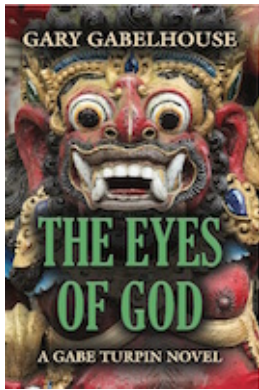




GARY GABELHOUSE

THE EYES
OF GOD

A GABE TURPIN NOVEL



A letter from Judas Iscariot is found under Jerusalem's Temple Mount, and exposes the storyline of Christ, the crucifixion and resurrection as nothing more than a political ruse of a radical Jew. The Vatican and a Zionist cabal both seek to secure the letter, as anthropologist Gabe Turpin, a Tibetan Lama, a Jesuit Priest, and a Mossad operative teams with an old spymaster to pursue the relic through the wormholes of time and space. From a Nazi expedition to Tibet in the thirties, to a Jihadist plot to reclaim the sacred sites of Jerusalem, THE EYES OF GOD is a metaphysical thrill ride, with the faith and lives of millions hanging in the balance.

The Eyes Of God

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GARY GABELHOUSE

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First Edition

PROLOGUE

Jerusalem-40 ACE

The Jew named Yeshua spoke in anger to the man, Judah, as the cadre of Jews and Greeks sat in the garden by the Mount of Olives. Despite the heated argument, the group of men all nervously watched the entrances to Gethsemane. Yeshua was a dark and swarthy Jew with a wiry build. He wore his dark hair and beards slightly cropped. There was fire in his brown eyes, and he spoke with an orator's tongue—often gesturing with his hands and making facial expressions to drive home a point. The man was not driven to histrionics, but it was clear he was a zealot who demanded the attention and compliance of those who chose to follow him.

Ernst Schäfer, member of Hitler's *Schutzstaffel* and Himmler's *Ahnenerbe*—a group of SS scientists focused on the occult and paranormal—tried to keep the motion-picture camera on the rabble-rousing Jew—Yeshua. The man they called Cephas, or *the Stone*, physically placed himself between Yeshua and Judah, who appeared to be nearly coming to blows due to their disagreement. The German scientist studied the men through the camera lens—men who would become known as Jesus, Judas and Peter.

Schäfer's ancient Hebrew and Aramaic was poor, and he tried to concentrate on understanding the heated conversation between the fervent radical, Yeshua, and the other, apparently more cautious men. The man, Judah, appeared to Schäfer as being more fearful than angry. Nonetheless, he continued to

question and apparently refuted what the radical, Yeshua, was asking of his small group of followers.

"Yeshua, if you are righteous in your war against the priests and Rome, why do you choose to hide yourself now, at this time? It was you who planned it! It was you who vandalized the Temple—threw out the priests, calling them thieves and money changers. It was you who got the ear of Caiaphas."

"And you will finish it, Judah!" shouted Yeshua. "Do not betray me at this critical time. Now, leave me with Cephus, as I go to pray!"

"You want to leave with Cephus to protect you if things go wrong," said Judah. "And you do not go to pray. You go to hide! For what would happen if it was you who I was to kiss and call Rabbi?"

Yeshua grabbed the large man, Cephus, and stalked off from the group. The two men disappeared in the gathering gloom of the garden as Judah stood alone, his jaws and fists clenched in fear and frustration.

Schäfer turned off the camera. He looked at his assistant, Konrad Gieblehausen, and raised his eyebrows in surprise. Konrad looked shaken. His eyes were sad, and Schäfer saw that his young assistant was shaking his head as though denying all that he had witnessed.

It was nearly dark when Schäfer saw the throng of men enter the gardens. They were thugs for the high priest, Caiaphas, and they carried cudgels and clubs—some brandished large cooking knives. Speaking loudly in their ancient language did not confuse the Nazi officer as to their intent.

"We have come for the King of the Jews!" shouted a tall and gangly gentile with rotten and ravaged teeth. "Where is your Messiah, Jews?"

Judah looked at the ground, anguished and full of anger and hurt. Despite his pain and shame, he slowly walked over to a man dressed in the white robes of an Essene. The white cloth of the man's robe was tattered and stained. Judah walked by the costumed Essene and quickly kissed him on the cheek, saying, "Greetings my Rabbi."

