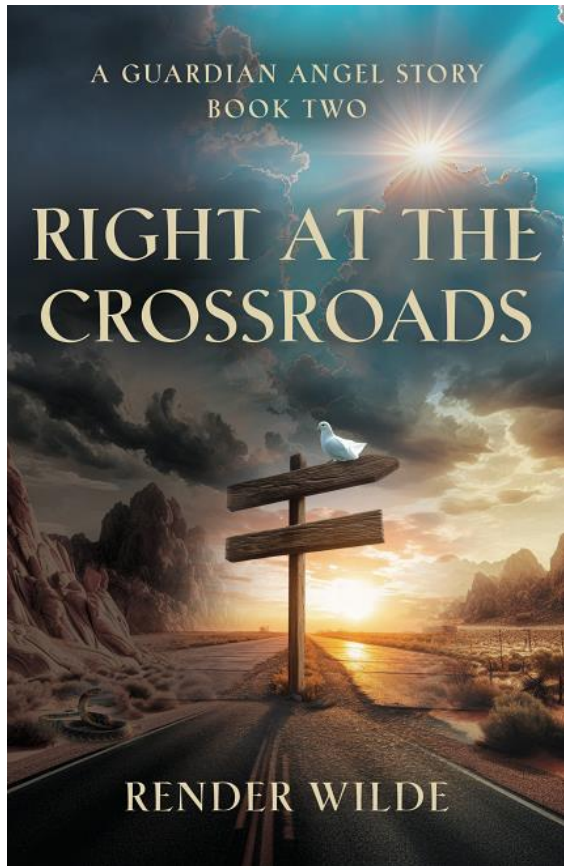
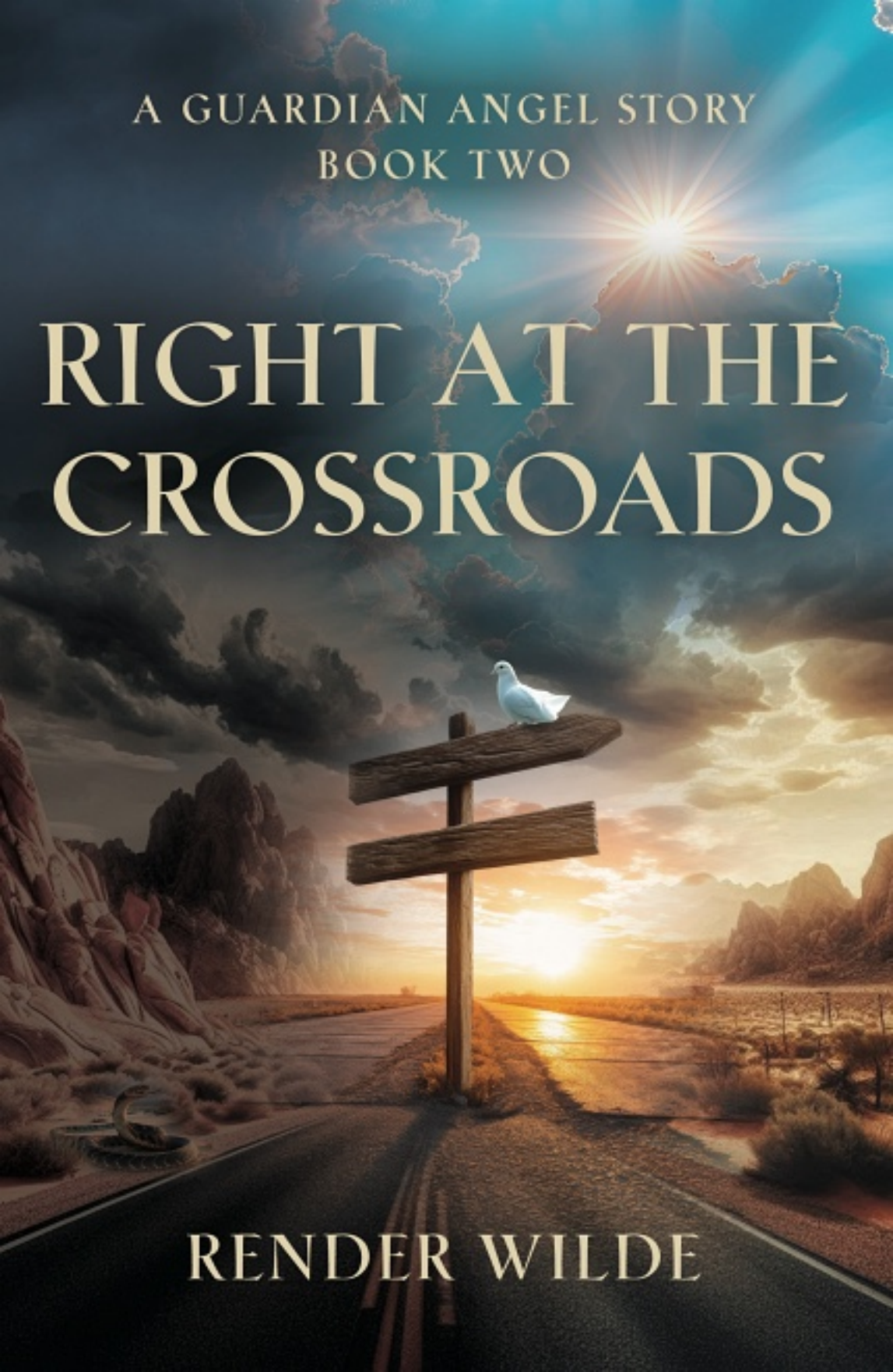




A new manuscript has been given to Hollywood producer Adam Bennett. The first one was very prophetic, this one has time sensitive written on the envelope it came in. A choice needs to be made, a crossroad is ahead and little time remains.

