll set it as a conference call.”

“It’s OK;” says the General, “they have our radio bands; they salvaged them. The info I gave you was false; I had to fake them out, and you, too. We have no SEALs or MPs where I said they were. I needed you to stay focused, with your reactions real. The SEALs and the MPs are on hand to move in on the survivors.”

“Survivors?” Juliet questions. “Of what?”

“Never just bring small stuff to a big fight.”

The Colonel now General is drowned out by the roar of two columns of attack helicopters swooping in low and firing, cleaning house along the dock, both in front of the buildings and behind.”

I report, “Stragglers are heading back toward the ship, but Juliet is calming cutting them down, beginning with the ones closest to the ship, and the MPs are moving in on the rear group and doing the same. I’m firing from my further distance. Hey, I’ve nailed a few. There’s a truck thundering toward the exit.”

“I’ll take care of it,” the General answers. Everyone clear out.”



The Docks Attack

"Another urban legend in the making," I note.

We are driven away in a fine car, the General in the front passenger seat, and us lovers cozy in the back. No one says anything for awhile, until Juliet comes out with...

"What the hell?"

The General turns, and smiles, "I'm sorry, but shouldn't officers take the lead?"

"True, yes, as the lead on the ground, and you gave us the best position. Anyone else on the actual ground would have been slaughtered. The MPs and the SEALs were saved, the SEALs just having come off the plane for looks, perhaps, same as the MPs did, previously, although they were both needed for the clean-up behind. We were it, us three, and the helicopters. Incredible, sir."

"And you had a front row seat, and a chance to react to the unfolding events, even those appearing to go very bad."

"Kind of a test, then, too, like the one on Star Trek with the Klingons overwhelming in the no-win scenario simulation."

"I took the opportunity, yes, but you were needed there, too. Had to have your reactions to be real, on the radio thing. And the Captain gave a good scream. I couldn't have anyone getting away or sinking the ship that might contain evidence. As you

noted, they'd gotten to those on the ship, employing their own there, for whatever eventualities. This thing is more than just selling pistols. Some of the really good stuff was on the way to other nations."

"General, with all due respect, you'd have us in the Middle East before all this is over. We'll never get our vacation. So far you've used the Air Force, the Army, the Navy, and I think the Marines from San Diego, going by the look of those attack helicopters. How big of an operation is this?"

"Huge, like most things now. The Pentagon is very interested in this; they even had the airspace cleared. Not to mention the President, which we shouldn't."

"I noted that, about the airspace. There's a busy airport over there that had no planes taking off or landing, and this time I didn't forget it, but it gave me pause, and so I pretended a bit. And Patrick's scream was convincing, but he knew you wouldn't let the MPs get trapped. Well, maybe we almost half took it as real."

"I can see why the Captain is going to find you unforgettable."

"Hope so. What about the other center?"

"I just got word from the SEALs that there were no clues on the ship, but the other center will be in Texas, a fine location for the equation of distribution. The local US market is their cut. They'll ship

both east and west. They're in with the gun shop dealers, too, probably, and they may have other forts as sources, but those will go nowhere without their centers, and any sub-centers will go pretty much dry as well."

"How do we find the other center?"

"Well, that's your new job, and the sooner you do, the sooner you'll be on vacation. Others will attend to the other nations, and are already quite embedded there."

"Any more clues?"

"Likely near an interstate highway exit. They always are, for ease of transportation. Look for a place with a lot of activity and guards, as they'll be clearing out their inventory, but the arrangements will still take time, even with a fire sale. It's in Texas, but, of course, more northern than even central. They don't deal with Mexico. Shouldn't be too hard to find; most of that state is arid and empty, although as wide as from Iowa to New York."

"Will you be there?"

"Perhaps, but you won't see me until the end."

"Thousands of flat acres and mostly empty interstates and yet we won't see you?"

"No, you won't."

"We will."

"OK, it's a bet. You get another week of vacation if you do. We're dropping you two at a nearby motel,

to celebrate and plan the search, and here's a hefty allowance."

"Thanks."



After the lovemaking, we light up, and then Juliet sits straight up in bed, having realized something.

"He fooled us, kind of, just hinting that he was DIA. Well, I mean, he is, but he's not just a one-star or anything that minimal; he low-balled us. He's at least three or more stars, but not a five, for that is a General of the Army Chief of Staff, the highest point of the military, and that person has to sit in the Pentagon."

"Try a seven-star," I reply.





Stars Talk

“There is no such thing; the Secretary of Defense is an implicit six-star, being above the Army Chief of Staff, and thus the President as Commander in Chief is an implicit seven-star.”

“They might work together, in some cases, but there are things that the President doesn’t want to know about right away, or even ever.”

“You know this?”

“I served in the Cambodia campaign that was an official non-campaign under the now retired seven-star General referred to as ‘The General’. We can even go to Tahiti to see him.”

“I was wondering where people already in Hawaii could possibly go on vacation.”

“So, you knew it was to be Tahiti? Why not Europe?”

“Because, um, it’s wintertime and they’re having an ice-cold one over there.”

“OK, just checking.”

“Should be warm enough in Texas, though.”

“Let’s look at that map of the U.S. and wonder about a good route to somewhere in Texas.”

“There are clearer and clearer limits to what paths the interstates can take as they get near Texas.”

“So I see. Let’s go to the airport in the morning and fly to what might be a good starting point, which appears to be Dallas, in the north, because the

next one, Austin, is too central. How did this guy know, anyway?”



CHAPTER 5

# The Action In Texas



Where Did He Go?

## Chapter 5: The Action in Texas

I offer, "It's not going to be right in the city; too many eyes there."

"Agreed, and it will be north of it, a bit just beyond where the suburbs die out, plus a bit more to allow for more housing expansion."

"And there's still ten miles to the next exit."

"Wow, now I'm learning how this seven-star General thinks. It's a piece of cake. He's probably already in the vicinity, with the MP teams, too."

"We are his backup, apparently."

"Thus his putting us on our own, so that no association is possible by anyone's observation."

"The MPs will again be a decoy, easily spotted even in their civilian clothes, so they won't be real close."

"And the center will own the local sheriffs. In fact, whole Texas towns are ever on the lookout for outsiders."

"The MPs still have to go in to identify that the target is valid, and perhaps to clean up."

"Yes, but they'll remain at a distance, but for some longer-haired infiltrators."

"DIA."

"Yes."

"And where will the General be?"

"High in the sky, I'd say. He thinks he'll win the bet through us caving in to only two-dimensional ground thinking."

"So if we can see him, we get the extra week."

"We have our weapons, and some have really good scopes we can use."

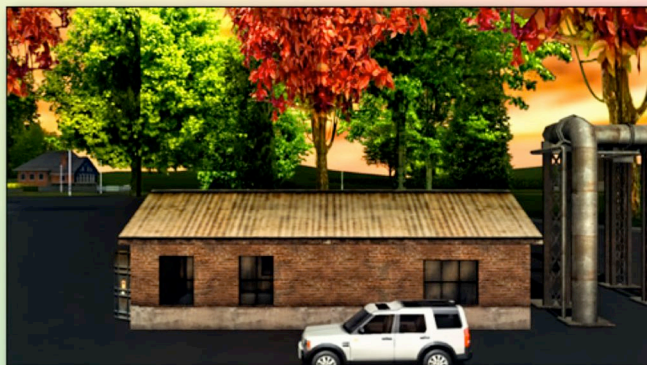
"We'll point a weapon at his plane?"

"We'd better remove the scope and just use it alone."

"OK, time to get off the interstate."

"Ah-ha, there's a heavily gated and guarded warehouse not too far off."

"Good, you're driving by it at normal speed."



"There are a lot of small white panel vans."  
"With no markings."

"That's a mistake, perhaps, not having fake markings on the vans."

"But then they'd have to have company names and even phone numbers. And that wouldn't look right on long range trips."

"Well, it will sure make it easier to find these vans across the US."

"They'll drive very near the speed limit and so they won't attract a lot of attention. The police go after speeders. They'll also make sure not to have any non-working lights, as well as good tires."

"Here's a motel nearby, as they always are, right off the exit, and it has quite the view of the warehouse complex."

"The bad guys will have someone at this motel, too, so let us really look like just a couple."

"Do we really have to try?"

"No, but I guess we shouldn't overdo it. This is not exactly a honeymoon spot."

"That may be tough!"

"All in the line of duty."

"Let's try for a room down at the end, a risk, but a likely place for a couple like us with no children. A DIA agent or two will probably be staying here, too, but they will be out and about, even pretending to hitchhike or hiding in the woods with the MPs, but far away, ready to move in to pick up any stragglers from whatever the General had in mind, probably

something not very subtle. Only in very serious operations does everyone on sight get terminated, but the workers here, whoever they are, know what they have gotten into. The right to bear arms can only go so far, even in Texas."

"This scope is so good that I can see the weapons, inside an open door that is now shutting."

"Great, for this is double or triple confirmation, which is always good to have. Wouldn't want to wipe out an innocent business. I'll call it in to the General's aide."

"These dealers are on alert; no doubt about it. It looks like panic has set in, causing some caution of the door openings to be thrown to the wind. Trucks are leaving, right and left."



“Something is going to have to have to happen soon, although no doubt the trucks are being followed, based on the weapons’ sightings. And once one of them is opened...”

“I hear the faint roar of a plane, its sound having slowing traveled behind, and thus not indicating where it is now. I’m lifting my scope to where it might be, tracking it closer and closer.”

“Aim for more vacation.”

“I’ve got him; I’m now sighting the General in the co-pilot’s seat. They’re going to blow the warehouse to bits.”

“Stay on the plane; I’ll watch the explosion; Here it comes.”



“Snapshot! Got him.”

“It may be a bit crude.”

“Ha, a lucky camera shot with a plane moving, but the plane had somewhat slowed, to make sure of the hit.”



“There are no stragglers this time.”



“A man is running out of the motel, in a real hurry, a mistake, for others are just standing and looking at the fireball.”

“What an amateur. Let’s get him.”

Juliet gets there first and takes him down.

“Nice tackle. Let’s get him back to the room and tie him up with phone wire, then you can call it in with the bulky cell.”

The General comes onto the phone line, to Juliet.

“I saw you taking my picture; you’ve got your extra week. You got one on me. Pure luck. Some MPs will be over to take the prisoner away.”

“Thanks again.”

“Wow, Juliet, the MPs are already here, and the General, too, out of uniform, looking like no one special.”

“We see you.”

“That’s over now; no more extra weeks of vacation.”

“Who was that guy we caught?”

“No one but the head of the entire operation.”

“You knew?”

“I didn’t think he would remain in the warehouse, but I did think he’d be keeping an eye out, not necessarily here, but I’ll take this bit of Irish luck, although I bet you would have still spotted him somewhere nearby.”

“Irish luck?”

“I know the smell of that delicious creme when someone has just had it.”

“Even with the rotor blades generating a large wind?”

“No, but when I pinned your bars on, I did.”

“You don’t miss anything.”

“That’s why I’m still alive.”

“What tales you could tell us!”

“If only I could.”

“Well, after all I’ve seen, I guess I will have my own tales, as I really have to join DIA now.”

“No, you don’t have to. We like volunteers, not hostages.”

“I volunteer.”