The thugs of Caiaphas rushed forward along with three Roman Centurions. They roughly grabbed the Essene and drug him out of the Garden of Gethsemane. The man's screams could be heard for nearly five minutes afterward. Schäfer thought the man would never stop screaming.

The small group of Jews and Greeks—Yeshua's apostles all stood silently in the garden—unable to even look at each other. A breeze sighed down from the Mount of Olives, and Schäfer smelled the scent of olive blossoms and wood smoke in the air. Then, the man named Judah began to weep, and quickly strode toward Schäfer. He stopped and stared curiously at the German who was still holding the motion picture camera on his shoulder. Schäfer was sure the camera and their expedition dress appeared strange to this Jew of the first Century. Tears ran down Judah's face, and he looked at Schäfer with a mixture of shame and fear.

Schäfer spoke with the best Yiddish he could muster, and slowly talked to the man destined to be the apostle of Christ's betrayal.

"Ikh vet nit shatn ir—I will not harm you," Schäfer spoke the words slowly and with care.

The man seemed to understand Schäfer's Modern Hebrew—at least a bit. Encouraged, Schäfer continued to address the man named Judah.

"*Ver iz geven es az iz tsu shtarbn?*—Who was it that is to die? *Ver vet kayafus oysfirn*—Who will Caiaphas execute?"

Judah looked at Schäfer with open surprise, mixed with a growing fear.

"I will not harm you," repeated Schäfer in Yiddish.

Judah swallowed hard and sniffed his nose, rubbing the tears from his cheeks. His look grew sad—but then a tinge of disgust shadowed his face.

Judah spoke the words that sounded to Schäfer like old Yiddish, stating, "*A shtum shklaf mir bought far draysik breklekh fun zilber.*"

Schäfer listened closely as the man spoke his words with the thick accent of ancient Hebrew. To Schäfer, the words were not meaningless. If he had heard it right, Judah had said, "A mute slave we bought for thirty pieces of silver."

Schäfer asked in Yiddish, "A mute slave?"

"Yes. A mute slave that Cephus knew. He was from the east and claimed much before Cephus and Yeshua captured him and cut out his tongue," said Judah in his thick Hebrew, and with a growing disgust.

Schäfer continued. "Where did Yeshua go?"

Judah smiled grimly at Schäfer and said what sounded to Schäfer as, "He will hide with his woman, until he can appear to come back from the dead."

Schäfer gathered from his rucksack some sheets from a parchment notebook given to him in the temple at Shambhala. He held the sheaf of parchment toward Judah, along with an old fountain pen. He demonstrated for Judah how to use the pen and paper.

"Tell me your story," asked Schäfer in Yiddish. "Do—write it down for me. Here," he said offering Judah the paper and pen.

Amidst the silence in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judah recorded the story by the light of an oil lamp that had been produced by one of the apostles. Writing the story seemed to be cathartic for the Jew—as he now knew that at least someone would understand that he had gone along with Yeshua's mad plan only under protest.

Judah finished his scribe work as gray light bled into the early-morning darkness of the sky behind the Mount of Olives. He dutifully handed the papers to Schäfer, keeping the pen. Schäfer and Gieblehausen had nodded off, each leaning against large rocks beside the garden's path. It was then that Schäfer heard the shouting as Roman soldiers flooded into Gethsemane, brandishing javelins and broadswords. Sounds of armor and running feet filled the darkness of Gethsemane.

Amidst the chaos of the attack and raid of the arresting centurions, Schäfer and Konrad had gathered their kits, and ran blindly in the early-morning darkness. Schäfer fell flat on the graveled trail that ran out of the garden, and the camera skidded roughly across the ground. He quickly sprang to his feet, and on the run, stooped down to grab the camera, and ran in fear toward the Temple Mount.

With a wet *smack*, a javelin pinioned Gieblehausen to the middle of the trail, having gone through his rucksack, his back and out of his chest. The German SS Officer lay silently in gouts of black blood as Schäfer ran on, fear choking him out of breath as he

raced with abandon to the holy ground of the Temple Mount.

Hannover, Germany-1992

Ernst Schäfer lay in the hospital bed amidst the airy, electronic sounds of monitors and life-support. He knew that he would be dead soon, and so be it. He had grown weary of life not long after he had returned from the Himmler-sponsored, *Ahnenerbe* expedition to Tibet in 1939—over fifty years before. He had told no one of his adventure after entering the Temple of Shambhala and its mystical wormholes into and through earth's time and space.

