

A novel of ideas with nonstop suspenseful action. Its theme is: "Heaven on Earth can be achieved when reason reigns." Young beau ideals shine as battles are joined between tyrants who crave to rule and thinkers who cannot be ruled.

Reason Reigns

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# **Reason Reigns**

**Ilyn Ross**

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# Part 1 - Faith and Reason

## The Current Month, Day 1 - The *I-TON*

“I swear to defend, preserve, and live by the Constitution of the Saviors’ Isle.”

Jay Rahman was elected Chief Civilian Executive of the 570-square-mile country located a few hundred miles west of Senna, a province of the Republic of Ibelyn. He took the oath of office beside his resplendent wife and their fifteen-year-old son, Jawo. Jaya Rahman, Jay’s sister, gloried in her younger brother.

The island’s entire northern frontier was a high steep face of a rock. All its five hundred and fifty-five citizens witnessed the ceremony at the eastern side of the massive rock. Basking in the early morning sunshine, they applauded Jay as he finished his speech, stepped down from the podium amid cheers, and mingled with the revelers.

The revelry was a total departure from tradition. In eleven days, the holy month for honoring humility, sacrifice, and suffering would commence.

Two men and a woman eyed the happy faces with self-righteous indignation. “These sinners worship pleasure and pride. They must be made to see the error of their ways!” The codename of the older man was Suff, while the younger man’s was Sac. Humi was the woman’s alias.

As the citizens relished the festivities, a delegation from the Union of Ibelyn arrived looking for Dr. Ari Hugo.

The doctor had studied saxitoxin since his return to the Saviors' Isle four years ago. A month prior to the election, he saved the lives of numerous islanders, including Jay and his family, after they ate seafood infected with the red tide toxin. Moreover, an Ari chemical formulation eradicated red tide around the island.

The large medicine supply that Ari sent to his Uncle Ethan in Senna also saved many lives in Ibelyn. Residents of the Republic of Ibelyn paid for the red tide drug, and ordered huge quantities of the chemical product.

The Union of Ibelyn was located north of the Republic of Ibelyn. The latter seceded from the former after the great invasion almost two centuries ago.

The delegation demanded that Ari give up the medicine and the red tide buster for humanity. The Union officials pontificated, "It is evil to profit from suffering, from what people cannot do without."

Ari was direct. "I deal exclusively with traders." He turned his back and moved away from the delegation.

"Please explain, Dr. Hugo."

Ari faced the delegation, but kept his distance. "You are free not to buy what I spent four years to create. I am free to sell the fruits of my labors in a manner of my choosing; I earned this right. I transact with people who respect property rights. If you are here as advocates for people who desire the unearned, you have wasted your time."

"But the people need your creations! The medicine for red tide poisoning is necessary to save lives. The product that eradicates red tide is absolutely essential to the livelihood of fishermen and to increase the food supply."

“By your reasoning, only those who create products or offer services that have nothing to do with saving or improving lives may trade; that those who do otherwise forfeit their rights.”

“The public needs your medicine and your red tide buster. Poor folks utterly need them!”

“As I will not be ruled by a single human being, neither will I forfeit my rights to the public. An emperor has no claim on me; neither does a poor man. Need is not a claim.”

Many appreciated Ari’s principled stance which was in keeping with the individual rights enshrined in the island’s Constitution. But some vowed to destroy him. Each thought, “Ari is a danger to our cause and to society. He must be stopped!”

Ari had shown that nature could be understood and dealt with, not feared nor accepted passively. Storms and droughts had destroyed crops; epidemic diseases had killed poultry and cattle; red tide toxins had poisoned mussels and fish. Nature had wreaked havoc. Food production on the island had required backbreaking labor. Islanders had to travel to Ibelyn to see a doctor or attend school. Life on the island had been very hard. The arrival of Dr. Ari Hugo and his wife, Glenda, was a boon to the country. She was an educator. They represented progress and exemplified that everything was achievable.