“Don’t you know that’s not good to do in the Army?”

“I know, but I still volunteer.”

“Welcome aboard.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“I need the scope with the photo; just a precaution.”

“Here it is, sir. You don’t exist, do you?”

“No, I don’t, I have to say, but am not sad to say.”

“No public credit; no limelight.”

“My own satisfaction is quite enough.”

“You even stuck yourself as an MP Colonel, in middle management, without the action of the lower ranks or a full command position.”



The Marines

“It freed me to do what I had to. My move to MP Brigadier General was unplanned, but it will do, as well, yet still a peon in that higher realm, but there are things to explore there, and no one will see my rise as anything other than a logical happening.”

“You didn’t take any credit for the weapons’ investigation, did you?”

“No, I don’t need that kind of publicity. I played you guys up a bit, but you really did most of it anyway.”

“No, sir, it required the three of us in the middle and the end. And something didn’t seem right about the General to you, though, but you would have sorted it out completely by yourself.”

“Maybe not; he was a tough nut. Sometimes we lose, and I was losing.”

“We were your backup, both now and then, when you were at Cathy’s Lounge.”

“Yes, indeed, and the President would thank you two, and me, if he could, but he can’t.”

“Duty, honor, country.”

A tear came to my eye. “Juliet, you just made me cry.”

She states, “We have new enemies who didn’t sign the Geneva Convention, and so we are not bound to it either.”

“The President doesn’t want to know about these specific kinds of things, and has stated that he doesn’t, which is thereby an approval, but not one that’s been written down. He will surmise what happened though, and evaluate if it’s within the parameters. I would have to take the blame. It wouldn’t go public though, but I’d not be able to hold off the assassins if I got really out of line.”

“You won’t stray, and you are trusted. And even if something bogus came up, they would never find you. They would not see you. You intentionally put me where I could see you, to give us extra time off.”

“You’re right, they wouldn’t find me, for I would see them first. I have become the invisible ghost, there but not there, coming as water but going as the wind. When you return to base, you will find that I have been transferred, destination classified. If you ever run into me, you will not recognize me; I will have had plastic surgery, maybe even a skin-color change. I may not even act very bright.”

“I will know you; you will be where strange events take place, and I am DIA now, too. I might even pick you up hitchhiking down the road after some near disaster.”

“Yes, you might. I’ve had to do that on occasion. Things don’t always go as planned.”

“Yikes, what’s that noise outside?”

We run to the window and look out.

"A secondary explosion," the General reports. The heat from the fire has now reached six feet underground, causing some natural gas line problems."

We turn back around. Juliet beginning to speak."

"Sir... What! Where did he go!"

"Let's go outside."

"I neither see nor hear any car pulling away, nor any helicopters."

"He seems to be just gone."

"I see nothing. No movement anywhere."

"Let's go back in."

"Hey, Patrick, there two oak leaves on the table. You are now a Major. Congratulations."

"I'm shocked, and awed."

"I'll make arrangements for us to fly to Papeete, Tahiti."

"Good, it's may not be that healthy to stick around here."

"Our promotion and leave paperwork has probably already magically appeared back at Fort Shafter."

"Haunting, isn't it?"

"Yes, but there are no such things as ghosts. He just walked into the day somehow, but as real."

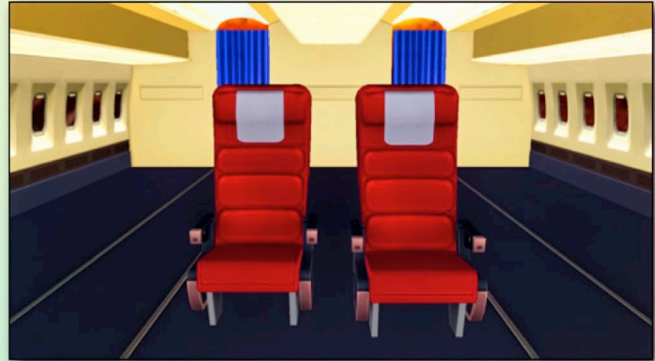
"But we went out and looked."

"He hid behind a tree while we were looking."

"How did he know when to move on?"

"He heard the motel door close when we went back in. He probably then waited a bit more and then walked far away and was picked up by his aide. He wanted to get one over on us again. Or it was so we wouldn't think deeper about some other things, which I still am."

We drive to the airport in Dallas, return the rental car, and board a plane for Tahiti.



Infinite Smallness x Infinite Largeness  
equals  
finite Unity

Past's Destruction  
→ Now →  
future's Construction

(s)

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(-) Eternities (+)

(£)

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(-) Polarity (+)



The One  
(solidity)

and

The None  
(vacuity)

are

Impossible,

thus

The

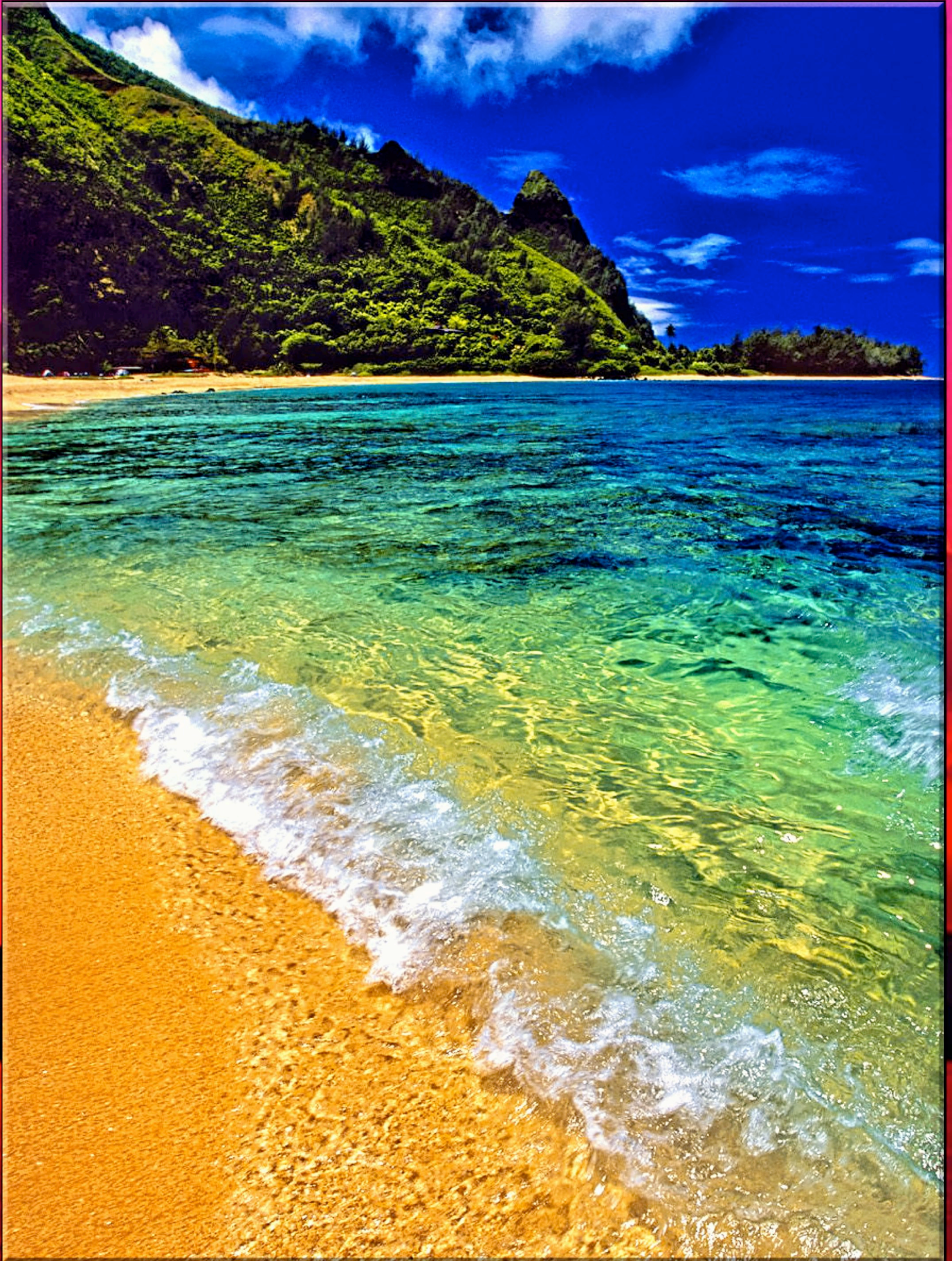
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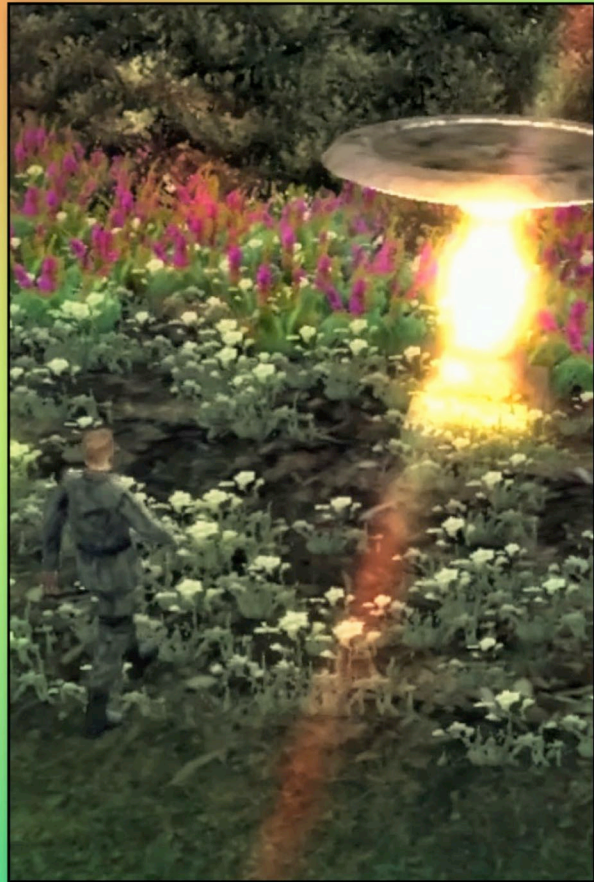
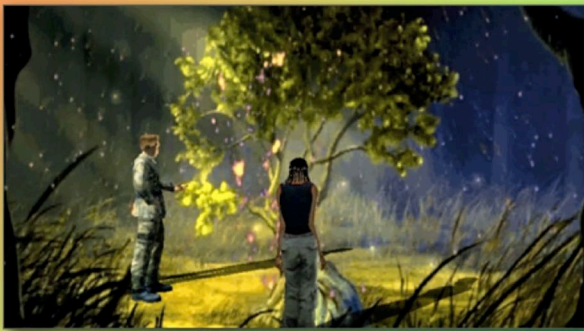
(Plus & Minus)

The singularity of nothingness  
Demands existential closure,  
Which demands compositional parity,  
Which demands cubic space.

Our universe's Dimensionality  
Is as inevitable as its existence.



# Revelations



The Colonel



## Chapter 6: Revelations

“Patrick, he’s an eight-star. He doesn’t have to tell the President everything. He got us again, trying to suggest some equal type partnership, or even that the President has some kind of say or approval of the guidelines. He’s even above DIA and the armed forces; he just utilizes them.”