After his unenthusiastic service to the Fuhrer during the war, Schäfer had been tried at Nuremburg, and was found innocent of any war crimes. After his trial, he had spent time doing good science work in Venezuela, but eventually returned to a new Germany. He grew old as the Wall had come and gone, as did his friends and family. And now, all of his friends were gone, except for his Austrian climbing buddy, Heinrich Harrer. *Heinrich was coming to visit him sometime soon, and that would be good*, mused Schäfer. And perhaps he should tell Heinrich about what they found at Shambhala, and what really happened in the Garden of Gethsemane. But, despite Harrer knew about the mysteries of the Himalaya from his own expedition to Nanga Parbat, Schäfer thought the sensible Austrian would think that only dementia could tell such a tale as his.

But, despite his story may be laughed at by his fellow adventurer, Schäfer found a pen that a nurse had left on his bed-stand tray. He began to write on

the back of a sheet of paper that had a listing of social services organizations for patients and their families. He wrote with care, and a will to legibly transcribe the strange events from his past despite the tremors of his old-age palsy. He wrote for over an hour, and when his story was finally complete to his liking, he signed the document, and dated it for good measure. With shaking hands, he folded the document twice, and wrote: For Heinrich Harrer as boldly as he could. Exhausted from living out his memories of Gethsemane two-thousand years and a lifetime before, Ernst Schäfer fell asleep. As he slept, he still held the chronicle of his impossible adventure. He was anxious to read it to Heinrich.

Deer Park Buddhist Center, Wisconsin-2009

Gabe Turpin sat less than five feet away from the God King of Tibet—the 14th Dalai Lama. His Holiness was sitting barefoot and cross-legged in a large, wooden chair. He had kicked off his flip-flops when taking his seat, and now sat there, smiling broadly and bobbing forward and back in what Gabe had come to call the sacred, autistic bow.

Gabe had a personal audience with His Holiness earlier that morning, but now he and a small group of senior monks from the Namgyal Monastery were being prepared for initiation into the Kalachakra Tantra—where they would negotiate the sacred Temple that was represented by the Mandala with its black wheel of time. His Holiness was talking to the small group about the relationship of Kalachakra meditation and what could be called time travel.

"The Kalachakra Mandala we create in sand is said to represent the legendary Temple of the Black Wheel of Time in the sacred city of Shambhala," said the smiling holy man. "The Mandala mimics the Temple, and at its center, is the Kalachakra: the Black Wheel of Time."

Gabe asked his question of His Holiness with humility.

"What becomes of the practitioner who enters the final gate of the Black Wheel of Time, your Holiness?"

"One becomes without confinement within the Kalachakra," said the Dalai Lama. "One leaves the world of both time and space, and is free to choose where to manifest his or her spirit."

"So, if one passes the final gate of the temple, one may choose a time and/or a place to...be?"

"If one wants to be," His Holiness chuckled. "Seriously, though, it is taught that the holiest of holies of the Temple of the Black Wheel of Time is a formidable place, and that it was a source of great learning and concentration of thought. It was a place where the worthy had access to any place on earth, and in the time—any incarnation of any sentient being—living thing—that had ever or will ever inhabit this world."

"Sounds like the Akashic Records," mused Gabe out loud.

The Dalai Lama's translator spoke in Tibetan to His Holiness. They had a relatively drawn out conversation before His Holiness responded to Gabe.

"Yes. These records can be sourced, or at least we're told that at one time, they could be sourced at the temple in Shambhala."

"But Your Holiness, was there, or is there really such a temple and such a sacred city?" asked Gabe politely. "Was or is the mystical kingdom of Shambhala...real?"

His Holiness rocked back and let out a laugh.

"Of course it is, Doctor Turpin. Our friend, Heinrich Harrer knew a man who claimed he not only found Shambhala, but that he successfully entered the Temple of the Black Wheel of Time."

In the 1980's, through his involvement with the Explorers' Club, Gabe had met and befriended mountaineering pioneer, Heinrich Harrer—who also was the mentor of the Dalai Lama before his exile from Lhasa. One of Gabe's prized possessions was a copy of *Seven Years In Tibet* autographed by Harrer. It sat in a place of prominence in Gabe's bedroom.

