

Discover a modern society dominated by a Caucus of seven evil men and the hero who helps bring about their downfall.

The Grandfathers' Promise

By Michael Strong

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THE GRANDFATHERS' PROMISE

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MICHAEL STRONG

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ISBN: 978-1-7777312-0-5

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia 30752 - 9998.

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Please note: This book contains adult language, and themes.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Strong, Michael

The Grandfathers' Promise by Michael Strong

Library of Congress Control Number: 2021910003

Booklocker.com, Inc. 2024

<https://grandfatherspromise.com>

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Chapter 1

The Set-Up

He had hoped for a more moonless night. But an unexpected stiff and bitter late-night wind, had blown away much of the earlier heavy cloud cover, that helped mask the slowly growing light, from a waxing-crescent mid-December moon.

Albert Leggett was further concerned that a late afternoon dusting of snow on the ground might also reveal his tracks. He hoped his new flat-soled shoes would work their magic on this chilly night.

He carefully moved forward to hide in the dark wooded Provence Plane trees, spread before him. By now, the winter winds had stripped most of these trees bare of their usually thick leaves. The winter winds caused the bare upper thin branches to sway and rub together. This combined action created a slight clicking noise.



In the summer, these trees' leaves accumulated a layer of fine dust on their undersides. This dust often caused people to suffer mild respiratory issues. Leggett was prone to such dust issues since his boyhood days, earned by living in tenement housing. This was another good reason for delaying this Contracts' completion, until this late winter period.

Now as Leggett moved forward, he crouched low behind an 85-year-old weathered out-building that included a two-car garage and stables, situated right of this night's Set-Up location.

The old garage now leaned eastward ever so slightly, because of the constant fall and winter west winds that seemed to plague this small French valley.

In this classic rural area of Toulouse, the garage had somehow survived intact, despite the Nazi regime's bleak, and gruesome 1940s march through France.

As World War 2 evolved, Vichy France, and this little wooden garage, quickly came under effective German control. Even though there was, until November 1942, a demarcation line between the German Occupation Zone, and the Vichy Free Zone. However, the German war machine operated as it wished, ignoring the negotiated line, and doing so, at will.

At that perilous time, many French Jews, collected themselves around Toulouse, because they viewed this strategically located city, as a potential gateway to escape the ongoing threats and brutality.

French Jews, trying to escape into Spain, faced much persecution. Their escape attempts remained a problematic, and dangerous activity for each Jew trying to flee from the Vichy, and the Nazis. Often, escaping



Jews would need to pay a large tariff, to secure their passage to safety.

Sadly, tens of thousands of these innocent French Jews could not escape their tormentors and were, over the four years of Nazi occupation, rounded up, and deported by the Vichy to work in death camps. All this to help ensure the Nazis' ongoing defeat of the Jewish people, and resolution of the Jewish Question.

But now, after almost seven-plus decades, few souls still lived to reflect, and bear testament, to that gruesome period. This location's thick ground foliage, shrubbery, and treed rolling hills remained untouched, as if this area had a simple promise to keep. A promised and hallowed remembrance, for the souls of the thousands of patriots, long since laid to rest in the bloodied ground of this brave, but fragile European country.

Leggett again shook his head free from his many meandering thoughts. Now in this remote inhospitable place, his mind snapped back to review the past several weeks. It occurred to him that each Set-Up element had been more challenging to devise this time.

To help him get a close-up view of his human target, and give reason for his daily presence, he worked in disguise for several weeks as a freelance landscaper, clearing local bush for the Occitanie Region. Then on other nights observing through a telescope from several miles away, Leggett would sit in the woods on a hillcrest, watching his two targets, the old wooden garage, and its owner, Marcel Rene De'Clare.

Albert Leggett would then join many other locals who often came to this area, to gaze into the night's dark heavens, to view the 2015 Winter Hexagon. Leggett would be just one of many, to set up a telescope and gaze into this December night's sky.

On those several nights located high in his perch, Leggett also carefully surveyed the large moss encrusted, stone-clad family home, with its dull gray slate roof, and three oversized protruding chimneys. On many other nights, like tonight, the chimney's smoke would rise and quickly disperse into the dark.