“You’re getting it, but he’s not military, per say.”

“What then?”

“Ninja Empire.”

“What the hell is that? This has really been quite a week.”

“It’s the backup for the whole world.”

“And some nations agreed to this?”

“It’s a win-win situation. Evil goes away, with no fingers that can be surely pointed.”

“Now don’t tell me he’s the head of it.”

“He is; he’s a 10th degree Ninja Grandmaster. There is only ever one such. That’s what he was trying to tell us, with the wind and water references, and more.”

“And I just spoke to the King of the World like he was my best bud.”

“He took it well. I think he liked it.”

“And that’s why you were so quiet.”

“Yes, and you were doing quite well.”

“What’s this Ninja stuff?”

“When they began, they recruited people from the martial arts.”

“Honor, dedication, strength...”

“Yes, and it was partly a result of World War II, but then it grew into a reaction against the Conspiracy, an organization so secret and insidious that they could be given that name.”

“Where is it?”

“Everywhere, in government, business, the armed forces, maybe the Senate and Parliament, but headway is being made.”

“The General we arrested was in the Conspiracy?”

“No, for he had a fine record and was a family man, but the Conspiracy got to him, somehow, perhaps by threatening his family.”

“So now I’m in the Ninja Empire, too?”

“Yes, effectively, until officially, as am I.”

“They have their own nuclear weapons?”

“Yes, and EMP disruption, but they’re invisible, like the Conspiracy, with no country to be attacked. The battle goes on, kind of in the dark.”

“That’s why we saw such extreme force being used. I wondered about that. And that enemy army appearing at the dock, very unusual. We’re not just dealing with mafia types, are we?”

“No, they would be stone age compared to the intelligent Conspiracy.”



The Mysterious Colonel

“Our so-called former Colonel was in Cathy’s Lounge in order to overhear conversations and sniff out Conspirators serving in our Army, maybe like hearing someone ask too many questions of the technical units.”

“Most likely.”

“He has to do all of this by himself?”

“No no way; he just happened to have himself stationed here, as did his predecessor. He may have a counterpart in the Middle East, such as in Turkey. They may switch sometimes.”

“The Conspiracy could be part of our own MP unit. I might have put one in charge.”

“No, he is Ninja Empire, a set of good eyes. You made a fine choice.”

“What! I need time to absorb all this, but I can’t stop now. Does the Conspiracy have nuclear weapons?”

“No, they don’t, but they try to grab components, but have been unsuccessful so far. They much more try to infiltrate governments, and even the FBI, and any federal agencies, and their likes, abroad. Their centers are separate, autonomous; zero contact.”

“That’s why I heard that wordage today, I wondered about that. What are we going to do?”

“Life goes on, pretty much as usual. Most of the spooky goings-on are behind the scenes.”

“What about people seeing and swearing that an airstrike wiped out a warehouse in Texas?”

“It was just a tornado and a natural gas explosion, but for those few who actually saw it.”

“Like those who claim to see UFOs, or even become abducted.”

“Yes, kind of like that.”

“And the attack helicopters chewing up the docks?”

“They didn’t hit the buildings or the actual docks, but just the open areas, which were re-black-topped that night, right over the blood and guts, dissolving them.”

“Holy shit! And no police responded to the noises there?”

“They were told not to, like it might have been some FBI thing, and if some did, they only saw a crew at work, with big steam rollers and such.”

“Still suspicious, though.”

“These things don’t happen everyday, at least not in the same place, and the noise was brief.”

“Anyone around could see the helicopters.”

“Just a night exercise.”

“Juliet”

“Or UFOs.”

“Yes, plus they were first on the ground, then came out of nowhere, and then went back to ground.”



Eternity’s Child

“Does this Ninja Empire have some kind of base?”

“The bases are all over, some beneath parking garages, anywhere where you wouldn’t think they would be. There are many ongoing operations.”

“Where’s the main base around Hawaii? On Oahu?”

“No, Niihau.”

“The Forbidden Island, presumably run by the same old Hawaiian family for ages.”

“It’s shared.”

“You’ve been there?”

“Yes.”

“You had to keep these secrets until I was on-board.”

“I had to.”

“I love you for that.”

“Most of the secrets are out now.”

“What if some agents get captured and are tortured into revealing things?”

“We have constant watchers.”

“More ghosts?”

“Kind of. It’s a big eye in the sky.”

“We have satellites that can do that?”

“Yes.”

“How do they pinpoint us?”

“By our brain waves. They’re as good as fingerprints.”

“And if the Conspiracy gets hold of the satellite or its data stream or the computer centers on the ground.”

“Unbreakable encryption.”

“But if they get the encryption code?”

“There isn’t any. It works totally on its own, putting out alerts.”

“How can that be?”

“I don’t know.”

“This is the first time you didn’t know something. And you’re going to oversee the new crypto unit?”

“Yes, and I’ll even see the design, but it won’t ever make any sense.”

“It’s the ninth-star.”

“That it is”

“And the tenth?”

“The TOE—the Theory of Everything; it has been discovered.”

“And only the 10th degree Grandmaster knows it.”

“Yes.”

“And if he dies without passing it on?”

“It remains forever encrypted until the top Ninjas rediscover it. Each one has a clue.”

“And if they can’t pass on all their clues?”

“Then it gets tougher, but it was figured out once and could be again.”

“But the ninth-star would continue on, meanwhile, still knowing the TOE within itself.”

“Yes, it would.”

“It can’t wear out or run out of energy?”

“No, for it knows the TOE.”

“We have a non-person as our ultimate leader.”

“True.”

“What’s in Tahiti?”

“More secrets.”

“Kiss me and bring me back to reality.”

“OK, and the plane is landing, too.”



CHAPTER 7

# Tahiti



Bora Bora

## Chapter 7: Tahiti

“Juliet, when you see the Southern Cross for the first time...”

“You’ll understand why you came this way. The four brightest stars in the Southern Cross, also called the Crux Constellation, form a cross.”

“At Honolulu International, we had entered the 7th gate, the one marked Papeete, the name of a place quite remote that had always intrigued me, it being Hawaii’s sister and mirror, its archipelago even looking much the same, with beautiful Bora Bora at the end of the world, of today, yesterday, and tomorrow, much like Niihau is in Hawaii. We may or may not have clipped the date line while flying over the deep blue waters.”



“My pleasure. You’ve adapted well to the revelations that have arrived so fast and furiously.”

We leave for the jungle pool.



“You look like a mermaid, with your hair down.”  
We partied for a while.

“Now, let us go see the General,” she suggests.

We approach the General’s retirement home.

“Why are you looking all around?” she asks.

“I’m surveying the environs as I was ever taught to do, and, see, here’s a large encased wire running down the electric pole and into the ground. This guy needs a lot of power here for some reason.”

The General’ greets us, “Come on in; I’ve been expecting you. Let me and Nimue show you around. It

“Don’t pinch me; I don’t want to wake up.”

“In these southern islands, here in French Polynesia, the Wizard, known as the ‘The General’, has retired with his sweet Nimue in a fine and still youthful middle-age, he, my mentor, and the staunch seeker and destructor of evil with his pure and golden heart.”

“I heard that in Papeete and Bora Bora it is all dance, love, and song on the beach, and thus so very suitable for us lovers, Lieutenant Juliet Bailey and Major Patrick Torney.”

“Here the Southern Cross will once again rise, and it is here that we might learn so many more of the world events that have never happened.”

“Let’s have a drink on the beach, Patrick, a very fine whiskey this time.”

“Let’s raise our glasses to the valor of the deeds, for the living and for the dead, over the bronze of the sea of the setting sun. We are on a three-week vacation, and need it, after the intense period of action.”

“Take me to some secluded and magical spot.”

“I know just the place. On this enchanted evening, we’ll be swimming in the moonlight, at a magical pond in the forest near the base of a waterfall, without suits, of course.”

“I’m game. And you are the hunter.”

is all Polynesian decor, with wicker and bamboo, very open and bright, with tropical art and tapestries adorning the walls.”

I observe, “There is no sign at all of anything military here.”

“Oh, I suppose much of that is past now. Come out to the back porch for a few drinks as the warm airs embrace us with their balm.”

The ocean shows its reflected moonlight through a short jungle.

“This upside down glass has been placed here for our Major who was killed in Cambodia, but there is no need to say anything. We honor him with our silence for a moment.”

“OK, let’s go in for dinner.”

Dinner was near ready and we enter the home, the General noting by a glance a door with a combination lock.

“I’ve been intending to show you two something. Follow me down to my office.”

There is one desk, with a picture of the ‘Circle of Palms’ from Fort Shafter on the wall behind it, but little else.

Juliet says, “I see another door with another combination lock.”

“That’s where we’re headed.”

I look in. "Holy Christ! A complete RCA Spectra mainframe, with Ben and Lina from CSG running programs on it."

"You two look cozy; I've always suspected you as a couple, or at least moving toward. Now I have to break training and fall over at the sight. And the General had not completely retired, it seems. I can do some programming from afar, if you like, General."

"Actually, I was hoping for that, and I can extend your vacation leave if you wish to spend some time on the system, amid some more touring of the islands. And I took note of your noting of the wire outside. Perhaps we shall have to run it through the pole itself."

"Yes," Juliet says, "we'll take more vacation, and my gears are really turning again. So many questions."

"Well, let's all go up for dinner, and discuss, us three and our ladies, the ultimate meeting of East and West, in trio, the spell upon discussing old times broken, along with the revelations of the new."

I begin, "Your replacement is doing well; we went on some missions with him."

"So I hear. What was his name?"

"God, he never told us, and the lettering was faint on his uniform, but I got close and looked, at my first chance. It said 'Saunders'."

"So then he was Colonel Saunders."

"Oh, my, he got us again. Colonel Sanders, as of KFC. And he did fry a lot of Texas chickens. Christ!"

"He spoke highly of you."

"Me? I was just a Sergeant last week."

"Conjunctions often arrive out of the blue."

"You're not retired; you're only in your fifties, and still trim."

"But don't I look retired here?"

"No, you have a mainframe computer."

"And?"

"You're the fricken' eleventh-star! Please excuse my language."

"Now you have to join the Empire."

"Gladly, sir."

"Any questions?"



"What big things never happened?"

"Well, the Conspiracy had just installed their own look-alike as the leader of the Soviet Union, and so we took him out at his Army speech to three whole divisions who were armed and also had tanks. In our haste, we had to use an old-fashioned sniper rifle long-shot by a trainee."

"Holy Christ, sir. And the trainee got away?"

"He was a cross-country runner and ran like the blazes through a forest being shattered by gun fire and tank rounds. He then used his last shot to ring the bell of our fake tugboat and jumped off a cliff toward it, whence there was a transfer to a sub and the sinking of the tugboat as well as the destruction of a tank that had reached the cliff."

"And I just joined your organization?"

"You did, willingly."

"And I'm happy to have. What else?"

"And on that same day we raided a 'Charm School' in Northern Russia that was training spies in American culture and how to blend in. They had even built a typical Main Street, USA. Captured pilots from Vietnam were being employed as instructors, but they were clever enough to teach some false American idioms and manners in a subtle but noticeable way."