"A friend of Heinrich's had been to Shambhala?" asked Gabe. "Had been at the Kalachakra Temple?"

"Yes. Heinrich told me of a man and his strange story. According to Heinrich, the man—a German Officer back before the war—said he had been on a scientific expedition to Tibet, and had seen and done...impossible things. Including time travel...at least according to Heinrich, this is what he was told."

"Did Heinrich believe the story?" asked Gabe.

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama sat silently and stared at Gabe for some time before speaking. And when he spoke, Gabe felt a chill run through him.

"Heinrich said the man's eyes had seen too much—had seen both Heaven and Hell. And somewhere along his journey, he had seen and done things that could never be told, and should never be known. Heinrich felt the man held within him a great burden, and it

was that burden that finally made him take his own life."

"He took his own life?"

"Heinrich said that after hearing the man's ramblings and ravings about giant vortices between worlds, and how one navigated through time and space with only conscious intent, the old man had seemed exhausted. And after closing his eyes, Heinrich said the man appeared to have fallen asleep. Heinrich let him sleep and left his room. But after Heinrich was out of his friend's hospital room the old man removed all of the tubes and wires that were keeping him alive. And just before the old man died, Heinrich and the nurses trying to revive the man claimed he shouted out, '*Jesus, you have forsaken us.*'"

Gabe sat silently in the Deer Park Temple. The handful of monks remained silent, as well. He looked at His Holiness, and the stern look on the old monk's face startled him. Finally, it was the Dalai Lama who broke the silence.

"It is, indeed, a strange story. And our friend Heinrich was bothered at his memory of it, and by his retelling of the event."

"What could Jesus and Shambhala have to do with each other?" asked Gabe.

"Doctor Turpin, you, like some, always seek answers. Sometimes the truth we find cannot be borne by the mind and body. Sometimes learning can become a most perilous path."

CHAPTER ONE

Temple Mount, Jerusalem

Kahlil peered into the Well of Souls. As a Jordanian scientist attached to the Waqf—the Muslim Trust that administered the Temple Mount—Kahlil had access to the secret spaces of this most holy of holy places on earth. He had gained permission to explore, and if necessary, perform minimal excavation of the tunnels beneath the Dome of the Rock Mosque. The Mosque offered to the faithful, the bedrock of Mt. Moriah where the Prophet found a stairway to Heaven, and had conversations with God and Angels. The tunnel—often called *The Well of the Souls*—was cramped, and had air that was so heavy with age, that it was difficult to breathe. Kahlil's headlamp provided the only light.

As Kahlil inched his way forward down the small tunnel, and into a larger subterranean *room*, his headlamp beam jerkily panned across an object that seem embedded in the dust and rock of the chamber's floor. He turned his head at the appropriate angle so that his headlamp bathed the object in its bright, white light.

Kahlil crawled forward on his belly, and slowly rose to his hands and knees, his headlamp focused on the object. From his belly bag, he retrieved a small brush and began to gently caress the dust-covered object with the soft hairs of the brush. Slowly...gently...Kahlil exposed a rotted canvas bag about a cubic meter in size. Despite its obvious ancient age, the bag looked like a relatively modern rucksack. He brushed off the top flap of the bag which was clasped by two metal

clips. Kahlil wondered at the modern design of this artifact. When the last bit of dust was removed, it exposed the ancient, canvas flap. Kahlil gasped in the thick air. Despite it was there less than a half-meter in front of him, Kahlil refused to believe what he saw.

It was an embroidered patch beneath which was old, stained writing—a name: Schäfer, written not in Hebrew or Aramaic, but instead, rendered in modern German script, hand-written under the embroidered Nazi symbol.



Schäfer

Kahlil delicately opened the bag's flap, and it gave way—the canvas crumbling out of its metal clips. The canvas flap fell back on the floor of the chamber, and revealed the metal edge of a rectangular object. Kahlil, now wearing a pair of surgical gloves he had retrieved from his belly bag, gently lifted the metal object free of the rotten canvas. The object shook in the light of the headlamp, but Kahlil knew the object had no movement. It was his own hand that was trembling.

As the object got clear of the canvas bag, a metal portfolio binder fell out of the bag, and opened to reveal a sheaf of parchment sheets. The sheets showed some age, but were unusually preserved given the apparent age of the canvas bag.