He had studied each occupant's comings and goings. He then placed into his memory each movement for future reference but mainly remained focused on the habits of his target, Marcel De'Clare.

A successful modern Set-Up typically required everything to be observed, and secretly recorded by using the latest Smartphone technology from multiple angles, so later, all recordings could get critically reviewed, and analyzed for more precious details.

Errors were not part of Leggett's being, conscious or otherwise.

His human prey was a 57-year-old French-born national. He was a large-framed, full-faced Caucasian man with no facial hair. His piercing dark eyes, and prominent forehead suggested a man with a fractionally troubled, and intolerant conscience. His hair seldom strayed, as if he had commanded it to refrain from ever dancing in the wind. Surely, it would dance vigorously on a wind-swept night like this.

This Set-Up was number 62, in Leggett's long deadly career. This specialized work, and many other off-the-books opportunities, had easily made him a multi-millionaire, many times over.

Leggett breathed heavily into his coat's lapel, and knew it soon would be time to focus on keeping a few promises of his own. At that instant, he shivered, and closed his eyes. He had slowly come to understand why few in this job, even survived to achieve the status he might now accomplish.

Albert T. Leggett was now approaching middle-age and feeling the cold more than ever before. He had often mused, in his few quiet moments, what the promise of his impending retirement might encompass for a man like himself.

At 47 years, at Leggett's last birthday, he felt he had achieved a milestone for his life and career. He allowed a slight stiff smile to cross his chilled face.

Faith's true and generous heart was only the second heart he had ever loved. Faith's love gave him solace, and a pathway into an alternate form of redemption, he had not envisioned during their first brief meeting. That meeting had occurred some six years before as they met by chance, standing together as strangers, waiting to buy a lunch hotdog, in Bryant Park.

As always, she would wait patiently, and calmly. She did not know if Leggett would return, or maybe this time get discovered, and arrested, or even killed. Faith remained, because his world was now, her world.

Faith grew up as a less than privileged young mixed-race girl, who had also suffered grievously, for her station in life.

The Grandfathers' Promise

Her black father Bert, had died in a bar fight. His throat slit ear-to-ear, when she was only 11, leaving her white mother Sally to raise her daughter alone, on the wages she earned cleaning other people's smart, and highly valued properties.

Sally drank, sometimes mightily, and whenever she did, Faith could project the outcome of her life, for many days in advance.

At 17, Faith knew she had had enough to last a lifetime, and decided anything was better than being whipped, and starved every other payday. One Sunday morning, while her mother lay once again in her vomit, Faith stole whatever money, and food she could find in their two-room walk-up, and broke free of her desperation.

Over the next 15 years, she rose to the top of her profession, working in a city, which encouraged few memories, and had even fewer redeeming qualities.

Albert Leggett knew much had transpired in his life, and the world, since the year he left the Army, 23 years before. In 1992, the world's population was then 5.5 billion souls. A gallon of gas was \$1.14. He got to watch his favorite comedy movie, and for the first time, Albert T. Leggett, met the lovely Suzanne.



News reports in 1958 showed that Arnold Palmer had won his first Masters Tournament. The horse Tim Tam had ridden to victory in the Kentucky Derby, and a secretive criminal Caucus of seven men became formed, their intent was, to influence, control, and correct as many factors of a person's life, and liberties, as were possible to achieve. They viewed their mandate as God-given. A mandated viewpoint held over from their prior Nazi regime affiliations.

They chose America to be the first target of their subversive activities, because they believed that someone must finally

bring the highest, and mightiest democracy to kneel, before the Eagle.

Their collective quest for designing a superhuman race, remained a primary focus of their ongoing existence, and practice.

Overtime, by using the growing number of modern genetic design, and manipulation techniques being developed in Sontein, France, and Fredericksville, USA, they hoped to use whatever could be learned, to further establish their global dominance. Germany had always defined their citizenry by bloodline.

Genetics was a modern-day process for accurately determining a person's bloodline. A certain pathway towards universal purity. This path was chosen almost 28 year before as a premise for the Nazis' Final Solution. If such genetic technology had been available in the 30s at the start of their movement, the world would be a purer vessel, today. Their goal now was to continue with this valuable work in greater secret, and finally achieve their new honored dream of a Fourth Reich, that would survive, and flourish for another thousand years, and, God willing, beyond.