"Please continue."

"Senator Parker is in the Conspiracy."

"And you're leaving him in the Senate?"

"Senator Mansfield is his best friend, and is Ninja Empire."

"He won't get anything out of the Conspirator."

"True, just subtle clues, but Mansfield bugs Parker's office, and one day Mansfield can accidentally divulge false information, such as the location of one of our own centers."

"And you'll be ready there."

"Ready, but vacated, but we'll be listening to the top Conspiracy brass who come to oversee such a prize. They won't have good field discipline."

"They'll check for listening devices and such, making an entire sweep."

"They will, but the listening device will be human."

"A ghost."

"Kind of. Concealed underneath the floor."

"Wow."

"Small time. Actually, medium."

"Holy Moly. Then what's the big stuff?"

"Classified."

"What other small stuff?"

"We can control the weather, to a large extent, even make the dark darker, such as at the San Francisco docks."

"I noted that, but thought of a cloud passing in front of the moon or something."

"It did. And what about UFOs?"



The Eternal Flame

“They’re not real; probably just light planes or atmospheric anomalies.”

“They’re real enough, but not unidentified. They’re ours. Mostly stealth. Best we can do now. Had enough?”

“Never enough.”

“Churchill was our first leader, as it turned out.”

“And a damned good one, sir.”

“Then we began to work on the outside, but with governments.”

“Easier that way.”

“Yes. The Conspiracy tried to brainwash America via our television signals, but one of our early eagle-eyes noted it.”

“Small time.”

“Yes. And we found life on Mars.”

“Get out of here!”

“We got out of there, so to speak. As microbes hitching rides on rocks.”

“I’m flabbergasted.”

“You’re Martian.”

“And now I’m signed up for that, too.”

“The Conspiracy makes street drugs.”

“That I can believe. And are they doing it near some interstate exit?”

“So to speak. Colombia and Honduras.”

“Tough to come down on a million farmers, and tough if are loaded and unloaded at sea. Where is their vulnerability?”

“You’ve already hinted at it.”

“Destruction at sea, even leaving no trace. To the deep.”

“You got it, but the oceans are huge.”

“True.”

“The Conspirators have computer chips embedded in them. Under duress, they self-destruct the person.”

“Then tough to get those captured to reveal anything.”

“Yes, but when we get close, we can detect the chips.”

“You’ve cleared out the Army, the FBI, and such.”

“Yes, a good part of it, but some special people have no chips.”

“Good progress, but you need larger breakthroughs.”

“Yes, we do.”

“What else, that you can say?”

“There are some dinosaurs on Niihau.”

“Now you’re pulling my leg.”

“Maybe. We could have gotten them from the Amazon plateaus or have grown them from DNA.”

“Naw.”



Some of The General's Machinery

"Your boyfriend assassinated a General of the Philippines who sympathized with the Muslims."

"Now we're back to believable."

"We can't stop all tragedies. Terrible things may still happen in the future. That's how it is. Someone may get an atomic or nuclear bomb off into a city."

"Retribution?"

"Twelve times over. Guaranteed."

"That is the twelve-star."

"Kind of."

"The thirteenth-star, if all goes very bad and unlucky?"

"We have a base on the far side of the moon."

"No solar power."

"True, impossible; nuclear."

"The destiny of the human race is fixed?"

"No, the TOE indicates that it is open."

"The Theory of Everything? What is it?"

"I can't say, but everyone thinks at first that it must be complicated and complex, but it can't be."

"It's the more reactive simpler and simpler that can only lead to the complex and the eventual more so."

"Well said. Coffee and dessert?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Well, there are many more secrets to tell, but not just yet, if ever, including your ongoing love relation-

ship and the now extended four weeks of vacation for you, so let us talk again one day."

Our vacation time passes.

"Juliet, a special jet has arrived, and will be carrying us to a destination unknown."

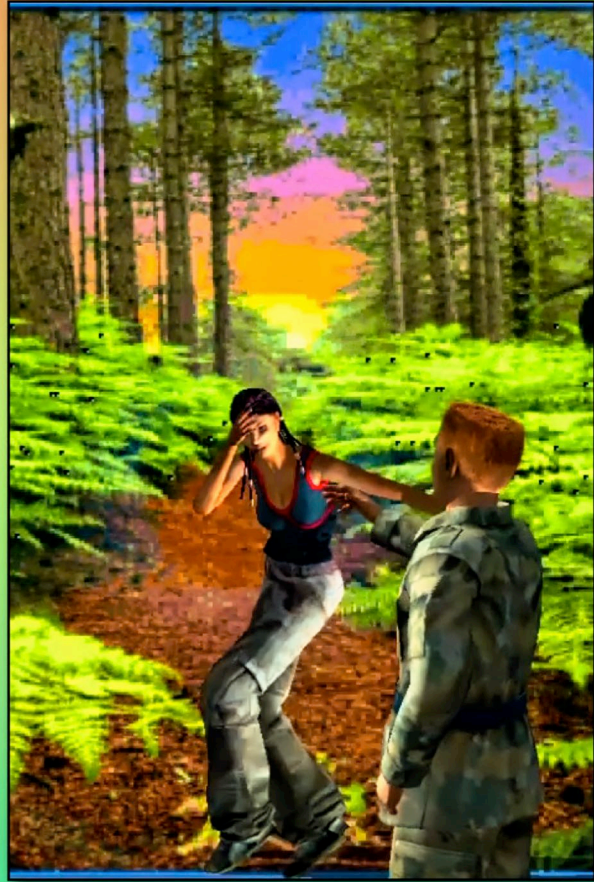






CHAPTER 8

# Niihau



Ninja Empire Hall

## Chapter 8: Niihau

“OK, Patrick, any more revelations?”

“The thirteenth-star is truly the last one, one that we hope will never be necessary. Oh, and the Garden of Eden has been located, as well as the Titanic.”

“OK, and come on now, about finding Paradise. The Titanic I can believe.”

“Well, we’ve found Paradise in us.”

“So true. And where are we going?”

“I don’t know where we’re going, but I could guess.”

“We’re headed in the direction of the Hawaiian archipelago. Guess we’re going back to the post.”

“Probably.”

“Probably? Maybe? Maybe not? No more surprises, Patrick. My heart can’t take it; or maybe it can, as being large with love.”

“The plane is heading a bit west of north.”

“The Forbidden Island, Niihau.”

“Has to be.”

“Our friend, the eight-star, the former Colonel will be there, and we’ll see him.”

“But he said we won’t recognize him; he’ll look different.”

“Um, he will be the head honcho.”

“But you won’t really know it’s him, the same person.”

“It will be in the eyes, even if they’re a different color; they’re the window to the soul. I know his eyes; I made sure to look into them when he pinned my bars on.”

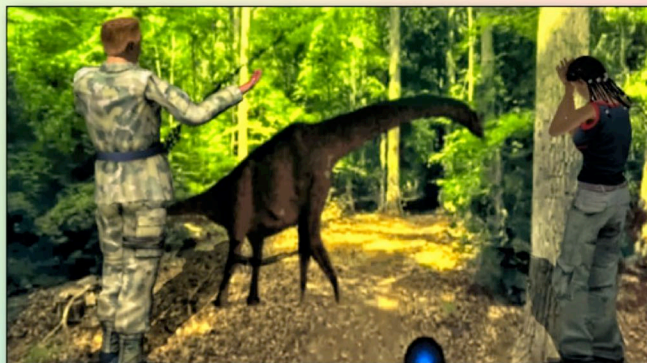
“Well, we’ll see, or not.”

“We’re landing, Patrick, high up on a natural stone runway, braking rather hard and fully reversing engines, due to the short length.”

“OK, off the plane we go. Ah, what’s that roar!”

There is another roar, down beneath. Juliet runs to the edge of the cliff and looks down, aghast.

“I’m going to kill you all; there be Brontosaurus here!”



Niihau



The Forbidden City on the Forbidden Island

I laugh so hard that I have to kneel, and can hardly get up for a minute or two. She turns into the most wonderful smile I've ever seen."

"And there's a full size replica of The Forbidden City below. We're in the heart of the Ninja Empire."

"See you back within the hour," the Pilot says.

"Here are the steps down the rocks," Juliet declares.

We make their way through the forests and meadows where the peaceful dinosaurs are grazing.

She remarks, "One is looking at us, but now he's decided that we are not anyone of interest."

"That's Bronto. He's the leader's favorite, and vice-versa."

"Hear anything, Juliet?"

"No."

"No army coming, like the one behind the docks."

"No, nothing; just the breeze."

"Turn around."

She turns around and looks. "There are a thousand monks but ten yards behind us! This is my biggest heart-attack yet. Wait until I get you in bed again."

She moves quickly, giving me a hug, as the monks bow, and we head on.

"Turn around."

"I know; they're gone. I think I heard them this time."

"Yes, somehow this place gives one powers beyond the norm. Now you're a Ninja."

"Ah here the Forbidden City."

"I still marvel at its wonders, especially the row of dragons leading into the main, where the old Colonel should be."

"Perhaps he has more to tell us, now that we've been to Tahiti."

"I think he wants us to figure out everything on our own."

"That's a tall order."

Hundreds of monks are wandering about.

"A monk is sweeping the final steps there, and pouring cherry blossoms on them."

"A fine welcome for our brief visit."

"Could be some big operation going on, with the Grandmaster back here directing it."

"But he likes to be in the field."

"The plastic surgery, perhaps, needs time to heal. Let's go in"

"There is an operation going on, at least according to the computer screens, which show some kind of large plant in the Middle East somewhere."

"And a close-up of someone getting ready to shine a laser spotter on the plant."

The man standing in front of the screens looks busy, but he nods at us.



The Operation

“Well, Patrick, he is the same height as the leader we met as a Colonel, and his face looks raw.”

We walk up to him, and he speaks, “I don’t really know what I’m doing here.”

Juliet retorts, “We’re not falling for that act. Let me see your eyes.”

She looks deeply into the man’s eyes.



“Ho, an air strike has the plant!” I cry.

“And the man just vanished into thin air. He is totally gone.”

“Hey, look at the computer screen. A huge thunderstorm has just moved in, out of nowhere.”

We step outside and wait awhile.

I observe, “Nothing out there; nothing happening. No monks; not a one left. Just the breezes calmly blowing the cherry blossoms about and away.”

We wait some more, and Juliet surmises, “Well, that was indeed a brief visit, as advertised.”

We walk back down back through the ‘city’.

I ask, “Was it him? In the eyes? Looked like his skin was still rough.”

“No, it definitely was not him. No way.”

“Then where?”

“Damn it; he was the monk putting the blossoms on the steps. He got us good.”

We stop, and look back up, and there is the monk sweeping the steps again, and the monk sees us looking and he quickly raises both his arms in triumph, jerking them up and down, then throwing blossoms in the air that he’d had in his hands already ready.

I exclaim, “Hey, there he is, as the monk, waving to us, and throwing blossoms!”

“You, know, Patrick, something tugged at the back of my mind concerning that monk.”

“What?”

“Hard to say, wait, I know, his movements were familiar. That’s another way to tell, beyond the eyes.”

“So close, you were.”

“I’ll make full Ninja in no time.”

“That you will.”