Kahlil looked back at his trembling hand...which held a tarnished and dust-covered...motion picture camera.

Namche Bazaar-Mt. Everest Region

The Yak-cheese pizza tasted good. Gabe Turpin chewed the greasy chapatti-bread pizza as he looked out at the mountain vista from the Namaste Lodge. Just chewing pizza at this altitude robbed Gabe of breath. He took a sip of San Miguel beer and imagined what it was like up high on the massif that hovered over the Himalayan village of Namche Bazaar. Everest loomed like a brutish house frau in the center of the horizon with the elegant Ama Dablam standing tall and graceful to the east. Nuptse framed Everest to the west, on the left of Gabe's view. A jet stream of snow continually blew off the summit of Everest. *Chomolungma—Mother Goddess of the World as it was called by the Sherpa, was, indeed, a world of its own, thought Gabe. Chomolungma makes its own weather, and sits in judgment every day as to who will live or die on its ice-covered bones of stone.*

Gabe's ass ached due to his yak ride from Lukla the day before. In fact, at sixty years old, everything ached—everything hurt. Doctor Gabe Turpin was a big man—both in stature and persona. At six feet, four inches tall, and weighing in at just over one-hundred, twenty kilos, the man tried to remain active, and regularly walked and taught Daitoryu Aikijujitsu at a dojo he had been part of for nearly thirty years. And now, he was living out his tenure as professor of cultural anthropology at the University of Nebraska, where he was primarily focused on research into the

metaphysical sides of sacred ceremony and primitive cultures. His graduate students sometimes called him, "Doctor X-Files."

Gabe had been divorced for over a decade, and had been willfully bound for a Shingon Buddhist monastery. That is until Rabbi Jan Whitmore had re-entered his life. And in that one magical afternoon, every one of Gabe's misgivings and rationales as to why he would never be with another woman, dissolved in the face of what could only be described as big magic. It was as if the two of them, the Rabbi and the anthropologist, had loved one another before—a new love that was impossibly old. Jan was practical—believing they had always been lovers in past incarnations. Gabe, who made a career out of making sense of renditions of the afterlife, was slower to wrap his head around the whole concept of reincarnation. Despite that incidents of wonder teased him with understandings Gabe was still reserved about reincarnation accurately defining birth, death and rebirth.

Gabe finished his pizza and chased the warm and greasy cheese pie with his San Miguel. He quietly burped, and looked out at the Himalaya, adorned with flapping, white prayer flags—their sutras flying over the roof of the world on the Wind Horse. The scope of things here was, like the Himalaya itself, massive and powerful.

Gabe had been in the Himalaya only once before, in 1987. He and a small group of friends flew to Kathmandu and bought a Trekking Peak permit to climb Imja Tse, or Island Peak just southeast of Everest on the Nuptse Glacier. Back then, a trekking

peak permit cost three-hundred dollars—that compared to a six-figure fee for one of the eight-thousand-meter peaks. At just over twenty-thousand feet, Imja Tse was commercially, small potatoes for the Nepalese government.

Not only was the peak permit a bargain, a trekking peak required the permit-holding expedition to hire only a Sirdar, or government minder, plus one cook or "boy" from the Sherpa. The cost of climbing a Himalayan peak was affordable if one was focused more on the quality of the climb, rather than how high the climb was, and the associated bragging rights.

Over thirty years before, Gabe had flown into Lukla on a wing and a prayer, and hiked to Namche Bazaar with a splitting headache. He had tried to acclimatize with his friends at Namche Bazaar. After two days of nausea and chain-strokes breathing, Gabe soldiered on and hiked to Dingboche for another day of acclimatizing, and then on to the handful of trekking lodges at Chukhung. Chukhung squatted at the confluence of the Nuptse and Ama Dablam Glaciers. Everest loomed over the valley.