It amused each Caucus member, that throughout American society, despite its democratic dogma, and shrill freedom declarations, ran many deep segregationist leanings that could, over time, lend themselves to foster an autocratic society, that would favor the strong, and the efforts, and beliefs of the Caucus. Once America got turned towards their will, other countries, and societies would soon follow, like sheep into an embedded pen.

However, the Caucus would need to be cunning. It was early times in 1958, but the people must believe the lies told to them. These lies were designed to drive deep into their personal psyche, releasing their own worst demons. The people must not realize how manipulated they truly were, until it was too late to make a difference. The Caucus' intent was to inflict total anarchy, wherever their influence might touch.

The name applied to this evil seven-person Caucus that was again structured after the old Third Reich was, **The Grandfathers.**

Leggett's work for The Grandfathers as a Set-Up Operator, carried many untold risks. Still, the rewards were magnificent to those willing to endure those risks, and put The Grandfathers' success, and well-being, before their own lives. Even in these modern days, there were those still willing to sell their souls, for 30 pieces of silver.

However, now in these later days after almost six decades, much was brewing throughout the land, and in the many countries already forced under The Grandfathers' control, or influence.

Whenever there were unresolved conflicts between persons, entities, or countries, a more definitive solution was necessary, a Set-Up Decree was then sanctioned.

Permitting a Set-Up Decree, was a multi-level process that required detailed paperwork prior to assignment. In many ways, this was typical of how the Nazis had, in the past, tracked their activities, and posted their achievements. It was this thoroughness that had contributed to the Nazis' historical downfall.

For Leggett's winter-focused Purchase Set-Up Decree, a fee of \$35,000,000 USD, plus expenses was set. All subscribers considered it a good deal for solving the many long-standing issues involved.

Leggett would receive his usual 30% Operator Fee, plus an extra \$2,000,000 for expenses. Once his fees were deposited, to any of his several secret off-shore accounts, the Contract would move ahead, and even if the Contract got canceled, for whatever reason, all money was effectively considered spent. A canceled Set-Up had occurred only two times in the past. Knowing his target, and the Contractor's secret identity, he was certain this Purchase Set-Up would survive any indecision.

The Rebel Brigade, and their resistance forces, denounced everything The Grandfathers' represented. Silent late-night raids by the Effectuators often punished the Rebel Brigade, and their sympathizers. The Grandfathers' growing empire depended upon these armed, and ruthless specialists, to help maintain control, and increase profitability.

From early days, The Grandfathers realized they needed to establish special administration centers called Stewardship Farms, to aid in reconditioning the Rebels, and other non-compliant persons, who could not see, or did not wish to accept, The Grandfathers' world vision. A few months, or years of specialized reconditioning, would usually prove beneficial. These Farms were very similar in operation to the Nazis' confinement and work camps of World War 2.

To further guarantee the Caucus' cause, healthy women and men of a specific genetic purity were placed inside Mating Camps, to live in lavish communal sanctuaries, where they were frequently mated, and cross-mated. These Camps helped The Grandfathers design, and build an efficient, and structurally sound Effectuator, or worker-bee community.

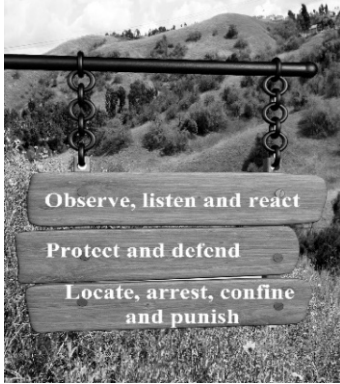
Any pregnancy found to be in trouble got immediately aborted, and any newborn child found defective, or genetically inappropriate, in any regard, was sent to a special section of the Sub-Caucus stratum, and destroyed. No biological impurities could then get inadvertently released into the Effectuator's gene pool, or accidentally escape into the world's populations, to later revolt against The Grandfathers.