**Right at the Crossroads:
A Guardian Angel Story - Book Two**
By Render Wilde

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A GUARDIAN ANGEL STORY
BOOK TWO

RIGHT AT THE CROSSROADS

RENDER WILDE

RIGHT AT THE CROSSROADS

Render Wilde



Trenton, Georgia

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CHAPTER THREE

Joey at work

I received her text while driving to work. It disturbed me somewhat. Between her and Jacob I was on pins and needles. When I parked, Danny was at my window before I could get out of the car. He was extremely upset. My conductor for the day had once again been out partying hard with another woman with the first name beginning with the letter D. He had no desire to be with a Susan or a Lisa, not even if she was the prettiest girl in the bar, but if a girl named Diane or Debbie strolled in, it was game on. I had made up the D words just for him. He was a drunk, sometimes I would call him names like dipshit or dumbass, which fit him perfectly.

Today he wanted me to hear his new story. When the call came in, he had found himself under the covers in the bed of yet another woman with the first name that began with the letter D. This one was a Native American girl with the first name Dakota. He explained how this one had stolen his heart and how he thought he just might have to leave his wife and two children, who were back in West Virginia waiting for him to visit once a month or so. Work on the railroad when the coal industry had dried up because of the war on coal, made it tough on these guys. It would be a long time if ever that he stood for work back home.

I didn't want to hear another story about yet another girl. He already had two illegitimate children here in Richmond that his wife knew nothing about. Two different woman that were hounding him for money on a monthly basis. The man was throwing his whole life away because he couldn't stay faithful. I just shook my head and walked into the crew room to prepare for my day. We had been called for a Grain train, but it had been delayed so they switched us to a train that I would have rather not been anywhere near today. I had a nickname for this train. I called it the Taliban Special.

I was not pleased by this change in plans. The text from Maria fresh in my head. Jacob saying this was going to be a big day. I just returned from consulting on a film in Hollywood about this train about a month ago. A terrorist attack that was foiled by the engineer. Now here I was about to get on the same train. Would my day end like it did in the film? I sure hope not. I started to get goosebumps.

I looked around for Jacob, sometimes he would hide and other times he was right in my face being a pain in the ass. Today he was nowhere to be found, just my luck. Danny and I made our way out to the taxi that took us to the train. I had to remember to open the window as I crossed the James River, Maria claimed it would save my worthless life. I looked up at the sky and couldn't ask for a nicer day. If I had to die today, then so be it. I climbed the ladder and boarded the locomotive engine.

The cab had cameras, like most of the locomotives, it would record everything that happened inside the cab. This one was older and had an open concept, unlike the newer models that were a bit cramped. It had desk top controls, and the middle seat was behind the conductor's seat instead of in the middle of the cab. Plenty of room to maneuver and battle a terrorist just like in the film I had just consulted on. I began to have flashbacks and a sense of Déjà vu.

Danny was back from knocking off the handbrakes and instantly talked about this new girl. He just had to tell me all about her, but I wasn't listening. I was watching the movie scene inside my head preparing for what was about to happen. I grabbed a package of ear plugs and inserted them in my ears. I never wore them, but today they were going to be needed. If not for Danny's constant whining, then for something else much more sinister. I had to be prepared.

This train was smaller than other trains, still it was about 40 to 50 cars in length. The power was sufficient to make the big climb up the hill to the main line without pusher help. The TSA would monitor us from a distance, sometimes we would see them, other times they would be concealed, but I knew they were there.

I hated this train. In the past, whenever I would catch it, I would hug my wife and tell her if anything happened to this train, that I would not be coming

home. I would say it as a joke, but in all reality, it was the truth. One of these cars could kill thousands all by itself, we had 45 of them today.

We started our slow ascent up the hill. We would be lucky to hit 15 mph on this hill with all this weight. At the top, I had to slow down and make the turn south slowing the train down under 10 mph. I noticed the EOT we had was one of the older models. I was sure they had all been removed from service. They ran off a battery that failed more times than not. The new air powered ones just charged themselves and were much more reliable. The other thing these End of Train devices did was put the air down on the train if someone were to block the trainline air. It would just blow out and set the brakes. The battery packs just bottled it and when it was time for brakes, there were none.

I eased toward the signal around the big curve; saw it was green and proceeded to move us south toward the river. There were no crossings for another five miles, so I opened the window and let some fresh air blow on my face. The noise from the horn made it uncomfortable to ride down the main line with the windows open. The constant blare of the horn hurt after a while, so it was better to ride with the windows closed when going over crossings.

I peered in my mirror and saw a man walking down the walkway of the locomotive. He had a TSA badge hanging around his neck by a lanyard. Flashbacks of how the terrorist got inside the cab began to connect within my head and before I could reach back and lock the door, he was inside. Fear took over my body as he raised his hand and pointed a pistol at Danny. Two quick shots fired inside the cab were deafening. Fortunately, I had the ear plugs in. He pointed the gun at me and ordered me to increase my speed. I looked over at Danny; he was covered in blood and was clearly not going to be of any help to me. He was what I would say another D word for, dead, deceased, done for the day. I swore to myself I would avenge his death.