When Gabe and his crew of flat-land climbers got to the base-camp staging area for Imja Tse, it started to snow. It snowed for four days. When the skies cleared, the route up and around the south flank of the mountain turned into one of the most active avalanche zones Gabe had ever seen. Clouds of snow and spindrift continually floated over the roaring, racing floes that rumbled down the mountain, burying the route in a tomb of snow and ice. Gabe remembered that the Sirdar sat in the snow sipping the milky chai the cook had prepared. Between sips, he had told Gabe in his sing-song voice, "Now, we must go back to

Kathmandu." It was the last time Gabe had been in the Himalaya—thirty years ago. And now, all he had these decades later was the memory of blinding headaches, suffocation in the thin air, and having such a lightness of being that his spirit flew free on the Wind Horse over the snows of Imja Tse.

Gabe drank down the last swallows of his beer. He was looking forward to his interview the next afternoon. It was truly a unique opportunity—to interview, in person, the Nechung Oracle—or at least the Kuten—the physical personage who was the official oracle of the exiled nation of Tibet. The Nechung Oracle was a venerable Lama who became possessed by the *Dorjee Drakden*—the incarnation of the Protector Deity for the Dharma of Buddha. The Oracle's deity form—the *Dorjee Drakden*—was fierce and in renderings, it was portrayed as a fearsome deity who rode on a snow leopard over boiling blood. Its spiritual energy was said to be so great that possession could mean the death of the Kuten—death of the physical form—the human vessel of the Oracle. The Nechung Oracle was asked to take part in almost every major decision of the 14th Dalai Lama and the senior priests—the Tulkas—who basically ran the exiled nation of Tibet from their haven of monasteries in Dharamsala, India.

Despite the Dalai Lama's exile, the Nechung Oracle continued to travel and pursue his divine duties from his temple west of Lhasa—which was now part of the Republic of China. The Nechung Temple was known as *Sungi Gyelpoi Tsenkar: The Demon Fortress of the Oracle King*. A few miles west of Lhasa, hidden in the high Himalaya, the Nechung Temple was also sometimes alluded to as being the legendary hidden

kingdom of Shambhala—the immortal, sacred temple that afforded the Oracle its ability to look into both the future and the past.

During Gabe's initiation into the Kalachakra Tantra in 2009, the Temple of Kalachakra, as represented by the giant sand mandala, was said to be patterned after the Nechung Temple. And the tantric infusion to, and rendering of the Kalachakra mandala represented the very clockworks of time. Entry through the last gate of the temple ceremonially allowed the practitioner free access to time and space.

When Gabe had taken part in the week-long Kalachakra initiation, there were incidences of unexplainable reality. He found himself able to chant Sanskrit sutras that were previously of no knowledge to him. And the vessel of his body was left behind, as he witnessed the presence of ancient Tibetan monasteries full of ancient monks that intermittently flashed between the real-life scenes of Buddhist ceremony, where he sat in meditation at the Deer Park Temple in Wisconsin. Time and place, for Gabe, had become unhooked. And that was the nature of the Kalachakra of time. Tantric ceremony could seemingly unhook the practitioner from time and place.

And so too, could the Nechung Oracle ceremonially unhook his bodily vessel from the confines of time and space, so as to divine the future, and confirm lessons that rose from the past. And the Oracle could do this on command, and by simply donning his massive crown. The Oracle's journey was a short-hand version that appeared to displace what for Gabe was a week of ceremony and lessons in Kalachakra time travel. And this was what Gabe wanted to more fully understand. What about the ceremonial headdress served to

function like a traveling temple for the Nechung Oracle? And what of the Nechung Temple itself? Was the temple the real Shambhala of legend—where immortality was found in the priests' freedom to walk up and down the paths of time?

Also, to Gabe, the legendary Shambhala and the source of what was called the *Akashic Records*, shared a lot of synchronicity, and piqued his insatiable curiosity. The Akashic Records were said to be the psychic recordings of every life, of every sentient being that had ever lived, or will ever live on earth. It was an unimaginably massive family tree of all of our past and future lives. And the "Self Review" that some experienced during near-death experiences, was said to be the rerun of their Akashic Record at the time of death.

The Akashic Records was a synthesis of 19th Century spiritualist, Helena Blavatsky, and Emil Schlagintweit, who wrote *Le Bouddhisme Au Tibet—The Buddhism of Tibet*. Blavatsky—the first Westerner to convert to Buddhism, claimed to regularly travel via astral projection to a Temple outside of Lhasa in Tibet where the Records of the *ākāśa—the Records of the Sky*—were lodged. For Helena Blavatsky, and according to her teachings of Theosophy, the entrance to the sacred records of all beings could be found hidden deep within the snowy summits of the Himalaya.