For many years, the use of Stewardship Farms was a practical physical resource for reconditioning wayward persons, or as a secret location to carry out unsanctioned Set-Up Decrees. However, most Set-Ups usually occurred in full public view as a method of intimidation, re-education, and deterrence.

Rebel Brigade forces, and many millions of the world's populations, viewed Set-Up Decrees, and Stewardship Farms, as violations of established human rights, and long-held norms. Many opportunities to interfere in each Set-Up occurred daily.

The local police seldom interfered, their extended livelihoods depended upon their turned off eyes.

More often, secret inside Rebel sympathizers gleaned details from stolen paperwork, intercepted coded messages, and informant sources. This information got released to the



world through the Brigade's short-wave radio system, and many sympathetic news organizations, such as the Empire State Global News.

Over the later years, it became increasingly difficult for the Effectuators to accomplish their work, and carry out their designated duties, and mandate.

Many Effectuators defected, and sought redemption through exposing individual Grandfathers, to bodily harm, or calculated public ridicule, that would sometimes reveal the inner workings of the Caucus.

But now as Leggett was hunched down in this cold part of France, Leggett knew for this Set-Up, the Rebel Brigade would need, and want to stand down.

De'Clare, Leggett's human target, could never claim the status of a rebel.

Within four years of marriage, De'Clare's wife, Madame Françoise Marie De'Clare, bore him a son, Phillip. A wonderful boy-child, who would thankfully one day follow De'Clare into the family business. And a further three years into their marriage, in late 1997, she provided him with a second child, a feckless girl they named Clarice.

Francoise's loving father had been Malcolm Telefore Steadier. At age 74, on October 11, 1994, he had conveniently, if not questionably, passed away in his sleep about four years after their marriage, near the time Phillip was born. At the time

of his death, he had achieved a listing as the third wealthiest man in Europe.

This business icon, born Saturday, February 7, 1920, to Frederick and Lucia Steadier, both impoverished farmers, had little vision of what his future life could be.

At 20 years old, he worked as a minor official with the Vichy French during the Second World War. It was his duty to grant and process travel visas to those wishing to enter, or move through the Vichy Free Zone, and onward to other freer destinations. Whether they be Jew or Gentile.

After the war, only the most flagrant Vichy officials saw any wartime retribution, so Steadier, being a simple bureaucrat of little concern, despite his Nazi affiliations, received little, or no punishment.



Immediately after the war, and during the 50s, and mid-60s, Steadier continued to secretly profit from helping many Nazi party members, market, and sell their goods, or services, from inside their secret foreign locations. During these early productive years, he knew he could still help other war profiteers needing to relocate to friendlier climes, and gain their freedom to associate, and spend their war plunder at will, across many borders.

Steadier had no bone to pick with any Jew, or any of these fleeing the Nazis, because after all, war was war, and everyone had a right to make whatever profits from a war, they could achieve.

One tale put forward was that, in late 1944, he had aided a certain SS Colonel Walter Rauff, the creator of the mobile gas chamber, that killed over 200,000 Jews, by driving them around in an enclosed van until they suffocated, and died, to escape into distant shores.

Rauff was arrested by the Italians, but later escaped, as the war was ending. Rauff would later die, almost 40 years later, at age 77, from a massive heart attack in Chile in 1984, still living in relative freedom, and wealth. His funeral was a grand Nazi celebration, that Steadier attended, as the honored guest.

Steadier's reported price for smuggling Rauff, his family, and two minor associates through Vichy France and into Spain, and onward to freedom after the war, was his standard tariff: 20 rough uncut diamonds, at a minimum value of three carats each, per person. This tariff was paid, whether Nazi or Jew. Steadier had lots of expenses, so the price for freedom from the hangman's noose was decidedly dear, but worth every carat.

Rough uncut diamonds were, in those times, the preferred remittance, since they were easily transported, and hidden.

Many believed that Steadier further assisted hundreds of middle and upper ranked Nazis, German nationals, and other non-German business people, who had profited well from the war, and their families, to post-war freedom. All readily paid his tariff.

With the help of a well-paid, sympathetically inclined ally, all his travelers received fake IDs, and passports. For the travelling Nazis, these IDs would have fooled the Gestapo head himself, Heinrich Muller.