The man was standing in the middle of the cab facing toward the front. He was watching me while also making sure Danny was indeed dead. The speed for this section of track was 40 mph. I had to round another curve and then proceed across the river. Then there was a slight climb followed by a large downhill grade. At the bottom of that hill there was a big curve, one that if I were doing sufficient speed, I would not be able to keep the train on the tracks. I knew what this guy's plan was. We were going for mass destruction

at the bottom of the hill. If it derailed far enough behind us, he might have a chance to escape depending on what direction the wind was blowing. Those folks downwind would all perish. I had to do something before it got to that point. Jacob made his first appearance.

“Did you miss me? I see you have things well under control here. Would you like some help?”

I nodded my head that I would indeed like some help from my useless guardian angel. He did what he did best. Cause mischief. I glanced over and saw him raise Danny’s lifeless hand and give our would-be terrorist the finger. The man freaked out and fired three more shots into Danny. Jacob was yelling at me to do something. I was trying to recover from the noise of the shots. I must have waited just a second too long and when I bound for the terrorist, he was ready, well almost ready. I grabbed his lanyard and pulled as hard as I could down, while at the same time trying to secure a choke hold. We fought back and forth for what felt like eternity but was more like a couple of seconds. We were crossing the James River bridge. I fell back into my seat while dragging him toward me and the open window. The top of my head hit the back of my seat as I launched his body up and over me. He held on for dear life practically dragging me out the window with him. I could feel Jacob’s hands holding me firmly in the seat so the terrorist couldn’t take me with him. One hand on my shoulder the other holding on to the edge of the window. I turned my head and took a bite out of his hand. His grip loosened just enough for him to lose the fight, and I watched him bounce to the ground and go over the side of the bridge. No guardrails or walkways along the side of this bridge. Just a ledge with rocks and water far below. I lost sight of him, no way to know what happened to him after he went over the side. My priority now was stopping this train. I just needed to recover and get my senses back. That took me up to the other side of the bridge and over the incline. We were still gaining speed, so I let off the throttle and applied the brake.

I looked at the pressure on the rear. It was holding steady. I was now descending the hill, and the engine brakes were not doing anything but sliding over the rail. With sparks flying everywhere below me; I tried using the dynamic brakes. All that did was maintain my speed, which was way too fast for that curve at the bottom of the hill. The bastard must have blocked the air when he boarded the train. I tried dumping the air using the EOT. Nothing

happened. Those darn things were the biggest piece of junk the railroad had ever purchased. I ran out the back door to see if he had done anything else. I found he had turned the dynamic brakes off on the 2nd motor. I put them back on and ran for the lead motor. My speed was decreasing, but not fast enough.

The curve was fast approaching, and I prayed that I was able to get the speed down enough to keep us on the rails. It was in God's hands now. I had done all I could do. I felt my speed decrease some more as I prayed my heart out. Jacob was hooting and hollering letting out a bunch of yee-haws as we headed for our death. Well, my death, he was already dead.

I began to sing a song by Green Day. "Wake me up when September ends." It always seemed to start in September. I thought back to all those years ago when I first met Maria on September 11, 2001. I died that day, but God wouldn't let me die, he sent me back. Would this be like that once again? Would I die again only to be sent back to fulfill some destiny I had no control over?

I closed my eyes and sang along with Green Day. My ears hurt and my heart was racing so fast I was getting lightheaded. I sat down with my finger firmly pressing on the sand button. It helped the dynamic brakes slow the train. I went around the curve at 60 mph, twice the speed for that curve. The train held the track and slowed some more as I climbed the next grade. Minutes later the train came to a stop at the top of that hill. I ran to turn the air back in and the train dumped its air. Now the damn EOT wanted to work. I lay down on the ground and thanked God I was still alive, and the train hadn't derailed. I lay there until the emergency vehicles got there and took Danny and myself away. Me to my favorite room at the hospital and Danny to the morgue.

The assassin used a lock pick to gain entrance to the back door and effortlessly slid into the house undetected. All this went quickly, and he was inside. His information said that she would be alone, most likely sitting in the parlor at her laptop. His orders were to eliminate her and get out. He had no idea what she had done to deserve to have a hit put out on her, all he cared about was the thrill of the kill and the money that went along with it. A few more years of this and he would be able to retire in luxury on some island in

the Bahamas. He looked forward to that day, so he took every job they gave him.

He was a homicide detective for LA. Never much of a large man, he always had to put up with larger men giving him crap about his size. He had some health issues when he was a child, and it had stunted his growth. Now he was just a bitter man having to look up at people that were always looking down on him. He worked hard at his physical fitness, and some would say he was all muscle. Never one to take lightly in a fight, he often fooled his opponent and would beat down much larger men than himself.

He slid silently down a hallway and found who he was looking for. He also found some people he wasn't looking for. Why was he holding a pistol with a suppressor attached to the muzzle? That was a good question he was going to have to explain to the Mayor and the Police Chief. They were hanging naked by their wrists. She was sitting in a chair reading the Bible.

"I've been waiting for you. I told the boys over there you were coming. They didn't believe me. Have a seat and let's talk. I have so much I want to ask you."

Francis didn't know what to do. He was confounded by his situation. Two important people had just observed him break into this house to do bodily harm to someone. His career was obviously over unless he killed everyone in the room. He felt like he had been set up, but who would have done that? The girl wanted to talk, and she sure was dressed to excite. He leerily sat down in a straight back chair and let her talk.

"Your career is over. I guess you've already figured that out." She said cheerily.

"I have a deal for you, take it or leave it. You can take this needle and stick it in your arm, and I will take care of you and make sure that no harm comes to you, or you try to kill all of us and make a getaway which will fail and I will kill you. You may think you have the drop on me, but I've been waiting for you. Take a good look around. Danger lurks in every corner, just ask these two fellows." She pointed over his shoulder at mayor Frasier and the Police Chief.