Great Wonders



Center of the Ninja Empire



Flower Blossoms

“How did the man disappear so fast when the plant blew up? Wait, don't tell me it all.”

“We had focused our eyes on the computer screen for a few seconds or more.”

“A ghost wouldn't need that diversion.”

“Yet it was still a really quick vanishing act.”

“And there were no exits nearby.”

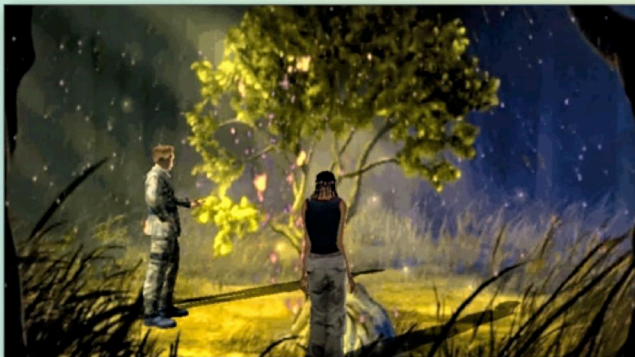
“So?”

“Trap door in the floor. Gravity does all the work. It's the oldest trick in the book.”

“The man in front of the screens told us the truth, outright giving us the answer. He didn't really know what he was doing, at least about what was on the screens.”

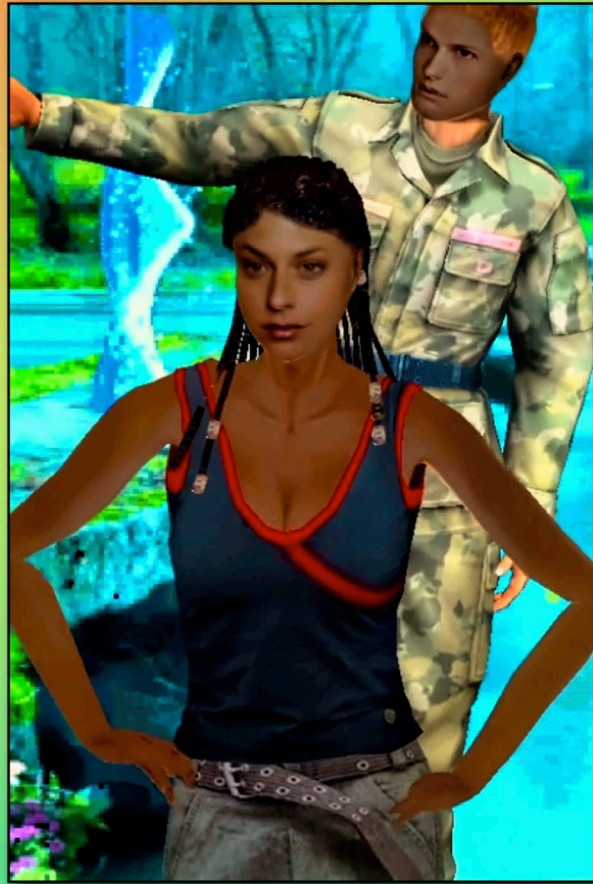
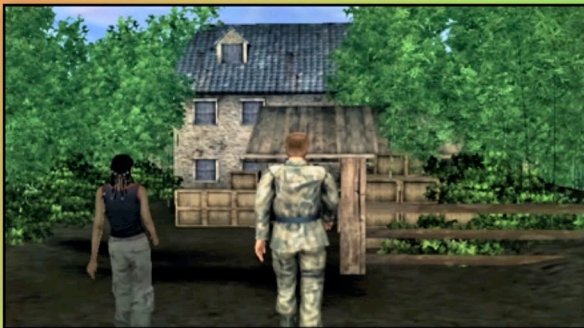
“Double damn.”

We wander about, then head back to the plane.



CHAPTER 9

# Ultimate Adventure



Upcoming Adventure in the Mountains



## Chapter 9: Ultimate Adventure

We fly back into Hickam Air Force base, take a taxi back to the fort, and sit down at the MP unit.

I look at the rooster. "We have three-quarters of our MPs left, plenty enough, but we have no Colonel and no General, and no acting ones. We are all the more in charge. Guess I'll move into the empty Major's office, and you into my old one."

"Let's go christen your new office, Major."

"Hey, someone left us a new bottle of Bailey's on the desk."

"Our invisible friend. Let's check the news on the TV first."

"Sure enough, a possible munitions plant in Russia has somehow exploded, in the middle of a heavy thunderstorm."

"I didn't think that really happened. I thought later that it had to be a video replay to distract us so he could vanish."

"He timed our entire visit right to the second. That air strike was in real time."

"That's the lesson he wanted us to walk away with. That precision is necessary. I love this school, Sherlock."

"Elementary, my dear, elementary."

"I'm going for my PHD."

A week passes. All minor stuff. The other MPs take care of it.

"Juliet bursts into Patrick's office."



"We've got another dead soldier. Drug overdose in the barracks."

We walk over to the barracks. It is an open floor with many beds and lockers. Everyone quietly drifts away when they spot us entering. No one likes MPs.

Juliet searches the area. "Marijuana in his locker. And an empty bottle; may have had pills in it. Nothing else of interest."

"Relatively harmless pot but for it leading to more dangerous drugs, which I'm sure the medical examiner will find in him and in the residue in the bottle. Maybe he took too many."

"If we can track down the pot, we'll get on to the source of the hard stuff. How is the marijuana getting into the fort? We have dogs at every gate."

"There are other ways in."

"That's their mistake."

"Greed has tripped them up."

"Or they're attacking the Army with drugs."

We put the items in an evidence bag, including the rolling papers and the matches, stand around until the deceased is taken away, and then walk back toward the MP unit.

I take a pinch of the pot, roll it, light it, and smoke it.



Juliet looks surprised. "Now you've done it; pot on the job."

"It's a field test."

"How is it?"

"Very good, and locally grown."

Juliet walks to a stand and looks at the map of the fort. "There's an unused area to the east, nothing in it, and then it stretches across the mountains."

"For future expansion, perhaps."

"No fences up there?"

"It's part of a long hiking trail."

"And off the trail?"

"Acres of fertility. We'll check it out ourselves. No use spooking them off with a large group. We've got to move quickly; they'll know soon that someone goofed, and so they'll be on the move soon enough anyway. We'll bring our shoulder launchers, and the rapid-fire rifles."

"Expect the worst?"

"They may have been fully armed by the weapons' stealers."

"That would not be good, and so I'll post our MPs along the base of the mountains, both sides, spreading them out. I'll have them pick up anyone coming down the mountain."

"Now or never; do or die."

"And we had to be MPs, leaders even."

"Yeah, and this was supposed to be my down time at the end of my service."

“That Conspiracy stuff has put a whole new light on all of this. They are behind everything.”

“I’ll say. It still has many tentacles. I’ll give Niihau a call. This could be either small time or big time.”

We ride the motorcycle up the range, through the fort’s land, and further, the MPs in their jeeps and armored light tanks keeping up with us below, somehow.

She says, “We’ll stop every few miles or so, turning off the motorcycle, and listening for many minutes.”

“It can’t be much further, if we gauged it right. Think like them: Not too close to the fort, but not too far away to have logistical problems in the wilds of the heights.”

“We’ll stop more often, and then walk a while, so as to not give ourselves away by the sounds of the motorcycle.”

We stop, and Juliet closes her eyes and listens. “I have my new ears. I hear them. They are moving slowly toward us in their trucks. Maybe a mile ahead.”

“Man, toward the fort’s land. Of all things. I’ll call it in. To Niihau as well.”

“The MPs closed off their first escape road, just as we wanted them to. They’re hoping for the next one.”

“Bad for them, and also bad for us two. We’re in between them and the next road behind us, which is right in town, where we have HPD on it.”

“Can’t let them get there. Too many civilians, buildings, and traffic near there, and they may have gun trucks.”



“They’re desperate, but, even so, they don’t want to deal with the MP combat armor; however they can easily dispense with HPD.”

“Juliet”

“How did they get on the move so quickly?”

“It’s the damn Conspiracy, as we thought, not just some locals. They have great surveillance.”

“Still, we got the jump on them.”



The Lookout

"Yeah, the two of us standing right here in their path."

"Juliet"

"They're speeding up. Hold; MP armor is attacking them from behind. They're moving ahead much faster, throwing all caution to the wind. Damn, 20 trucks, all manned with machine guns."



"Run!"

We run back to the motorcycle, with the Conspiracy but a half mile off, and gun the cycle."

Trucks are coming at us from the other direction, too.

"Patrick, now I hear trucks from the other direction! This is serious shit. They're going to come right

through us and pass their other trucks at a clearing so they can face the MP armor head on."

"They don't know we're here."

"Probably not."

"We're out of time; we have to stop, get off the cycle, and lock and load. Stay near the cycle; there are extra launcher shells in the pouches. No time to even call this in."

We stop, not even having time to hide the motorcycle or ourselves, and quickly load the launchers.

"They're almost here," she notes.

We have only just set up when the first of the trucks comes roaring up the path.

I scream, "Those trucks are dead ducks. I'm almost ready. Take out the first and I'll take out the second and the third, and then you take out the next one."

It works.

I note, "OK, four down; we have four shells left."

We grab the reserve shells from the motorcycle pouches and reload.

She hopes, "There'd better not be more than four more trucks."

There were four and they had started firing when the trucks ahead of them had exploded.

I yell, "They're already firing; we have to get off the path; opposite shoulders; find a tree for cover."

"They'll see the blasted cycle."



Danger

“No time; bad luck for us.”

Bullets are blasting all around; we can't show ourselves. The motorcycle is shattered to bits. Its presence identifies us as being in the vicinity, so we can't just wait for the trucks to pass and then take them out, so we have to do something before men can jump off of the trucks. We peek out and look at each other across the path, and then nod. Now or never; do or die. We swing out our weapons.

What if each of us goes for the same truck? Then we'll come up one shell short. There is no time, for, for each of us it has now slowed down internally. Rank. I am the Major and she is an acting-Captain. I must take the first and the third truck; she the second and the fourth.

And it works out that way. The trucks are blown off the path, just as before. We step out.

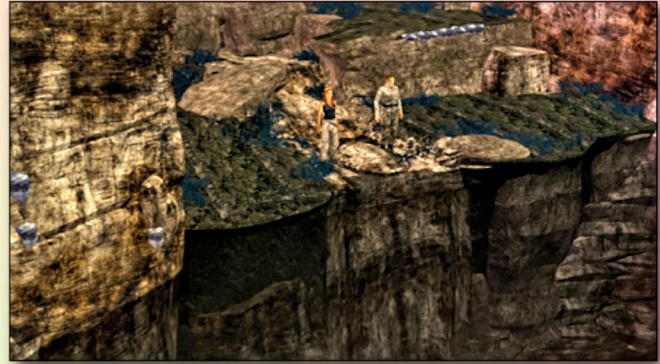
She congratulates, “Good going.”

“But this leaves the path open for the big convoy still headed for us from the other direction, and they are not far off. We can't go over the side, for it is sheer here. We're out of ammo.”

“Run!” We take off like it is the Olympics. No where to duck into. We hear bullets thudding far behind us, inexorably getting closer. They can't see us, but they are firing anyway. Our lungs are near bursting.