For travelling Jews escaping through Vichy France, they received shoddy IDs, and were often re-arrested within hours of their escape attempt. Of course, their tariffs were always presumed. Spent.

By 1964, it made more sense for Steadier to immigrate to America to improve his wealth, and expand his empire, in ways not possible by remaining in Europe, because much of Europe was still rebuilding, post-war.

America rapidly became the seat of all power. Like many other parts of the world, specific geographical locations became more popular, and good for business than others. Santa Barbara, California, proved to be one of these locations, and it soon became his new economic base, and family home.

Its pleasantly warm climate, and easy money, glitzy movie stars, its standing as the American Riviera, and finally the wide batches of unregulated military contracts, available to plunder, made it much easier to keep his past learned lessons, more holy.

He brought to this part of America, his devoted wife, Claudette, and their only child, their sweet young daughter Françoise, who he knew was far from keen to leave her treasured Toulouse. But Steadier knew she would soon bend to his will, everyone eventually did.

Toulouse, France, had become Steadier's headquarters in those heady post-war years, because of its proximity to Spain's porous borders, but now with the move to America, there was no reason to maintain the now-vacated hollow Toulouse offices. Some wondered if these granite halls would ever return to their post-war glory.

The echoes of lives long past, still reverberated as the years ambled forward. Those echoes were a testament to over 76,000 French Jewish murdered souls cast aside for Steadier, the Vichy, and Nazi glory.

For Leggett sitting here in this cold wooded area, reflecting on whatever Steadier did, mattered little to him. Leggett's investment in completing the task set before him, could not be more straightforward. Once successfully completed, this Set-Up would allow him to retire. Promises were made and must now be kept.

It was true that Malcolm Steadier was long since dead. It was also true that this sad little garage that Leggett now sat beside tonight, also meant nothing to him. But Marcel De'Clare, meant everything to him, and the Purchased Set-Up that Leggett would affect this night, was set-in stone. French stone.

Chapter 2

Those Heady College Days

At 28, and mainly on a lark, Marcel enrolled in college and attended Business School. As a freshman, he was older than most of his typical fellow college students. He was classified as a mature student, so he qualified for some lower student counsel and course fees.

The year 1986, saw the Ukraine city of Chernobyl get irradiated out of existence, and Marcel first met his golden ticket, Francoise Steadier.

De'Clare was legally French by birth. His biological father had died tragically in a boating accident when he was three years old, his mother Paulette luckily remarried five years later to a divorced American Industrialist named Jack Hawthorne, who owned an aging steel mill near the Savanna, Georgia Sea Port.

For Marcel's sake, the new Mrs. Paulette Hawthorne accepted the necessity of this marriage. At this point, she buried all her interests and dreams in favor of her young son. Any leftover dreams had now long since vanished into the sweltering heat of the Georgia south.

His step-father was a stern man, and insisted Marcel do more with his life. So here, in gloriously sunny and warm Santa Barbara, California, he finally found himself with a healthy monthly allowance that would permit him to live a rather bohemian, but still expansive lifestyle, living by the Pacific Ocean.

He carefully worked the college's social scene, and soon got himself befriended by the local horse and pony set. Miss Francoise Steadier had for several years lived her lackluster life primarily by proxy. She was also an essential part of the same horse and pony set.

Her rich father and mother had made her abandon her beloved Toulouse, when she was only nine years old, moving to

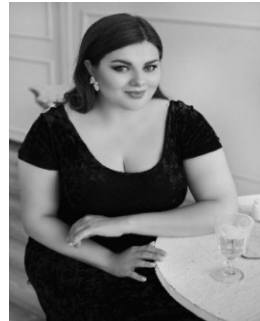
California over 22 years earlier, to continue to expand the family's business empire.

Building that empire had, for Francoise, certain overlapping benefits. She often enjoyed the wide access to college functions, her status as a college third year afforded her. Her parents were principles on the College's Alumni Council, and her father had personally funded five different Science and Engineering Chairs.

The name Steadier, was synonymous with success, and prosperity. Any out-of-bounds speculation on exactly how Malcolm Steadier achieved his success, was quickly squashed.