Francis had some decisions to make. He knew there was no way he would voluntarily stick anything into his arm. He also could see that she had gotten the drop on two very capable men. He searched the room to see if he could find anything that might have given her an advantage over these guys. All he could see was two very large mounds on her chest that were so inviting along with a sexy pair of legs incased in fishnet stockings that were distracting his attention away from what he was supposed to be looking for. Her eyes were pulling him in like he was being hypnotized, her sexy red lips pursed and called him in to dine on her sweet flesh. She stood up and one breast popped out of its confines. He watched her quickly stuff it back in place. Francis was distracted, he had taken too long to decide, so the decision was made for him.

Lightning fast, she closed the distance between them in an instant plunging the syringe she had hidden in her other hand into his neck. He got off a shot, but it harmlessly hit the wall behind her. The spider toxin she used was fast and effective. It took an extreme effort to move his limbs within seconds of the toxin flowing through his veins. He would be this way for about four hours. She picked up her phone and dialed Leon. It would take the two of them to get the next part of her plan accomplished. Francis' days of being a man had come to an end. How dare they send such a little guy to kill her. She looked at him and guessed they were close to the same height and size.

"Would you gentleman like to watch what happens next, or would you like me to blindfold you?"

Neither of them was able to speak, their mouths stuffed with ball gags. Their eyes showed fear, which was what she wanted. So, she let them watch. Francis could still speak, just not move a muscle in his body. He begged for mercy. Something he would not have shown her if he had gotten the drop on her.

She stripped him naked in front of them. Francis had a goatee and his hair was slicked back and about shoulder length. The facial hair had to go, which she quickly removed with some shaving cream and a straight edged razor. About the time she had accomplished that, Leon showed up. It was lotion time, and every inch of Francis was covered leaving his eyebrows and

hair untouched. Leon dragged him into the shower fifteen minutes later and when he returned, Francis was hairless and smooth.

"Help me with the red Merry Widow. I think it might just fit the little guy," Maria asked Leon

"Do you really want to do this?" he asked.

"You're right. I forgot one thing before we put this on him," she said as she pulled Francis over the chair with his butt sticking up in the air.

"When I was young, my father would send me to upstate New York to spend time with my grandparents. My grandfather owned a pig farm. I had the pleasure of being a slave laborer every summer. When I first got there every year, he would have me catch the piglets and bring the male ones to him to castrate. The final year I was there he was sick and dying, so he taught me how to do it. I was quite proficient at it. Let me show you." Maria lifted Francis' butt in the air and with the straight edged razor; while listening to Francis beg her not to do it, she removed his testicles.

"He asked to keep them, go get me a sandwich bag from the kitchen. I'll save them for him." While Leon was gone, she splashed plenty of alcohol over the cut to keep it from getting infected. He howled and cried but she didn't care. The guy was a pig and got what pigs deserved. Shortly afterward, he was bandaged up and ready to be dressed.

They worked the corset up and over his body and tied it up nice and tight. Leon found some breast forms in the closet that he added to give Francis something up top. Maria pointed at the vanity.

"Time to try out the new henna makeup I made up and see if it works like I think it will work. You do his makeup. I'm going to do his nails."

They sat him up in the chair and used the Mayors and Police Chiefs belts to secure him in the chair so that he didn't fall over. Maria ran out to the kitchen and came back with an ice cube and a sewing needle.

"It's so hard to find clip on earrings these days," she said as she proceeded to double pierce both his earlobes. Once that was accomplished, she went to work with the manicure and pedicure. Leon finished just about the same time as she did.

Francis looked like a pretty male in drag. It was just the look she wanted for him. She looked over at Leon and begged the question.

“You going to give him to your boys? Let them have a field day with him, or should I be using different pronouns. Show her what a sperm bank is. Make her squeal like a pig. He lost the right to be a man the minute he entered this house to kill me.”

“I’ll see what I can do. How long does the spider toxin take to wear off?” he asked.

“You have a couple more hours. Here, I think these might fit her big feet.” Maria handed him a pair of open-toed pumps with a three-inch heel. Leon put Francis over his shoulder and carried him out to her car. It was like trying to carry a scarecrow. Francis had no control over his muscles.

“Good luck. Make her wish she were dead, maybe have her make you some money. I know your girls will take good care of her. Remember she still is dangerous, so be careful and keep her under your thumb.” Maria gave Leon a kiss on the cheek and returned inside to free her two captives.

As she walked into the house, she turned and saw the look on Leon’s face. She tried to put herself inside of his head and see what he was thinking. These were the thoughts that came back to her.

I think I might’ve bitten off more than I can chew. This is a dangerous game were playing indeed. Playing with an assassin was something only a crazy person would do, and at this moment, I feel like I might need some additional appointments with my psychiatrist, I know Maria is long overdue for her sessions.

She smiled as she thought about it, how nice it was to keep everyone on their toes, ready for anything that might come their way. The fact they thought she might be crazy wasn’t lost on her. She had to remember to schedule an appointment soon in case things got out of hand and she needed something to fall back on. For now, there were bigger fish to fry, starting with the mayor and the police chief.

“Did we learn anything today gentlemen?” she inquired as she released them from their bonds.

Each of them tried to stretch out their shoulders while rubbing their wrist. The mayor asked her why Leon kept calling her Maria.