While Ari was with the delegation, his ten-year-old daughter, Lola, was with a classmate on the new obstacle course, a hundred meters south of where the sumptuous buffet breakfast was laid out for the early morning celebrations.

“Let’s try! Let’s do it.” Lola successfully hurdled the difficult obstacle course. She urged her classmate to do the same. “It’s your turn.”

“I’m ashamed.”

“There is no reason to be.”

“Okay, I’ll try. Don’t laugh at me.”

“I laugh when I am happy. I don’t laugh to embarrass people.”

“What if I fail?”

“Lessons learned, and then try again.”

Lola’s classmate focused. She exerted her very best effort. “I did it! I did it so well! Oh... I should be humble.”

“Why?”

“It’s good to be humble.”

“Why?”

“Everybody says so.”

“I am not humble,” Lola declared. “I respect and love myself. I always do my best because I don’t ever want to feel low and small.”

Lola’s classmate realized that self-love was the hallmark of a good person.

Afterward, Lola joined her best friend, ten-year-old Toni Connor. Toni brought their latest science project, a transmitter-receiver device successfully tested the day before. They enjoyed playing with it while recording their observations on static interference and the distance factor. The girls also practiced communicating in a private code.

Another classmate observed the two girls enjoying each other’s company. The recent tests where Toni had the highest scores,

particularly in science and math, came to mind as Grandmother Connor summoned Toni. The classmate joined Lola and asked, “Don’t you want to be better than Toni?”

Lola replied, “I don’t compare myself to anyone. I want to be good – period. I want to be the best I can be. I also admire intelligent people, like Toni.”

Meanwhile, Grandmother Connor gently admonished, “Toni, the Holy Book warns of punishment for proud, ambitious people. Study the Holy Teachings and pray more often, instead of performing experiments. Read the Holy Book more faithfully, rather than science books.”

“Grandmother, God does not punish,” Toni smiled confidently. “I enjoy finding out about God’s creations. The mind and body are wonderful gifts from God. Surely, He wants us to use them.”

Just then, Toni heard her sister’s name. Eighteen-year-old Alisa Connor joined Josephine Schwartz on the podium. The two ladies played the guitar and sang.

Alisa had worked very hard and had taken care of Toni ever since their parents’ boat exploded seven years ago.

Josephine lost sight in her right eye when she was eleven, yet, at that young age, she vowed to make mining her vocation. At twenty-five years of age, she had gone completely blind. Nonetheless, with her strong will and steadfast determination, she remained the driving force of the island’s mining industry, her brainchild.

Alisa and Josephine projected vitality and confidence. Their zest for life inspired the thought, “Do not give up. Rise. Go forward.”

Alisa worked at *The Fun House* owned by Frank Thomas, a retired decorated soldier. The property consisted of a theater,

dance hall, lounge, bakery with a snack counter, merchandise store, and a children's playground.

Suff, Sac, and Humi thought of Frank's property as *The Hell House*. They harbored the same sentiments: "Those who cause people to disobey the Holy Teachings must be punished!"

The head of the holy faith, Santo Sacrificio, stood beside Ron Balian, an architect who took the preliminary vows of a holy man two years ago. They were surrounded by people singing along with Alisa and Josephine.

Ron was three years older than Alisa. Like her, he was eleven years old when his parents, Collin and Demi Balian, were thought to have met an accident. Like the Connor parents, their bodies were never found. Ron and Alisa understood each other's terrible sorrow. Behind their calm façade was an anguish that squeezed the heart. Everyday was a battle to defeat pain and suffering.

Ron had his father's intelligent face and his mother's radiant eyes. His skin color was a perfect blend of Collin's dark skin and Demi's light complexion. After the tragedy that befell his parents, Ron solemnly told his grandparents and their friends, "Father held dear that suffering is not a value, and that happiness is the aim of one's existence."