Francoise enjoyed being part of the College's party scene, because at this moment, from across the crowded large, ornately decorated dining room, she brightened as she heard, above the din, his distinct French clipped accent, and quickly moved in the direction of this new male voice, to introduce herself.

Francoise had unhappily tried several schools, and colleges, before finally leaving it all, for an extended two-year world tour, and many unkind lovers. Now back at this college, and at 31 years, she was a college Junior, and more than three years his age.



It amused Leggett, to think of the intertwining of the differing histories between these two college sweethearts, that brought him to his work on this chilly December night.

After their first meeting, Marcel studied her carefully. He had heard many rumors about this French-made bed. He asked many discrete questions of others about her. Not overtly, in case someone might get the wrong idea concerning these inquiries. He did however discover that everyone around Francoise displayed a certain deference level, as if she were local royalty.

Day by day, Francoise hung onto her dream that someday she would forever return to her beloved France.

Marcel De'Clare planned to become more than the qualified guy to replace her daddy's function in her life, and to eventually grant her dream. He quickly saw his chance to improve his lot.

One day, entirely by his pre-arranged accident, they bumped into each other on campus, and he casually asked her out for a pizza date, all the dining value his dating budget would commit for such a vacant girl. She readily accepted his invitation. They set a time, and the date for the following Friday night, and even shook hands on their small bargain.

She was excited to be going out with her dream guy and tried to dress sexy to thrill. Unfortunately, she badly missed the mark. He picked her up outside her Sorority House in his new van, with its classic Moonroof.

At the local pizza joint, when not eating, she talked at a rapid pace about her daddy. Francoise eagerly spoke about how proud he would be that she had finally found such a good friend here in America. She bragged about his money and power. Francoise easily explained how essential he was to the University's continued success. To his surprise, she spilled all the beans on her status as the local royalty.

Despite her constant muffled chatter, he was quickly becoming aroused by her manic right hand's attention to his swelling crotch, right there in the college pizza joint. He whispered into her ear, telling her about a special safe parking place on campus where they might continue this challenge, in his van, at a much later hour.

She smiled demurely, and relaxed, and now used her cramped freed right hand to carefully wipe her stained mouth of excess gobs of pizza sauce. She calmly looked around the pizza joint, and realized several girls she knew from her various classes had watched her curious sexual antics. They all knew what had happened. But Francoise had an influence, few other students at the college had, and for the right price they would keep their musings to themselves. Her elite status within the

college would be maintained for a reasonable investment, paid, as usual, by her forgiving father.

Sensing a great triumph, De'Clare smiled inwardly.

Thirty-minutes later, De'Clare's van sat in a secluded spot often used for clandestine meetings. She owed him. He viewed this date as being fully transactional. Two pizzas with drinks plus a little tip had cost him \$12. She must now pay up.

He found her eager to please. Yes, she was older, plumper, clingy, but still acceptable. He marveled at her stamina. Marcel mistakenly supposed that this moment relieved many years of sexual neglect. After only 20 minutes, she had already proven her sexual value, and repaid her debt.

He was such a stud.

Then, suddenly, a rapid and aggressive banging from the outside of his van on the side door broke his lustful musings.

"Come on get outta there." Ordered Campus Police Officer Roger Thynes.

Campus Police Officer Roger Thynes, 47, was now only eight years away from early retirement. He was more short-tempered than ever before, and hoped he would not shoot some college punk before he could collect his three-quarter pension, and forever go fishing on his 28-foot Trawler, The Catchall.

He hated these rich college punks for their uppity, smart-ass comments, and loose morals. It was pathetic how they always found some way to grope some unsuspecting girl, especially in these outer campus parking lots.

Francoise started to cry. De'Clare could not understand his reaction to her tears. He felt strangely sorry for her. He tried to be calm while pushing her to dress more quickly.

They tried to descend simultaneously through the van's side door, but fell out together in a tangle of arms and legs. Francoise had not fully managed to replace her ripped panties, and now her swollen, red, and battered vagina was on full display to the campus police officer's view, with his arms akimbo.

