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## **THE CHRYSALIS BOOK I: The Fall of the Seraphim**

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“The Chrysalis”

Book I

The Fall of the

Seraphim

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## II

As the attaché for the Swiss consulate in Miami, Emil Sturgen was used to handling all manner of services and requests for Swiss citizens and dignitaries coming into Miami. He had always born some passive resentment for many of the menial tasks that one with his qualifications was called upon to do in the diplomatic service. Today, as he stood on the isolated and seldom-used tarmac at Miami International Airport at 5:30 a. m. watching the impressive Falcon 2000 jet taxi in his direction, his resentment had been largely diminished. It was not because his task at hand was any less menial or mundane, but because he was performing it for one of the most powerful and influential of Swiss corporate citizens. Sturgen was still somewhat bothered by the fact that today he was little more than a glorified messenger, but he knew that the Bundeschweisz Bank of Zurich, or BBZ as it was widely known, knows how to show gratitude to those who serve it well.

The BBZ is the oldest and most stable of the Swiss banking institutions, literally tracing its foundations to the time of the Crusades. Today it is a multi-national conglomerate, with interests in industries such as biomedical research, logistics, weapons manufacturing, and satellite design and construction just to name a few. Moreover, the bank was run in the old traditions of loyalty, central control, absolute secrecy and invisibility for its clients. The BBZ has no satellite branches or franchises nor does it even have a website or conduct any other advertising whatsoever other than word of mouth. Simply put, it is a banking institution for those in the highest echelons of power and wealth, all others are not invited.

Sturgen's instructions were given to him very specifically via telephone call directly to him by his superior, the Swiss Ambassador to the United States, Hans Gruber approximately twelve hours before. The instructions were simple: "I am forwarding you the diplomatic credentials and flight information for a new Consulate worker for Miami. You are to make arrangements to meet the plane at a preferably isolated area in Miami International Airport. Go and pick her up in a van or truck with an enclosed cargo area that can carry a six foot long luggage bag. Clear her with the appropriate personnel and see that she is not delayed in any way or that her diplomatic luggage is not handled by anyone or searched. Do you understand, Emil?"

"Yes, of course I do, Sir," incredulously responded Sturgen.

"Oh Emil," the Ambassador continued, "Ms. Tessa Bianci has in the past worked in the security division of the BBZ."

Sturgen remembered knowing exactly what the Ambassador had meant by that last phrase. The "traditional" operations of the BBZ were known to include force where necessary. The "diplomat" Sturgen was helping to bring in to the country in the morning would more likely than not be some sort of enforcer or assassin, and either way extremely dangerous. Sturgen knew that the less he knew about any of it, the better.

As he leaned against the white van he arrived in as instructed, Sturgen saw the small jet begin to turn in his direction as it approached from approximately fifty yards away. Sturgen motioned to the plane, more out of boredom than anything else, to come in his direction which it clearly had already been doing. As the private and unmarked mid-sized jet crept slowly in his direction, he glanced at his reflection in the side mirror of the van. After a cursory glance

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in the mirror, the forty year old Swiss diplomat combs his beard with his fingers and gently pats his hair when, out of his peripheral vision, he saw what must be a white U.S. government sedan arrive and park just in front of the van.

Sturgen began to take a few steps in the direction of the vehicle when he saw two armed men wearing two different uniforms step out of the car and walk in his direction. One of them, a very tall, pale fellow of at least six and one half feet tall with a very short, cropped blonde hair cut was wearing a white uniform shirt with a badge on the left lapel with blue uniform pants. The other, a much shorter, black man also wore a white shirt adorned with a badge but he had black pants. The two approached Sturgen with hands extended and the black officer began, “Good morning, sir. I am Officer Fred Dukes, I am with the Border patrol, and here next to me is Officer Dwight Stuyvesant of Customs. And you are?”

“My name is Emil Sturgen of the Swiss consulate,” the diplomat retorted in an almost automatic tone of voice as he reached into his coat pocket, pulls out his wallet and continue, “Here are my credentials.”

“Mr. Sturgen,” Stuyvesant repeated as he reviewed Sturgen’s identification. “Your identification is in order. Now tell me. Can you explain the situation with this plane that is arriving, this is highly irregular and it has more than a few people in different levels of security here at the airport pretty antsy to be sure.

Just as Stuyvesant finished his question, the plane squealed to a stop not fifty feet from where the three men were standing. Sturgen, relieved to know that the pilot had been given prior orders to not open the doors or allow access to anyone without Sturgen’s direct approval, responded to Stuyvesant,

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“Sirs, it was my understanding that all of this had been cleared. I provided via fax all of the documentation directly to both of your departments as well as Homeland Security. I received an approval from the airport director for the use of this particular runway. Everything has been cleared I assure you.”