Seven years ago, Santo Sacrificio extolled suffering during the prayer session held for Alisa's parents, Ali and Dyosa Connor. "Blessed are they who suffer... "

Grandmother Connor was then too distraught to speak. Then eleven-year-old Alisa thanked the group and recounted, "Almost two centuries ago on this island, children as young as eight years and no older than twelve beheld their fallen parents. Wrenched with anguish, they ran to their chosen posts and defended their country." She gazed at her then three-year-old

sister, Toni, and resolved, "I have chosen my own post." Her eyes were on Ron as she continued, "I have chosen my path. I will travel the road to happiness everyday."

Frank found it suspicious that Ali and Dyosa Connor met the same fate as Ari's parents, Ivan and Kori Hugo. Frank suspected that the disappearance of the Connors, Balian, and Hugos was contrived by a single evil group. He believed his friends were still alive.

Six weeks after the Connor tragedy came the holy month for honoring humility, sacrifice, and suffering. A number of children noticed the stark contrast between Ron and Alisa battling great sorrow, as well as Josephine overcoming a tragic affliction, and the self-deprivation, self-inflicted pain and suffering that many folks engaged in, especially during the holy month.

During a prayer session, then eight-year-old Jawo asked his parents, "Father, Mother, do you want me to suffer?"

"No. Of course not. Not ever. No parent would want that."

"Then why do some think that God wants people to suffer?"

The adults could not justify ascribing a sickening trait to the Almighty.

As the islanders continued to celebrate by the cliff, the other cabal members, two men and two women, fueled the outrage of Suff, Sac, and Humi. The secret group called their leader Head-Hunter; the other man was codenamed Fort; the two women were known as Gem and Glitter. Each craved to tear down those who did not follow the Holy Book and traditions. Each vowed, "God's will be done! I must defend the sacred traditions at all cost!"

Back on the podium, Santo Sacrificio was requested to speak. He prayed, "God, please have mercy on those who do not worship, praise, and serve you. Please forgive them for flouting your will, for their ambition and pride. To all dear Saints, please help them see that self-sacrifice and suffering are pleasing in God's eyes."

When Toni's turn came, she prayed, "God, You are all-good and all-loving. You do not need praises – You are not insecure. You do not need service – You are omnipotent. You are not a sacrifice profiteer nor a sadist – it must break your heart to see anyone suffer. You want people to be happy, and have given us everything needed to achieve happiness: our minds and bodies, the Earth, and the universe."

Toni requested Ron to speak after her.

Ron contended, "Every demonstration of how powerful the mind is, every discovery, invention, or advancement, proves that God is all-good and all-loving. Therefore, using the mind is immensely pleasing to God."

The merriment continued. Ron joined Alisa. Her face was the picture of joy. "Alisa, you are an angel on Earth."

Alisa responded, "Heaven and Earth – they are one and the same."

Amid the revelries, the cabal members seethed. Suff, Sac, and Humi were of the same mind: "I am God's soldier. I must defend God's will!"

Fort inflamed their anger. "People who influence others to spurn the Holy Book, who flaunt that they do not need God, who worship pleasure and science, must be made to repent and fear the wrath of God."

Head-Hunter stoked the avengeful fury of his cabal. "Proud, happy, ambitious people cannot be ruled. We must step up measures to force them to submit. Armageddon is needed again. These people must be punished for their sins."

Legend ascribed the destruction of the wonders created by the island's founding heroes to God's wrath. What betided the founders and their legacy remained a mystery. Over the decades, many searched for the legendary underground chambers, believing they would find the Heroes' Journals and other treasures.

Jaya was asked to speak on the podium after Ron. When she finished, she requested Ron to give another speech. The islanders were all ears as Ron solemnly addressed them.

"Reason is the faculty that deals with the perception of reality, while faith is the claim to a non-sensory means of knowledge. Principles and values derived from faith are often accepted without question even in the face of contrary evidence, while reason deals with facts and employs the method of non-contradictory identification.

Faith has been used to further ignorance, enshrine irrationality, and exploit people. With faith, there is no necessity for justification. Force is its corollary.

But if one's personal faith holds reason as its top value, then, faith and reason are not incompatible. If one's personal faith holds the life, freedom, and happiness of each human being as the most sacred of values, then, reason and faith can coexist, parallel to each other, in the same man.