The intermittent flashing of the single cruiser cherry light cast an eerie red glow on their upturned, sweat-warmed faces.

Thynes then demanded their college IDs and carefully reviewed each one.

Thynes questioned the young lady, "Your name is Francoise Steadier?"

He quickly added, "Miss is this guy raping you? Are you safe?"

Francoise Steadier shakingly replied, "Yes, monsieur, I am safe, he is my boyfriend, Marcel. We are so sorry if we did something wrong. We just wanted some private time together, to share our love."

Francoise's frightened French accent seemed to foam forward, accentuating each word with an unnatural force.

Thynes paused and again looked at each of their Student ID Cards. He breathed heavily, flicking each card's edge as if he were counting roulette chips, in Vegas.

In his mind, he reviewed the situation and his options. It was late, and he was due to go off shift in a few minutes. They were just banging, like all the kids here would be doing this time of night. Besides, he did not want to have to do the paperwork. He then handed them their ID Cards.

Thynes then roughly demanded of them, "Get outta here. This area is closed past 11:30 at night, and you two know this."

Thynes then turned to enter his patrol car and suddenly stopped short. As he swung around, he almost stumbled in the process.

He hesitantly further questioned Francoise, "Are you the daughter of Mr. Malcolm Steadier?"

Then Thynes pressed, "You, say he is your boyfriend? How long you been datin'?"

As he spoke, he pointed a stubby finger in De'Clare's direction. His words trailed off into a dark accusing verbal tunnel. De'Clare shuffled his feet, but Francoise quickly took up this challenge.

“Yes, sir officer, I am. Francoise Marie Steadier.”

“Not long officer. We are just getting to know each other, but we are hopeful.”

“Aren’t we, darling?”

Marcel never spoke, but just smirked and shifted around uneasily.

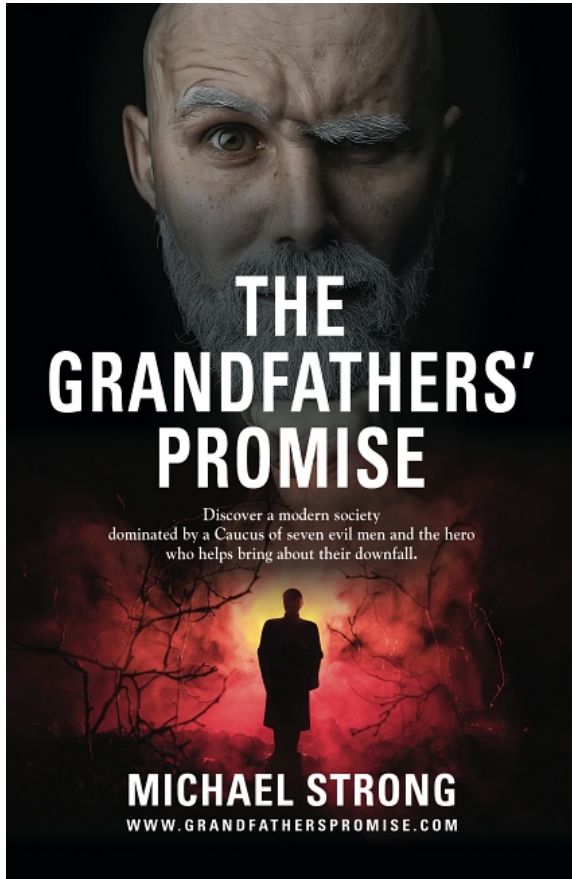
Marcel then casually shifted his arm around Francoise’s shoulder, slightly grazing her swollen breast, causing her to giggle and almost purr as she shyly smiled at the officer.

Marcel cast a glance in her direction and exhaled loudly. He instinctively knew he must protect her good name, if nothing else. De’Clare was due more good times, and he intended to collect this new, and unexpected debt. Her daddy would surely reward him for his kindness this evening.

Thynes had had enough, and he roughly ordered them to leave.

“Okay, git yourselves outta here, and in the future, keep a better watch on the exit times.”

He sadly recognized, at her age, this young lady did not care one whit for what her father might think. She was older, but still lost in the moment. Probably her first moment, and Thynes had no right to interfere.



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