“It’s what they call me when I dress up and play these stupid games with you boys. I’m all done doing this, please don’t come back here and ask me to do these things ever again. I seem to lose control and do crazy things.” Both men agreed that they would never come back, then asked if she was serious about the effects of what she had injected them with. Somehow that made Maria laugh, they would find out soon enough. Exhausted, she went to bed and slept like a newborn baby, waking every couple of hours crying her eyes out.

CHAPTER NINE

The train suddenly braked hard. Deke heard what sounded like a release of air hiss out in a series of bursts. This caused the train to stop suddenly, causing the sliding door to slam shut. Except for the slit in the ceiling, he was enveloped in darkness. Making his way in the dim light to the door, tripping several times over debris on the floor, he tried with all his might to get the door open. It was stuck shut, trapping him just as surely as his jail cell. Only now he had no food or water. The thoughts of being trapped in this boxcar for days on end caused Deke to panic and scream for help. He banged on the side of the car hoping someone would hear. Nobody came to his rescue.

He peered at the sky and asked Jesus if this was his plan. For him to die like a caged rat, trapped inside this dark and cold cage. Deke sat crossed legged on the floor in front of the door pleading and praying with the Lord to release him and set him free. The devil sat next to him and told him he was not alone. This made Deke want to get out even more.

Deke banged and pleaded and cried. He told God that he would do what was needed and said he surrendered to whatever was his will. Crying and feeling totally defeated, he began to sing. His voice sounded terrific with the acoustics inside the boxcar. He sang a song he had heard by Hillsong Worship at a concert called "I Surrender." It was a time when they would let him into those venues before he got all the face tattoos and piercings. To be able to go back in time before he destroyed his body with all the body art he had gotten and forever condemned him to his fate. His body barely had a spot that wasn't covered with a tattoo. Deke sang and prayed and within a few minutes after he became silent, the train lurched forward, and the door slid back open.

Deke didn't waste any time exiting the boxcar and scrambled away from the tracks. He looked about and got a sense of where he was at. This side of the track looked like deep woods and swamp. Once the train had cleared, he

was able to see the other side was an open field with the sun setting in the background. The temperature was quickly dropping, and his orange coveralls were not heavy enough to block the cold and keep him warm. He would have to seek shelter.

Looking across the field, he saw an elevated deer stand that was as big as a treehouse. The field was planted with peanuts that looked about ready for harvest. He stood out like a sore thumb in these coveralls. The first thing he needed to do was get some clothing that didn't scream *escaped convict*. He was in the middle of nowhere, so that wasn't going to happen today. Best he concentrated on staying warm and finding shelter for tonight, dealing with the clothing problem in the morning.

The deer stand was on the far side of the field facing another wooded area. It took what felt like forever to cross the field. Thankfully hunting season with guns was still a few weeks away. It would be hard to mistake him for a deer; he was wearing the right color he chuckled to himself.

The stand had a ladder that led to a back door. It looked like it had canvas windows that could be rolled up and used to shoot through when someone manned the stand. He climbed the ladder and opened the door to find he was not alone. A heavily tattooed man sat against the far wall with a crossbow in his lap, an unlit cigarette dangling from his lips and an open beer can in his hands. His head was shaved and tattooed just like Deke's head was. The man was clearly as big as he was, might just be the right size Deke thought to himself. The guy was snoring lightly, probably passed out from too much alcohol consumption. Somebody probably should've explained to the man that hunting and drinking didn't go in the same sentence.

The crossbow was ready for action, an arrow loaded and waiting to be fired. Deke gently reached down and removed the arrow and held it hidden in his hands. He stood back up and kicked the guy's foot, waking him from his slumber. The man opened his eyes, and Deke could see the instant fear in his expression. The crossbow came up and the man fired without warning. It was just as Deke had planned. He moved his hand fast in front of himself like he had just caught the arrow. A **sleight-of-hand trick**. The fool bought it hook, line and sinker.

The man stuttered and begged for his life. Deke had no reason to kill the man yet. He just wanted his clothes. He made the man a deal. He would let him live another day in exchange for his clothes. The man was standing in front of him stark naked within the next minute. He didn't have as many tats as Deke had, but from what Deke could see, he wasn't far behind. This was just too perfect. He threw his prison garb at the man, told him to put it on.

Everything was going perfectly until the devil decided to come along. The devil turned out to be the idiot's father. Anything to ruin a perfect day, like rain on your wedding day or a blizzard on Thanksgiving Day. Deke still remembered to give thanks, and then he went to battle.

The young adult couldn't keep his big mouth shut when the four-wheeler pulled up with a buck strapped down on the hood. The father was excited; he had bagged a beauty and wanted to show it off to his useless son. It might have been bow season, that didn't mean the kids old man wasn't packing some fire power. The warning the guy shouted out, Deke found out his name was Cody, was all the old man needed to draw his weapon. Deke was trapped in an elevated stand ten feet in the air looking down on an armed man. The father, who was heavily bearded and wearing camo like his son, was circling the stand looking for a way to get off a good shot.

"Cody. You stay down. I'm going to fill this son of a bitch with lead." The old man screamed up to his son.

Deke figured the old man had a screw loose or just didn't care much for his son when the first bullet whizzed through the deer stand, followed by another.

"You're going to kill your son you stupid idiot." Deke yelled down. That was followed by two more shots. This time one found its mark. The orange overalls were getting bloody. The kid had taken one to the leg. It was time to form a plan. He pulled the idiot over to him and whispered in his ear.

"Your father is going to get us both killed unless you listen very closely to what I'm about to say. If you don't do it, well, then I'll see you in Hell." Deke whispered in his ear.