Gabe, through his interview with the Nechung Oracle, was hoping to gain a better understanding of the Buddhist cosmology, and how at least the State Oracle accomplished his visits to the past and future—thus knowing what to avoid, and what to embrace in

what was and what is to yet to be in the mountain kingdom of the God King.

Coming up the lane to the Namaste Lodge, Gabe saw half-a-dozen monks clad in the saffron and amber robes of the Gelugpa, or Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. In the center of the defensive knot of monks tottered a little old man who wore the tall, amber-colored Lama hat of the Gelugpa. The small Lama held onto the extended arms of the monks, as he slowly, methodically walked up the stone path toward the lodge.

Gabe got up from the dinner table in the lodge's front room, and pulled on his pile sweater and wrapped his Afghan shemagh around his throat. He stepped outside into the cooling, thin air of Namche Bazaar, and fished the white khata—a prayer shawl—from the pocket of his sweater. As he held the rolled khata in his hand, he watched the Lama's entourage slowly climb up the trail as the first star appeared over the snaggletooth of Ama Dablam to the east.

The scent of wood smoke wafted on the antiseptic, thin air of the mountain village. Mongrel dogs lurked among the stone foundations of the village's monasteries and trekking guest houses. As the saffron-robed entourage came closer, the stars appeared in the sky—painted between the impossibly tall peaks of the Khumbu massif. The stars appeared over the black horizon like quick-blooming crocuses on a March day in Nebraska. And the star shine cast an ethereal glow over the monks and their venerable sage and soothsayer. Gabe watched the procession in the darkening gloom through the faint clouds of his breath.

The circle of monks walked around the low stone wall of the Namaste Lodge, and stopped ten feet in front of Gabe. The small, older Lama parted the way in front of him as he gently pushed his bodyguards aside.

Gabe and the Oracle silently studied each other. The Oracle, named Thubten Ngodup, suddenly smiled widely, exposing his white and blocky teeth to the cool mountain air. Gabe smiled in return, and slowly began to drape the khata around the neck of the Venerable Oracle. The fortune teller of the Dalai Lama interrupted Gabe's action, took hold of the prayer shawl himself, and gently placed the Khata around Gabe's neck. Gabe made the prayer mudra and bowed. The Oracle returned the gesture.

Awkwardly, Gabe spoke to the whole entourage.

"Venerable Lama Ngodup—monks of the Gelug...does anyone have English?"

The Oracle laughed, and spoke to the tall American in passable English.

"I have some English...Doctor Turpin, I presume?" Both Gabe and the Oracle laughed at the Livingstone, double entendre.

"Yes, Venerable Lama Ngodup," said Gabe. "I am Gabe Turpin—the anthropologist."

"It is good to meet you, and thank you for coming so far to talk with me," said the smiling Lama in the gathering gloom.

"Actually," said Gabe, "I didn't expect you until tomorrow."

The Nechung Oracle smiled and seemed to study Gabe as he laughed again. Shaking his head with a comical look on his face, the State's Fortune Teller, now deadpan, said, "Perhaps I have come...on the wrong day, Doctor Turpin."

Gabe stared at the Oracle, wondering if his statement was serious or in jest.

"If I have chosen the wrong day by mistake, I will leave again, and get it right eventually."

Right or wrong, rude or not, Gabe laughed at the Oracle's play on words. Then, to his relief, the Oracle burst out laughing, repeating his joke.

"I will leave again, and get it right, eventually."

A dog barked at the men's laughter, and the moon peeked from behind Nuptse as Gabe, the Nechung Oracle and his monks entered the lodge. Their laughter was carried away on the Wind Horse over the stone and ice of the Mother Goddess of the Earth—*Chomolungma*.

Vatican City

Jesuit priest, Father John Sheehan, watched the video for the third time. Al Jazeera's science correspondent Caroline Radnofsky was the talking head, who stood in the foreground of a laboratory as the camera zoomed in tight.

"The parchment sheets were discovered in a cavern beneath the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem," said the Al Jazeera correspondent. "What are being called 'The Letters of Judas' were discovered by Doctor Kahlil Fayad, a science consultant for the Waqf—the Islamic Trust that administers Jerusalem's Temple Mount."