This man uses reason for everything that can be explained, while his faith holds on to dreams that inspire him to live.

Faith in a God who is all-good and all-loving, who treasures each man, endowing him with a mind capable of understanding man's nature, the Earth, and the universe.

Faith in a God who so loves man that He respects his freedom of choice.

Faith that God shares the most sacrosanct of values: each man's life, his freedom, and his happiness here on Earth. Faith that Heaven and Earth are one and the same.

Faith that human life goes on until eternity, that everything is possible to man. Faith in miracles -

Think of a miracle. Believe that God has given the means to achieve it. Think, and find out the facts. Think, with the clarity of purpose. Let the vision of a miracle be a beacon to guide your actions. Think, and then act. Act with the confidence that miracles do happen to doers who strive to actualize them.

Rejoice! Angels do exist in our midst, though it takes the highest of virtues to recognize them.

Heaven on Earth can be achieved when reason reigns.”

Alisa gazed at Ron adoringly. “A good man,” she thought. “His mind matches his looks.” Ron was six feet and three inches tall. He was proud and joyously confident.

Ron continued, “I respect the freedom of each man to celebrate the holy month, but I do not hold humility as a virtue. I think self-sacrifice is evil, suffering has no value, and one’s own happiness is the purpose of life.”

Those who envied achievement, who hated men and women of ability, and who wanted people to grovel and weep, decided to execute Armageddon prior to the holy month.

The festivities continued. Toni and Lola played dodgeball with other children.

“Look! A huge boat is coming!” Toni pointed north. A stately boat, flying a gold, silver, and black flag with a white letter K on its center, was approaching the island. Frank’s father recognized the colors. “The letter K stands for the Knox family. But the boat must be the reincarnation of the legendary *Derek Bustoz*.”

The big boat’s name came into view. The Savior’s Isle citizens fell silent, a solemn greeting to a beloved legend.

Almost two centuries ago, the founders of the Saviors’ Isle achieved Heaven on Earth. They conquered nature by understanding it. They created and enjoyed wealth. The country was a land of plenty and glory.

The *Derek Bustoz 2* docked in the deepest water at the pier’s end. Located at the northeastern tip of the island, the principal diagonal structure extended from the massive cliff.

All the islanders were on hand to welcome the boat. Smiling and waving from the *Derek Bustoz 2*’s weather deck were a middle-aged woman with long golden hair, a young man of twenty, and a fifteen-year-old girl. The woman’s husband joined his family. Full of excitement, they disembarked.

Jay greeted them warmly. “Welcome to the Savior’s Isle. I am Jay Rahman.”

“Thank you, Jay. I am George Knox. This is my wife, Rio, my son, Glenn, and my daughter, Georgia. Our boat was copied

from the first *Derek Bustoz* which was built on this island. It is a dream come true to set foot in your great country.”

Toni greeted the Knox daughter. “Hello, Georgia. I am Toni Connor.”

“Toni Connor!” Georgia echoed excitedly. “Your name must be spelled with an I. Hello.” She looked at her brother. “Glenn, could we show them the *I-TON*, please?”

Glenn invited Alisa. “Would you like to operate the *I-TON*?”

“Yes, please. Thank you, Glenn. I am Alisa.” She boarded the *Derek Bustoz 2* with the Knox siblings. Jawo ran after them. He, too, was invited.

Toni, Lola, and their schoolmates were very excited. “What could the *I-TON* be?” Toni wondered.

The people heard a distinctive hum from the *Derek Bustoz 2*. A cylindrical structure made of lightweight steel and indestructible glass rose amidships. The structure with a twenty-foot diameter rose to twenty-eight feet. From its midsection, a tubular metal, eight feet in height, extended sideways up to ten feet. The tube could rotate around the vertical cylindrical post. The upper part of the post, ten feet in height, contained the control room. A big letter *I*, made of pure gold, was embossed on the outside. The post continued to rise to another twelve feet, and then another tubular metal extended sideways below the control room. The second tube had the same height and length as the first. The post rose to another ten feet, whereby a hyphen and three more letters, *T O N*, all made of gold, came into view. Two feet below the control room, two arm-like metal limbs emerged.