I gasp, “A hundred more yards...”

I somehow sprint a bit ahead of her, as like a runner seeing the ribbon.



“Nothing there.”

“One last surprise.” It's all the words I can get out.

I veer to what looks like a sheer edge, turn on the brakes and slide, kneel down and roll over, then hold with my hands and drop off the edge, my example conveying what words can not.

She does the same, falling 15 feet onto a five-foot outcrop, the 'lawn' of my mountain retreat. I pull her into the rock cave underneath the path. It is actually my supply room, not the main, but connected. I crawl to the weapons box and open it, grabbing one for each of us.



The Cave of the Mountain Retreat

We can hardly move for two minutes; too exhausted. The trucks had roared on by a minute ago, still headed into Honolulu. No MP Combat Armor followed. The path must have been blocked with debris.



I lament, “HPD is a sitting duck. We call; they listen; they hear us. They don’t want to leave. Duty; honor; protection; that is their job as police, very similar to ours. That’s what they’d signed up for. Traffic had been stopped all around them, so they couldn’t get out anyway. The HPD-blocked exit of the trailhead is at the the Likelike highway, but a mile away. I’d even be able to see it if I was a bit further down the trail. No time. Only a half mile to go and they’d surely be there.”

“I’m calling Niihau.”

The General replies, “OK, stay down.”

A missile is streaking though the sky, moving like a flash.”

Juliet sees it. “A missile! The Niihau defense system.”

The mountain shakes. A few things in my ‘living room’ on a table jitter and dance around.

Juliet looks over at the room. “It’s beautiful, and hidden, just like you told me, a home away from home—a retreat; a camp, a place beyond words.”

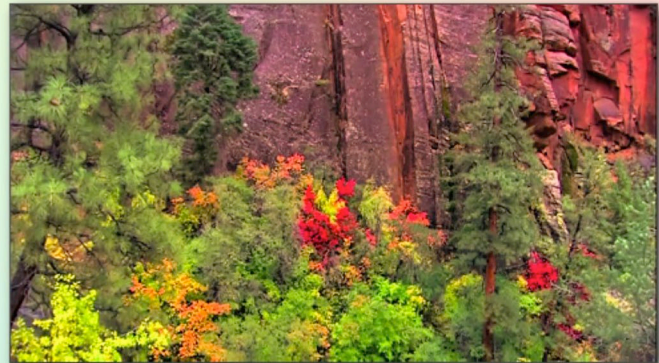
“Ours, now and forever.”

“I want my M.R.S. degree.”

“You got it; I give up my bachelor’s.”

“All this in just two months.”

“A rare conjunction.”



Safe at Last

“Hope things quiet down around this island.”

“I think we’ve got them on the run.”

“And how does that missile strike get explained to the public?”

“What missile strike? Just an artillery exercise from the fort. As for anything else, some local yokels got busted for a large pot plantation, and some tried to escape, just about as it really happened.”

“They were making much more than pot there.”

“That’s for sure.”

“And it looks like it was also their main base on the island.”

We hear the MP armor slowly rolling by.

“They’re looking for us.”

“Call them and say we hiked safely back to the fort. Honeymoon time, plus this place has to stay secret.”

“Now you’re talkin’.”

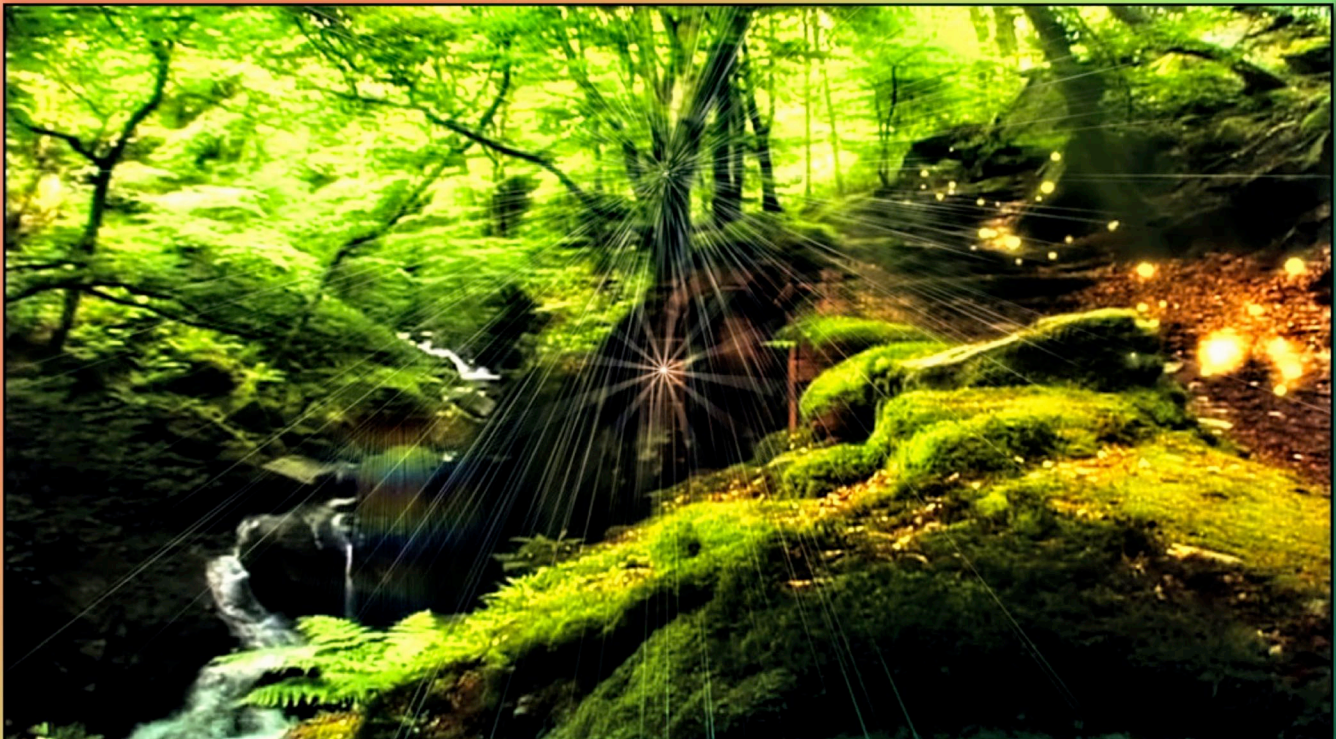
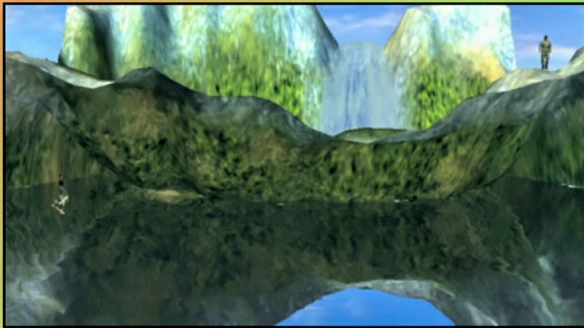
“Any injuries?”

“I don’t know; you’d better check me all over.”

“There’s a double-wide cot in the back of the living area.”



# The Retreat



The Trail up to the Retreat

## Chapter 10: The Retreat

The extent of this retreat is actually within the confines of Fort Shafter, in a scenic part unused for anything else. There are points atop from which one can see Diamond Head, Tripler Army Hospital, the International Airport, Hickam Field, and Pearl City and Pearl Harbor, as well as everything in between. After entering the Fort and being waved through by the white-gloved MP, there is, off to the right a ways, a seemingly useless and steep embankment, and, yet, after powering up it on a motorcycle in first gear there is then a sharp left onto a path six feet wide or so that goes up very slightly as it traverses the base of the mountain until a wide right curve brings it back to another, higher angled traverse, but not steep, really, but ever gaining height on its long way. There is then a tremendously steep climb right towards the ridge, and, upon getting there, one must be very careful riding along the two foot wide path, for only a bush separates it from a terrible fall down to the LikeLike highway running below. There is then a leftish turn onto the higher ridge toward the back of the mountain and here the trail apparently ends, but the rest of the trail around and down is really just blocked, and very treacherous, although one could use it for an emergency escape if fire were

coming up the front of the mountain. It seems as there is no retreat here, nor anything, but it is slightly down and beneath, tucked into the cliff-side, and so one must climb down to it; however, there is also an invisible and more circular route to it if one is not in the mood, although it is laced with jutting rocks. Here, then, in the nook of an open cave type of arrangement, a tent is tucked to the back, the double cot placed in the back of it, where the ceiling has sloped down. The tent doors can usually be left open on the average fine day time. There is a slight grassy 'lawn' in front, with enough room for lounge chairs, and a table, and beyond that is a sheer drop. The view faces toward the airport and its reef runways jutting out into the Pacific.

We remain in each others arms for a while, basking in the afterglow, then walk toward another ledge.

She notices, "I see a shadow; someone is atop the cliff."

We hear the General's voice, "Want another week's vacation?"

"You changed your voice slightly. And for once we don't want to actually see you to get an extra week."



Looking for the Colonel



“Fair enough, and besides, I’m busy recreating what happened up here, and you can’t very well make a report while you’re on vacation, and I know you’ve been softly sneaking out all this time to get a look at me.”

She is looking, and she looks straight up, but he is gone.

“How did he get here? I didn’t hear any helicopter. I didn’t hear anything at all.”

“Yes, impossible.”

“Unless they have a transporter type thing.”

“Too risky, and he could have waited and then gotten here in a more regular way. The assessment could have waited a bit.”

“Then it’s a duplicate maker.”

“Can’t have two guys as the boss, or umpteen copies.”

“Well, then, if the duplicate is unsuccessful, then they always still have the original.”

“True, but if the duplication is successful, then it is the duplicate that becomes more up to date with the latest memories, and so he is the version who must be maintained.

“So then the previous working version would have to be destroyed.”

“Or put on ice, but after tests have performed, totally verifying the duplicate as complete and working.”

“And if the active one was killed, then they could at least activate the most recent backup.”

“If we went back to the Forbidden City in Niihau and looked for the trap door in the floor, there wouldn’t be any.”

“That’s how he is a ghost who can disappear and reappear.”

“Appearing is fine, for a duplicate, but the base copy must remain, you know, just in case something goes wrong.”

“Yes, and even if the technology is perfect, such as perfectly copying every quantum state, human error could still have him materialize inside a rock or something, and devices can malfunction. You know, I reviewed some outdoor photos that we’d taken at the motel in Texas, and there was no tree wide enough for him to have hidden behind.”

“It’s a true transporter, not a duplicator. No messiness of getting rid of clones.”

“They have the TOE.”

“Nothing can go wrong, just as with the nine-star satellite.”

“That was the lesson of his visit.”

“He has taken a liking to us.”

“There’s still risk. Some of those bullets could have hit us today.”

“That’s true.”



Living on the Edge

“And if a fluke occurred, and he died, whether in transporting or even when not, such as being hit by a car, they could still reconstruct him from the transporter memory, albeit he going back to how he was when he last transported.”

“But he still grows older.”



“They haven’t solved that yet.”

“If they made a younger version, then that one would have had less experiences and memories, so, they don’t have a complete solution really.”