Father Sheehan sighed and reached for his glass of Bombay gin. He looked at the glass with the remains of three ice cubes floating in and diluting the single finger of gin. He drank down the gin and grimaced as he reversed the video stream to the beginning.

Father Sheehan was the Director of Intelligence and Security for the Vatican. He was a slender, well-preserved man in his early sixties, who had found God quite some time after he had found Hell on earth. As a Marine Recon in Vietnam, Sheehan came to the attention of I-Corps and the CIA. Sheehan had done three tours fighting a lonely, dirty war in Laos and Cambodia. He was inserted deep in-country and assassinated village leaders friendly to the NVA as well as wreaking havoc on Viet Cong supply lines and arms-caches. After Vietnam, he was recruited by the CIA's Special Activities Division to basically work as a contract assassin. He removed people—including problematic drug dealers, overly-ambitious African politicians, and one-time Bedouins who had grown too used to the high life of Dubai. John Sheehan was a formidable *Force of One* who removed troublesome people from the equations that ensured the profitable commerce of the United States intelligence juggernaut.

And then there was the wedding job. The Middle Eastern target had made it necessary for Sheehan to accept unusual collateral damage. The target had surrounded himself with a huge wedding party, and Sheehan's handler broke the news to his agent provocateur. The most effective means to remove the target was to remove the entire wedding party. All Sheehan needed to do was paint the reception venue with a laser so that missiles could find their targets and take the target out with a massive overkill.

When Sheehan saw the dozens of children and beautiful young women, all celebrating life, he could not bring himself to visit on them a fire-filled and hellish death. Sheehan laser painted an empty

warehouse squatting a block away from the wedding hall, and then he walked away.

Sheehan found his way down the dirty trails of black ops and mercenaries, and finally lost himself in the warrens of the Third World. Two years later, John Sheehan collapsed at the feet of the statue of Peter in St. Peter's Basilica. He woke in a Vatican hospital and feigned memory loss. He had entered the Jesuit seminary and eventually took the vows of a priest. His skills allowed him to assume the secular role as the Vatican's head spymaster and intelligence officer.

Father Sheehan dialed the speed-dial number as he watched the Al Jazeera video for another time.

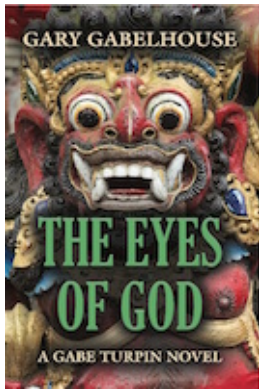
"Cardinal Canaday?" Sheehan addressed the Vatican Secretary of State. "We need to talk. I'll meet you at the Bernini fountain."

Sheehan listened on his phone, and then spoke softly.

"We need to meet where there are no ears listening, Cardinal Canaday. Meet me at the fountain in a half hour. And Cardinal Canaday? Bring an open mind, and be prepared to tell me the truth."

Father Sheehan shut off his phone and slipped it into the pocket of his jacket. He took a deep breath, and annoyed at the noise, turned off the recording of the Al Jazeera new story. In the silence of the office, he was certain he could hear the conversations of the thousands of the pilgrims strolling in St. Peter's Square. He looked out the window of his office in the Apostolic Palace. The Vatican's Intelligence and Security offices overlooked St. Peter's Square with its persistent throngs of tourists and the faithful. Sheehan was taken by Caligula's obelisk as it seemed to float on the waters of the Bernini' fountain that was back-lit

by the setting sun. As the waters levitated the glowing, golden obelisk, it seemed to rise upward as mobs of pigeons arched across the heavens. Suddenly, a cloud blotted out the sun, and it was as if the waters quit flowing, and everything fell from the heavens.



A letter from Judas Iscariot is found under Jerusalem's Temple Mount, and exposes the storyline of Christ, the crucifixion and resurrection as nothing more than a political ruse of a radical Jew. The Vatican and a Zionist cabal both seek to secure the letter, as anthropologist Gabe Turpin, a Tibetan Lama, a Jesuit Priest, and a Mossad operative teams with an old spymaster to pursue the relic through the wormholes of time and space. From a Nazi expedition to Tibet in the thirties, to a Jihadist plot to reclaim the sacred sites of Jerusalem, THE EYES OF GOD is a metaphysical thrill ride, with the faith and lives of millions hanging in the balance.

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