The *I-TON* was fifty feet tall; its post was forty feet in height. Its twenty-foot-diameter base tapered off to fifteen feet beyond the first tube, and then to ten feet after the second tube. Glenn and

Alisa manned its control room. Georgia and Jawo manned the tubes.

The *I-TON*'s metal arms extended. A massive palm and powerful steel fingers emerged from each metal limb. Glenn pushed a button; a *Derek Bustoz 2* miniature slid down the metal limb into the palm. The metal limb moved, offering the miniature to Jay. Georgia and Jawo operated the tubes and showered the islanders with candies and toys. Gifts continued to slide down the *I-TON*'s arms.

Alisa was all smiles as she operated the control devices with Glenn. Ron beheld the golden-haired young man and woman. Alisa looked like a goddess. Her zest for life and its challenges shone in her eyes. Ron realized he was in love with Alisa.

Toni threw a ball at the *I-TON*. The right metal palm and fingers caught it. The metal arm took up a throwing position and threw the ball back at Toni. Lola also threw a ball high up in the air, away from the *I-TON*. The left metal arm extended, caught the ball, threw it much higher into the air, caught it as it came down, then offered it back to Lola. The right palm was also stretched out beside Toni. Lola and Toni got on the steel palms. The *I-TON* lifted the girls up high before putting them on the boat's weather deck as other citizens boarded the *Derek Bustoz 2*.

Frank's military-trained mind was awed by the enormous boat and the *I-TON*. "What great offensive and defensive devices," he thought. "The *Derek Bustoz*' weapons must have spewed out of its metal arms and rotating tubes during the invasion. Its massive steel palms and fingers could have caught balls of fire from catapults. Even children could have operated the *I-TON* and its munitions!"

The tour of the boat's interior was a history lesson, an insight into the technology created and enjoyed by the legendary founders.

In contrast, the island tour elicited disbelief and sadness.

When the Knox family entered the Constitution Hall, George held on to Constitution's light steel and glass case. The Constitution was one of the very few remnants of the glorious days of the founders.

George looked at the faces of the islanders. Jaya stated his unspoken question. "What happened to the paradise created by the founders? Legend claims the wonderful structures were destroyed by lightning and fire. Many survivors migrated to the Republic of Ibelyn; they kept mum about the heroes and the destruction. Most who stayed behind accepted the belief that God's wrath wrought the destruction."

"What became of the founding heroes?" Glenn asked.

Ron answered, "They left the island long before the destruction."

"That is the only logical explanation." Frank's cool rejoinder came quickly. "The destruction would not have happened if they were here."

Frank's countenance did not betray what he had deduced. He thought, "Ron has found the underground chambers! He has read the Heroes' Journals! His skills as an architect and his brilliant deductive ability led him to his discoveries. But he is now in danger!"

Ari pondered, "Ron never asserts categorically unless he is sure of his facts." He, too, realized Ron had unlocked the wonders that had remained as mysteries for almost two centuries.

Frank's face remained unreadable. But the cabal's leader also surmised that Ron had found the secrets of the legendary underground chambers.

“The treasure is at hand!” Head-Hunter rejoiced in silence. “Twenty-four years of patience and shrewdness have paid off. I am blessed! I am a rich man!”

Head-Hunter devised a cunning scheme.

The secret group met in the evening. Head-Hunter rallied Suff, Sac, Humi, Fort, Gem, and Glitter.

“Today, we witnessed blasphemy and heresy on a grand scale. We must act swiftly to defend God. I have devised a brilliant plan. One blow will destroy the leaders of the nonbelievers. The blow will be followed by Armageddon. The wrath of God will again be unleashed upon this island!”

A novel of ideas with nonstop suspenseful action. Its theme is: "Heaven on Earth can be achieved when reason reigns." Young beau ideals shine as battles are joined between tyrants who crave to rule and thinkers who cannot be ruled.

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