Cody yelled down to his father, "You got him dad, shot him right in the head. Nice shot. I'm coming down."

Deke grabbed the crossbow and loaded in the arrow. He opened the door and prayed this was going to work. He hid his face from view and backed down the ladder holding the crossbow in one hand and inching toward the ground. The father was excited until he saw it wasn't his son standing in front of him. Deke smiled, "Hi dad, did you miss me?" Deke pulled the trigger and sent the arrow on its way. The arrow packed so much power it continued straight through the man's heart and into the field.

"I would say you did, although I think I didn't miss you." The old man stood for just a moment with his eyes wide open and his heart beating its last beats. He staggered and fell into Deke's waiting arms. "Your son told me he loves you to and wanted me to thank you for putting a bullet into his leg. He'll live; more than I can say for you." Deke let the old fool drop to the ground.

Deke raced back up the ladder and pulled the younger fool out of the deer stand and down the ladder. If he didn't hurry, the kid was going to bleed out. He removed the old man's belt and cinched the wounded leg as tight as he could get it. He put the young man on the four-wheeler and told him to go and get some help. He told the guy if he wanted to live, he had better hurry.

Deke watched him ride away. The man knew this area better than he did, or so he hoped. He didn't want to see the young man die; the kid reminded him a lot of himself. He was hoping the cops felt the same way.

Another train was coming; it was traveling at a slow rate of speed. He ran as fast as he could across the field getting there just as the last few cars were passing by. He pulled himself up onto a covered hopper that had a platform where he could wedge his body into. This train was heading north. He knew he was heading in the right direction now. God had provided everything he needed. Clothing, transportation and food. He found a sandwich in the pocket of the camouflaged coat the father had provided for him. He bit into it and smiled. Joey was going to be so happy to see him when he arrived.

CHAPTER TWENTY -FIVE

R.J. Ted woke to the smell of cheap perfume and hair brushing softly against his face. His eyes sprang wide open, in a panic, he slowly untangled himself from between the two women. He tried to get his bearings to figure out where he was. Slowly things began to come to him. He was in the apartment of a parishioner, a young lady that he had promised to take care of her cat while keeping an eye on her place. The cat hadn't been fed yesterday, and he thought he might have forgotten the day before as well.

He grabbed his vape and took a long pull from it. Then he took another and began the search for the cat. Both women were still alive, so at least that was a plus, now he could only hope the cat hadn't starved to death.

He found the cat sitting beside its food dish. Opening the cabinet, he found some food and filled the cat's dishes with water, dry and soft food. The cat was pure white, as white as snow. The eyes seemed funny. One was blue and the other was yellow. It stared at him with a disgusted look in its multi-colored eyes.

"Yes, I know I've let you down. Please forgive me and give me another chance." R.J. found himself begging the cat to forgive him. He had yet another thing he needed to ask for forgiveness from. After feeding the cat he went into the living room and turned the television on. The news channel reported the story of what had taken place while he was off on another drunken stupor.

The report from the prison about the murder of Jenna's father made him sit up and take notice. The story of a cop being hit in the foot by a stray bullet didn't even register as he contemplated what his next move was going to be. As he pondered about the direction he should take, a huge clap of thunder shook the whole apartment, and then the lights went out. The cat found him, claws and all. It had forgiven him and now just wanted his protection. If only

he could be protected from it. The fresh claw marks on his leg and arm were a small price to pay for forgiveness. He gently scratched the animal behind the ears as it purred and made itself comfortable on his lap.

Pulling out his phone, he called the church and listened to his voice messages. Even though it was past midnight, he knew that some of the people he associated with hadn't even gone to bed tonight. It was now Saturday morning. They probably had been up partying all night. He might find them drunk but awake. He knew they would be enjoying themselves, it was a way of life for some of these men.

"Jerome, I need you to get some of the guys together. Yes, we can play basketball on Tuesday like always. I need a favor."

He gave Jerome the address where he was staying. Hanging up the phone he went back into the bedroom to rouse the ladies. Their naked bodies sure did look good, but he had more pressing things to contend with at this moment. Like getting these girls to safety. He had a place in mind. The man owed him a favor, and until he could get these girls out of town, a favor was going to be repaid. Joey was not going to be happy with the arrangement, but that was just too bad.

Half an hour later, the sound of rap music filled the morning air. R.J. had the girls dressed and he rushed them out to the car. The wheels on the car appeared to still be moving but the car was indeed stopped. Looking perplexed, Jerome laughed at R.J. and told him he had just had them installed. He had wanted to get the ones that lit up, but he was a little short on funds and had to go with the cheaper version. R.J. thought the young man could have found something better to waste his money on, but to each their own. His only thought was getting the girls to a safe place. If the car got them there safely, he was fine with whatever they drove up in.

They gave him a ride back to the bar to retrieve his truck. Bid him farewell and drove off to Hopkins' place of residence. He had told his crew that if Joey wasn't there, that the townhouse adjacent to Joey's had the key and that person was someone who enjoyed partying all night on the weekends. It was the one thing Joey hated about his neighbor. The all-nighters, but the kid was the only son of the police chief, so he could do nothing wrong.

It was going to be a busy day. R.J. could feel it already. He stopped by the church, grabbed a few items he would need, and rushed off heading south toward Jarratt. Jenna needed his counsel. Peter wanted to talk to him anyway.