“They can’t just add them into a younger version?”

“I guess not, for that involves a lot more than just keeping him the same and moving him about as such.”

“We’ve still uncovered an actual big time secret.”

“I guess he let us.”

“We’ve moved up in the Ninja Empire. We’re on staff to a ghost. And we’re also in the invisible DIA and are still MPs. Three jobs, but only one paycheck.”

“They’re intertwined, and the satisfaction counts for a lot, but maybe we’ll get a raise. I need a new motorcycle. And I’m extending my service by six months; we have a wedding to plan.”

“I would hate that wedding prep stuff; we’re getting married by a judge. And those six months will be the best you ever had.”

“Fine with me.”

“I’ll always be at a fort near to wherever you are.”

“Great; we can live together.”

“And vacation here. Or maybe he’ll let us transport to each other.”

“Yes, probably, if part of those trips, when needed, are for Ninja Empire Missions.”

“We might get killed eventually.”

“Then he’ll reconstitute us.”

“It’s still scary to die in some horrible way.”

“It is, but we won’t remember it when we come back as we were.”

“We’ll think it’s Tuesday, but then find that it’s already Thursday, or something like that. Time will have moved on.”



Thinking Time

“That will be our clue. Then we’ll read about how we died, and learn from it, improving ourselves by seeing what went wrong.”

“Let’s just try to stay alive. The coming back option might make us reckless. I don’t really like dying that much, at least not while we’re young. It really just ruins the day, you know.”

“OK, we’ll only die if it’s absolutely necessary.”

“I’m going to kill you.”

“I’ll be back.”

We rest, sleeping for ten hours.

We get up, and look out upon the scene from these heights. Waterfalls run between the domes of green looming as hills into mountains as we look upon the glory of the main island of the archipelago of Hawaii.

“What is this retreat, really, Patrick?”

“It began as just that, years ago, a respite from DIA and Cambodia, and then it evolved. I keep some treasures from my adventures here.”

“From your times with that General in Tahiti.”

“Yes, some. And now it’s my Empire base, and ours. And the Conspiracy is getting too close to Niihau, although they don’t know it.”

“Niihau is in plain sight and they don’t know its worth?”

“No, for psychologically, it’s there but not there.”

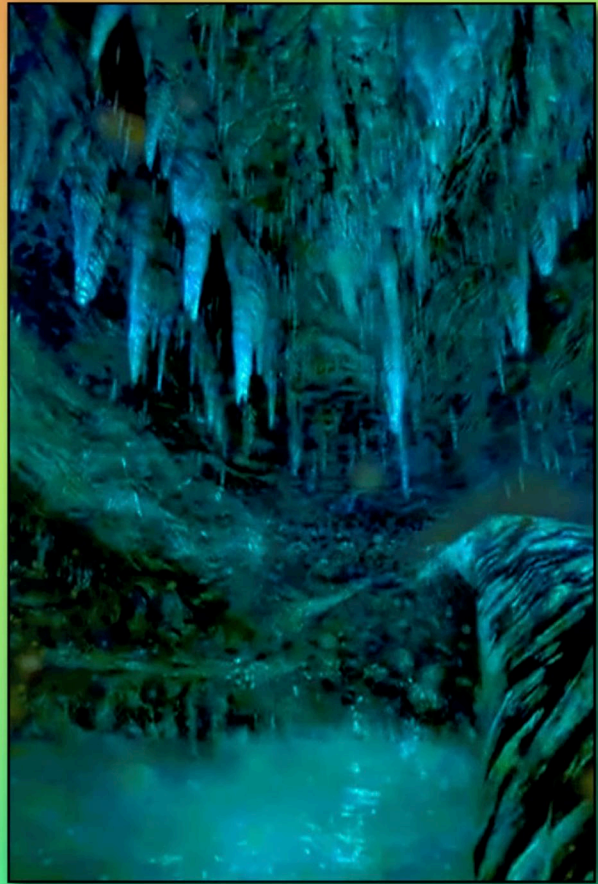
“Will wonders never cease?”

“No, never.”



Look What I Found

# Secrets



The Cave of Secrets

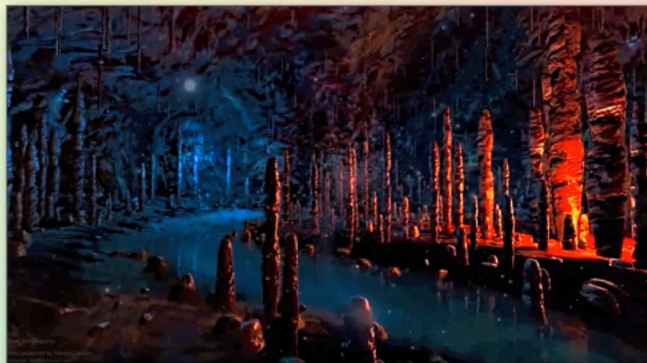
## Chapter 11: Secrets

We walk to the back room, through an apparently solid rock wall that somehow gives way; the room is full of communication equipment and treasures.

“Here are many fine treasures, Juliet, such as the one and only jewel-encrusted edition of the ‘Great Omar’ Rubaiyat that I fished up from the Titanic lying on the floor of the North Atlantic. The only other copy was destroyed in WWII. Here, as well, Aristotle’s lost book, ‘Beyond Metaphysics’, and, too, I have some nuggets of gold found in the original Garden of Eden that was located in the heart of the Amazon Jungle, wherein lie massive fields of Lady’s Slippers thriving due to a rare fungus, and all of the flowers of Paradise, many of them replicated here in Hawaii. And the Celtic Chronicles, I have, as well, that were found in an iron box beneath Glastonbury Abbey, telling all of the tales from the Dark Ages, and, from the tomb of the Holy Sepulcher—the Holy Grail itself.

“Here, as well, a sliver of the true cross, a small vial containing a drop of the Virgin Mary’s milk, a pebble from a moon rock, given to me by a polymath who works for the President, a smart thinking and talking cricket named ‘Crick’, the tip of the spear that pierced the side of the Saviour, a few molecules

of immortal air from a sealed pyramid chamber in Egypt, some secret papers retrieved from the shaft of the bottomless CIA and DIA trash pits of things that never happened, a thriving rose bush, just outside my window, that was begun from Omar Khayyàm’s 11th century garden, ‘Flamberge’—Prince Valiant’s ‘Singing sword’, twin to ‘Excalibur’, Thomas Jefferson’s briefcase, an original and intact Ming dynasty vase, the third, missing tablet of the 15 Commandments, the solution to gravity, as it is a means and a reason for quantum collapse from superposition, as well as a tennis ball with my initials marked on it in a yin-yang style. Yet, all of these treasures pale in comparison to reality’s truth unveiled.



“I am now holding part of a brick that came from Nero’s very recently discovered revolving banquet hall that kept pace with the turn of the Earth. And here the first book of the Library of Congress, a place which now has five hundred miles of stacks. It began anew, after burning by the British, when Thomas Jefferson donated his personal library. I found his personal diary in the lining of his brief case. It said that some of the founding fathers wanted to retain a Deity, non interfering, to save the new nation from the religious superstitions associated with a ‘Theity’, a word that I myself invented. You can look it up, finding that all of the entries are my own. I hold in my hand a bone from early sapiens or of proto-man. He is not gone, though, but lives on in your heart and mine, as in him lived all those before in which the universe itself came to life. Amen. Yet, all of these treasures pale in comparison to reality’s truth unveiled.”

“Count me in, forever and always.”

“We will each be given one of the clues. Mine will concern ‘nothing’ and yours will relate to ‘everything’.”

“They are opposite sides.”

“Of?”

“The same coin.”

“The currency of existence.”

“Its essence.”

“Butterflies are the proof that one can have a second life.”

“Thanks for flying with me.”

“We fly united.”

“Let’s stay here for a few days.”

“We’d better, for the Conspiracy may still be afoot.”

“Where’s the main entrance to this place?”

“It’s over there, coming from those bushes and trees, but no one would catch on to it, and besides, I took the rope ladder away.”

“Wow, we can do whatever we want here.”

“Honeymoon time.”

We walk down the mountain, feeling refreshed, and ready for the next big thing, for Hawaii is more and more seeming to be the arena for it.





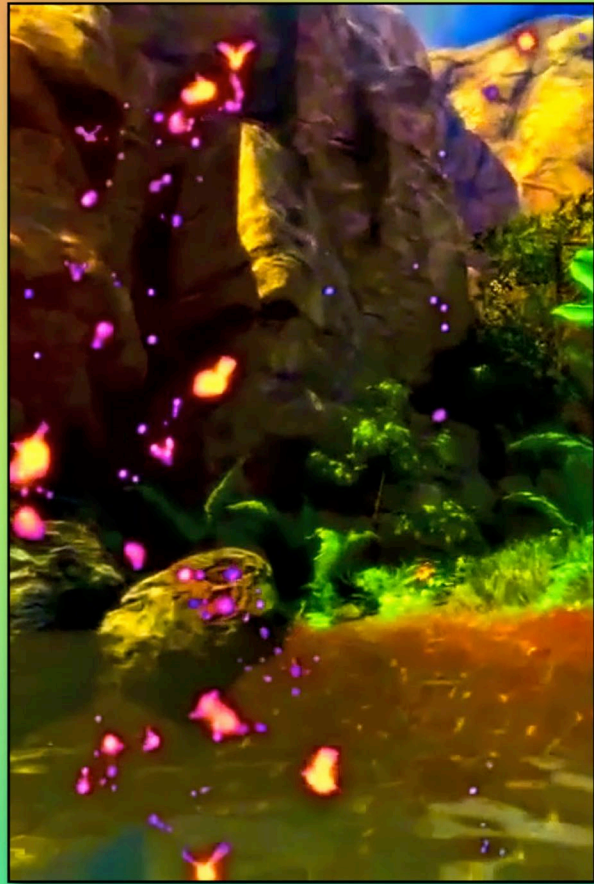
Treasures

## The MP and DIA Compounds



CHAPTER 12

# Cambodia Remembered



On the Wrong Side of the River

## Chapter 12: Cambodia Remembered

The MP unit is quiet, they having patched up themselves, their gear, and their trucks and jeeps. And they have a million questions, many of which we can answer.



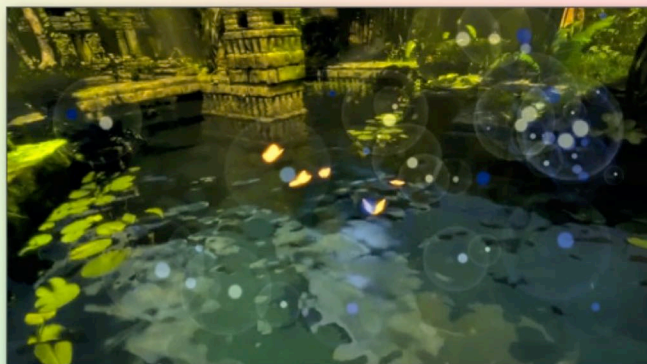
“Juliet, let’s retire to my office and finish the Irish Creme.” So, we go there.

“Tell me about Cambodia, the early times. With the Major who died.”

“OK, here it is in my drawer; my personal report.”

“We were on the wrong side of the river, by purpose, in Cambodia, which was fine, for we barely existed, with no records kept. We were in the wrong

place, too, one of our rare mishaps, as it turned out, and actually one very early on, of a cascade of unfortunate events that was not totally unplanned for. Always have an out, for there will be those times of woe. We, the intelligence officers, had been inserted along with the DIA, special ‘troops’, another nameless non-designation, and they with us, for we each supported the other. The action had been going fairly well, as planned, the many opposing rampagers led not so much by reason but by the beast that was ever part and parcel of man.



“The fire-engagement was over, for now, in the main, as a retreat had been called by the Captain of the section upon detection of a larger than expected approaching ground force, this fallback being some-

what hindered by some opposition stragglers whose spirits had been bolstered by the sight of an entire Klemmer Rouge division boldly crossing a long and open field, which could become good luck, or not, for either side. The tail end of the section retreaters was further slowed by the carrying and stretchering of our dead and wounded.

“Actually, the surprise incursion had gone well, but for the fact that we two remaining were now pinned to the ground just inside the front edge of the tree-line, as all hell was breaking loose, shattering the forest trees and their branches. The special troops had just begun their slowed retreat, and we could leave no one behind but ourselves, my Major friend and I.

“The lead Rouge were advancing, haphazardly, with some old and assorted mini-artillery, with an entire battalion or division some ways behind. We would not last where we were, but we had to stay behind for yet another reason, for we were the information and intelligence gatherers when in the field and on the ground, as well as back at our base in Hawaii.

“All we had was a machine gun, but a large one, hidden a bit further back in the woods, recently dug out of the ground, where we had left it on a prior occasion of recon. Always think many moves ahead. Yet, it was not quite the right time to retrieve it and use it, which is of knowing when to move, not just

where, on the chessboard, for we’d have to be somewhat exposed to use it, plus it wouldn’t be that useful against the machines firing into our area, and it would draw attention to our troops’ retreat path, for the KR didn’t exactly know where we were, or if any of us still were. Do not show yourself until you have to. We had to survive at least ten more long minutes.

“The fire was beginning to converge on us, whether by luck or a good sense of sweep, from either side, but not yet straight on, where a medium size boulder sat, just up ahead in the grassy field, as why we had chosen the spot. Do or die. We dashed out and crept up to it, it already having an end split just off of it. We needed more time, at least many or several minutes. We dug out the ground behind the really big rock a foot or so deep, exposing the part of the boulder yet underground, and laid in the depression. Another minute or so and the above ground portions of the rock would be gone, and soon they were, shattering and flying away.

“The enemy would see no one behind the rock which was no longer there, but just might figure it out soon. I raised a small bending scope and noted the yet noiseless jets approaching on the horizon, behind the battalion, as well as a vanguard of Klemmers approaching at 600 yards. We just needed 60 seconds now, or even half, as it turned out. The music began to play upon the drama...





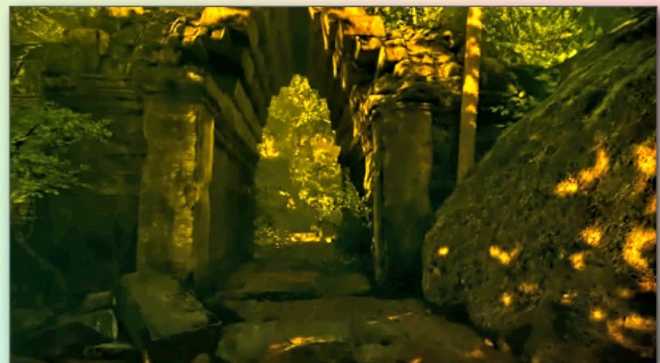
30 Seconds to go

“At 30 seconds, the enemy first heard the sounds of the jets, crying to all the rest to retreat, yet some of the vanguard still ran toward our woods, perhaps preferring that over an open field. Not good, neither for us nor for the special troops that were still re-treating through the forest, who could still become targets at the river shore clearing, while boarding.

“At 0 seconds, the air-strike landed on the main battalion, a fine diversion for us IAs, and so we rose from our would-be graves and ran back into the woods, rolling out the machine gun, blasting most of the on-comers away for quite a while. The chess moves had come to pass, although still ongoing into new territory.

“The machine gun finally overheated and jammed. We made no pause, which is more of the training, and so we were up and off into the jungle like bats out of hell, not wanting to become meat-loaf. The enemy, a bit shocked at the silence, had taken rather too long to give chase, but that they then did, yet still a hundred yards off or more, their bead and their one lucky projection blasting the Major to bits and instant death with some great munition, just twenty yards behind me, he an older man and of a higher rank, as I was a lieutenant.

“The rock had been hard, and the road of the trail was long...





### Getting Out

“Yet I knew that the General would not leave me behind, as long as I was relatively on time and/or could give him some indication that I was alive, pending, of course, the fact that we weren’t supposed to be here, and the less attention on it the better. The arriving enemies at the shore, if more came in greater numbers, could be better dealt with by firing on them from the other side of the river.

“I reached for the radio, but then remembered that it had been assigned to the Major, my mentor and my friend, even though I wasn’t even a Captain yet... nor now even the total captain of my fate, for the chess board had now crashed and fallen to the ground.

“He, this young lieutenant of myself of 40 years ago, believed that luck would never fail, so he ran like the wind through the jungle, surely knowing. He’d what he’d come for, now hopeful to find the help at the shore. The relentless ones were not far behind, that ill-fated menace of the bad kind.

“Miss Fortune laughed, and said, ‘No road could be too hard to tread, for we are fearless. To those, a boon, for they ever seize the opportune.’

“I see you, fairest happening.”

“Just past a sharp turn, in the trees, he suddenly dropped to his knees and fired into his pursuers mean as they came upon the scene, using all his

ammo but for one round, then hurried on, with nary a sound.

“I am wide aware, Miss Karma, of this continuing dharma, that chance shines as my sun, for, she, in turn, happens on everyone.

“‘Oh, say it is your lot, my friend and lover,’ she answered back, granting him cover.

“Listening, he could hear ever more troops rushing through the night, in groups, about a half-mile back, around the loops, far enough away.

“I gratefully welcome thee, Miss Lady Luck of Dice, though I may pay a late fee for my pick up so precise.

“Ms. Destiny Serendipity smiled, saying, ‘The game is on; we are yet alive and playing. Let joy and innocence prevail; believe that luck will never fail.’

“He moved on, ever faster, cheating lame old Death, a third wind becoming of her vaporous breath, it blowing this DIA operative onward to the shore, ever toward. He could hear the whirling chopper, but now receding was its doppler, he thus grieving of its leaving.

“Am I much too late; still too far? Shall I curse you all, destined stars?”

“‘No,’ said Lovely Dear Twist of Fate, ‘for you have one bullet left for chance, not to use to sleep or dream perchance.’



Lady Luck

“But the chopper was rising nigh, up into the star-crossed sky.

“Shall to self I take this bullet now that the bus has left?

“Oh, no,’ Miss Lucky Break encouraged, ‘Do not be at all discouraged, for you know it shall not be so and what with it you now must do.’

“Yes, perhaps it shall be so in some plight coinciding in a most kempt and hapful night.

“He smiled and then knelt to ground, and sent his last bright tracer round just ahead of the copter now departing, his minor wounds yet sorely smarting.

“I bless you with all my lucky charms, my good and well-fated man of arms.’

“The door-gunner noted the red tracer and whence it came of the river vapors.

“Captain, turn back and take a look; here awaits a fortuitous accidental fluke.’

“I am an uncursed, non-jinxed agent man. Let my joyous innocence prevail again.”

“He jumped into the rescue’s hovering haven, directing the door-gunner’s firings, wavin’.

“Fare thee well, my nightly knight,’ Dame Fortune wished upon his sight. ‘You recognized me even in the dark.’”



“Fantastic story, Patrick. With your General that we met in Tahiti?”

“He ran the mission.”

“He’s a good man, and so are you, but you’re lucky to be alive.”

“I sure am, especially now, with you.” “Ditto.”

“Double ditto.”

# The TOE



Oahu South

## Chapter 13: The TOE



“What’s next?” Juliet asks.

“We’re touring the island, keeping our eyes and ears open. We still have four days of vacation left. We’ll also unravel the final mystery.”

“The theory of everything.”

“Yes, at last.”

“My car is ready.”

“Let’s pack it up.”

We skirt Waikiki, pass Diamond Head Crater and drive through a rich residential section in Kailua.

“Conspirators might be in Kailua somewhere; it’s rich there,” she notes.

“Probably, but how would we know which?”

“We don’t, but we may see some cars with Kailua stickers around the island.”

“Which might be normal.”

“We’ll know the difference.”

“Yes, it’s time we did some preemptive work and got ahead of them.”

“Hanauma Bay, a favorite spot for snorkelers in the coral reefs, and the blow hole; note its spray when big waves come in. We’re onto Sandy Beach, a fine place for body surfing.”

“Let’s stop at Makapuu point, both of those ‘u’s pronounced, near the Kaneohe Marine base, ‘e-o-e’ pronounced as long vowel sounds, and watch the sun setting into the sea.”



A brief twilight comes and goes, as the night crashes down on us. We sit there a long time, hearing whales breaking through the surface, then spouting water.

Juliet begins, “The All, meaning the TOE, or Totality, must be Infinite and Eternal, or it wouldn’t be the All, and now we have Everything thrown in, as again, the All would have no limits, with Nothing somehow involved, for there’s nothing to make anything of.”

“Let’s focus first on the Eternal, but still keeping in mind the everywhere of the Infinite.”

“Eternal systems are their own precursors.”

“So they must be there all at once.”

“No real past, present, or future, but for how it all gets interpreted.” “No first anything, really, for forever systems.”

“Light requires matter before it, but matter requires light before it.”

“They were both already there.”

“All at once.”

“Hard to figure, but it must be so.”

“Stellar ignition requires some of the elements of previous stars.”

“No first star, ever”

“The All is at once.”

“No electron or positron appeared before the other.”

“Both at once, always popping up in pairs.”

“As for quarks and anti-quarks, and even photons, which are their own antiparticles.”

“Only two stable matter particles in free space, the electron and the proton, with opposing charge, and their antiparticles, of course, but no stable uncharged matter particles.”

“And only one stable energy particle, the photon, uncharged.”

“And from only these few all exists, in its glorious and resultant complexity, that as of now.”

“Amazing.”

“The All, at its level, is all past, present, and future.”

“Inside it, which is no longer the ALL, time is required to traverse it.”

“And time, although not fundamental in itself, always goes forward.”

“There’s no going back, for us.”

“Why would anything at all exist?”

“Because Nothing cannot.”

“Yet things have no source.”

“And so the total energy must be zero.”

“But zero cannot be.”

“So there is fluctuation, positive and negative.”

“Yet that capability exists as something.”

“Yes, something has to.”

“Because Nothing cannot be.”

“Sounds like zen.”

“It grants us now and zen and when.”

“Since the All is Infinite, this goes on everywhere, eternally.”

“Then everything happens.”

“All at once, playing out forever and everywhere, sooner or later, or even many times at once, due to infinity.”

“That is the outline of the TOE.”

“No first kiss for us. We’ve always been out there.”

“And always will be.”



Together