He would be strong for her. Now if he could only find someone to be strong for him. The storm was still raging, lightning lighting up the sky before him and rain making it nearly impossible to drive. It was coming down so hard he had to pull off the highway and sit in a parking lot until the worst of it had passed by. The radio was on and The Afters were singing a song called, "Light Up the Sky." He listened to the lyrics and the words resonated with him. He knew he was not alone in this fight. He gave himself a pep talk, put the truck back in drive, and continued his trip with destiny. He could have turned back at any time, but that was not in the cards. God has a plan for us all; R.J. was about to fulfill his.

Adam Bennett sat in the bar with Anna beside him sipping on a margarita. Adam's glass had long been empty, and he hadn't dared order another, for he knew where that would lead. His latest fall off the wagon had better be a short one he thought, for he had much that needed to be done. He told himself he needed to have his wits about him to be able to accomplish all that needed to be done.

Anna was a wild card. This was the first time he had dealt with her personally. Her husband was Urstin Trevosky, a piece of shit as far as he was concerned. Anna on the other hand seemed to be out of her element with this guy. This was his business, putting the right people into the right parts. A movie could lose so much and end up a flop with the wrong actor in a critical role. Anna was the wrong actor in a critical role. Whoever placed her into this position was a fool. He had an idea who that fool was, but she would never admit to anything. That would completely blow her cover, and since he was supposedly one of the bad guys, he could never get her to admit anything without him first admitting his role. It was a deadly game he was playing. He decided to play it coy, never admitting to what he was up to while trying to get her to admit at least something.

“Anna, you know what business I’m in. I can see things that normal people fail to see. I know when a part needs a certain actor or actress to play it, I sign them up for it, and then I make it work. It’s like magic, that is the reason I’ve had such a successful career. I look at you and I see someone that is playing a part. It was never meant for you, so to me, it is failing. To others it might be working, but eventually you will be found out because the part doesn’t work for you. Do you understand what I’m saying to you?”

Anna stared at him for a full minute before responding. Maybe she was gathering her thoughts and trying to tread carefully through a mine field Adam had just set up for her, or maybe there was another reason for her pause.

“Before I indulge in your fantasy world of make-believe, let me preface this by saying that you have no idea what I’m capable of doing. I could smash this glass in a second and slice your throat wide open if I am so inclined. That being said, I’m not going to do that, unless you push your little theory of me being a spy or a special agent. My husband would kill me without a second thought if he even suspected me of being someone that I’m not. So, for your safety and mine, please purged those thoughts from your mind and let me finish my drink before you upset my stomach.”

Adam watched her finish her drink in one final swallow, get up and head for the door. He sprinted after her. She was his ride home after all. It was as much of an admission as she was ever going to give him. He still hadn’t confessed his involvement in anything that had gone wrong in Urstin’s life in the last month, which was increasing as each day passed. Adam knew he must stop the plan that was in place for Sunday evening. Urstin’s plan would kill thousands and earn him millions in clean cash. No need to wash dirty money when it appeared to have been earned in the American way of free trading and commerce. Just because you knew it was coming and might even have arranged for it to happen, didn’t mean it wasn’t earned free and clear, just like Helen Harrison’s dear old dad did back on September 11, 2001.

Helen’s father had put together this elaborate plan using fanatic Muslims along with a sheikh from Saudi Arabia to plan an attack on US soil. The planned worked flawlessly and with some gentle pushing from the elder Harrison on the President of the United States, he made billions more in the war effort. All that dirty money was earned from the nefarious things he had

arranged. It was all earned legitimately as far as anyone was concerned, but Adam knew the truth. Now it was about to happen a second time, but Adam was going to make sure it failed. Maria's manuscript had foretold it all. There were few people that knew the full plan, Adam being one of them. When he had read the script, he nearly had a cow. That was when he devised the plan that was in full motion now. If anyone were to discover that it was him that had foiled their plans, his imminent demise was assured.

The ride back to his place was an easy half hour, Anna made it in twelve minutes. Once Adam was out of the car and his heart rate was close to normal once again, did he proceed to the front door. Leon was waiting for him. Tragedy had struck back in Virginia. Also, he thought they might have been fooled once again. He led Adam to the couch where a teary-eyed Scarlett sat nervously. She was in tears because she had been caught. Leon had used his little secret for being able to figure out who was who. The girls had made the switch while duking it out in the bedroom. Scarlett was with Joey, and Maria was here on the couch with them. That wouldn't have been such a bad thing except for one small detail. What was to take place on the plane would've been second nature for Maria, but for Scarlett, this would push her to new heights Adam was sure she wouldn't be able to attain.

Adam had to be restrained by Leon. His temper had gotten the best of him.

"Why, why did you think this was such a good idea? Do you have any idea how many people could die if Joey doesn't stop this from happening?" Adam spat as he shouted in utter despair.

"I do, that is why I sent her. You have no idea how jealous Jacob is. If he thinks that Joey was with me, he might cause Joey to die in a fiery crash. He would be more inclined to help Joey if he knew it was her with him. I knew you would never let her go in my place, so we switched. It was a calculated risk, one that I'm comfortable with." Maria broke down and sobbed.

Adam sat down beside her and took her hand in his. He told her he understood. This event was too big to mess up, he explained. He gently let her know that in the future he would like to be consulted before something like this took place again.

"I hope you're right my dear. Thousands of lives are at stake here. I have no doubt about Joey's capabilities, Scarlett on the other hand is nothing like you. She will hesitate when the time comes. That might just be enough time for them to counter whatever is going to take place up there on that plane. As for Jacob, I think you explained he can see into the future. Isn't he supposed to protect Joey? Won't he keep Joey from harm?" Adam questioned her.

Maria laughed out loud.

"Jacob is not a big fan of Joey. You see, Joey has everything Jacob always wanted. He brought Scarlett in so that Joey wouldn't have me. The problem is that I want Joey as much as she does. We switch a lot so that Jacob thinks I'm her and I can have some time with him without Jacob wrecking the house. I know how big this is Adam, that is why I felt she should be the one to go to war with Joey on the plane. I made sure he knew it was her. Now all we've got to do is wait and see how this all turns out tomorrow night." Maria stated self-assured.

Adam stood up and headed for his bedroom. Phone in hand, he ordered up his private jet. It was time to alter the script once again. He had no plans on being on the plane. It would've been a death sentence either way. He had a man he wanted on that plane just in case. One who could fly a big jumbo jet. In fact, the man he had in mind could fly any type of aircraft. The problem with his solution was the fact that the person he needed in Kansas City was in Colorado at that moment. Time was of the essence. Adam had a good idea his phones had been tapped, so calling was out of the question, this had to be an in-person visit. He would fly to Denver, get Billy on the plane with him, and then send him on that flight of doom on Sunday evening. The only question he had lingering in his mind was this, why did he need this pilot on the plane on Sunday night. The answer was obvious. The pilot and co-pilot were going to be incapacitated, somebody needed to fly the damn plane. He didn't want to take the chance on Joey being able to do it. Billy was an outstanding character. The man thought he was flying legitimate cargo from Denver to Baltimore once a week. He had no clue he was being used by a pharmaceutical company to supply the east coast with enough heroin to make many people rich. Billy knew it was drugs, but not the illegal kind.

Billy had been doing it long enough so that if someone wanted to compromise him now, he would have no choice but to do their bidding. It was another cog in the wheel Adam was about to remove. He just had to break it to the man gently. Adam scratched his head and pondered to himself; how do you tell a man that he is royally fucked? He would have to think about it on the way to Denver.

Leon and Maria had decided to join him, leaving Consuela back at his house to tend to Katrina. Adam was tired and decided to make himself comfortable for the short flight. Even a short nap would be better than no sleep at all. Closing his eyes, he began to dream almost immediately. His wife was there to meet him. She was not pleased with his performance and told him so.

"Nag, nag, nag," he heard himself mumble. The others on the plane heard him as well. He opened his eyes to see Maria and Leon smile as he gazed at them.

"I was having a bad dream, please excuse me." Adam blurted out.

"I have them as well." Maria giggled.

Leon was distracted by something on his laptop.

"She's headed for Hollywood boulevard."

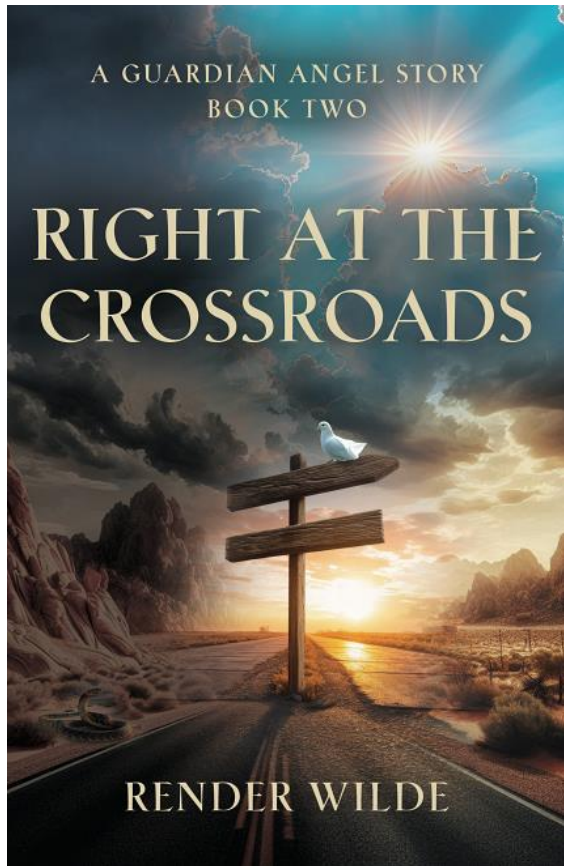
Adam hadn't fallen back to sleep yet. He piped in.

"She's going after the mayor now. Franny has been hiding out with Urstin's private accountant after you had her kill Jersey Rock star. I have no doubt that either they killed the accountant, or Franny did it to save herself. With what Urstin had planned for Sunday, there was no way the accountant was going to make it out of that penthouse alive. I didn't think Franny was getting out of there alive either." Adam said nonchalantly as he drifted back to sleep.

Maria and Leon stared at each other as if this revelation was earth-shattering. The gall of this man to willingly sacrifice others in his little game of power and deceit.

“We must remember the end game here. When Jesus went to the cross to save our souls, imagine what the people must have thought of God. The brutality of it all, but in the end, it was what saved us all. In a way, this is what Adam is doing. He is trying to save us all, we just can’t see it at this moment, but later down the road, we’ll see that what he did was for the greater good.” Leon explained as he patted Maria’s hand trying to calm her.

“All I see is someone who will do anything he can to maintain his place on top of the pedestal he has placed himself upon. Until I see something different, that is what I’m going to believe. You believe what you want, I don’t trust the man as far as I can throw him.” Maria stated agitatedly.



A new manuscript has been given to Hollywood producer Adam Bennett. The first one was very prophetic, this one has time sensitive written on the envelope it came in. A choice needs to be made, a crossroad is ahead and little time remains.

**Right at the Crossroads:
A Guardian Angel Story - Book Two**
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