Dukes said, almost needing to look up to make eye contact with both his fellow officer and the diplomat. “Mr. Sturgen, we understand and we acknowledge that all of your documentation was received. We are here to verify and receive the originals which you should have in your possession and ensure that only the person for whom you have documentation disembarks the plane. Once both of those are established, we will not impede you or your arriving diplomat or her papers or luggage in any way as your immunity provides.”

With a slight smile and a look of obvious relief, Sturgen opened the door of the van, reached into his brown leather briefcase on the floor of the front seat and pulled out a small set of papers, numbering twenty pages or so and hands them to Dukes. “You have in your hand all of the necessary documentation for the arrival of Tessa Bianci who is the lone passenger of the plane sitting there. Is she clear to enter the country undisturbed gentlemen?”

“She is,” said Stuyvesant, “now with the paperwork originally handed to Dukes in his hand.

“Very well,” the Swiss muttered as he walked toward the new-looking plane and motioned to the pilot. Sturgen then stood roughly ten feet from the plane door just as it begins to open. The two officers walk over slowly and stood behind the diplomat to peer into the plane and see whomever disembarks.

After a few moments, a young woman stepped out of the plane and onto the stairwell leading to the runway. She was in

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her late twenties, approximately five feet six inches in height, with a very slim yet noticeably athletic build that was well complemented by her perfectly straight black hair which she has gathered in a loose pony tail extending to the middle of her back. Her slightly Asian shaped blue eyes are visible for just a few seconds before she placed her sunglasses over them. She was wearing a simple white blouse with a provocative, short black business skirt with dark panty hose, and high heels. She walked down the stairs flawlessly and with perfect grace despite carrying two pieces of luggage, a leather briefcase in her left hand. In her right, a long tube-like rectangular case of some sort, approximately five feet in length on the long sides and with each small side measuring one foot. The case appeared heavy. Just as the attractive woman reached the bottom of the stairs, Stuyvesant approached her and reached out his hand toward the rectangular bag exclaiming, “May I help you, Mi---“

In the blink of an eye and with calculated precision, Tessa took a step back, removed the case from Stuyvesant’s reach, and, after in one critical instant ascertained that neither of the two uniformed men were a threat, coldly said, “No, you can not,” as she walked past the officers and toward the van where Sturgen had already opened the back cargo doors. She placed the large bag into the back of the van and without a word climbed into the passenger side of the vehicle with her briefcase. Sturgen approached the officers one last time and inquired, “I am sorry for that Officer, she is carrying very sensitive diplomatic documents. Have you visibly verified her identity to match the documentation?”

“We have,” said Dukes.

“Then I wish you good day gentlemen as I have much to do.”

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The Officers rendered their own farewells to Sturgen as he walked away and entered the driver’s side of the van. As he entered the Swiss gentleman catches a purely accidental glance of the woman’s upper thigh that simply emphasizes how truly attractive she was. Sturgen does not forget for one moment, however, who she is and, more importantly, how dangerous he knows she is. He can see that she had removed several files from her briefcase and was reviewing them. He started the engine, put the vehicle in drive and asked, “I have prepared everything as instructed, the warehouse has been equipped with everything you have requested. However, I was not informed as to what sleeping arrangements I could make for you so I took the liberty of making you a reservation at the beautiful Biltmore Hotel in Coral Gables. It is simply the best.”

“I have no doubt that it is,” she said, “but I will be sleeping in the warehouse. Just drive so that we can drop you off. I have much to do.”

“Is there anything else I can help you with,” Sturgen said as he drove the van out of the airport and stopped at a red light.

“In fact there is,” she said, as she held up a picture for Sturgen to review. “My target is this man, tell me anything you know about him.”

The nervous Swiss diplomat looked over a the picture of a good-looking gentleman in a dark suit with a caption that reads, “Francis Tolliver”.

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Tolliver finally arose from bed from a restless night at about 7:30 a.m. Through the years, he had grown accustomed to getting up around that time and had scarcely needed any type of alarm clock or the like. He immediately checked his

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cell phone beside his bed for any messages and, finding none, walked over to his bathroom to wash up.

As he did, Tolliver can physically feel the strain his poor sleeping was having on his body. He entered the bathroom, clumsily switching on the light, and leaned slightly on the front of the sink with very light pressure from his tall, slender frame as he turned on the water. He then grabbed a navy blue towel off of a neat stack of towels, placing it on his shoulder. While trying to shake off his sleep deprivation he routinely goes through his morning ablutions. His haggard face emphasizes to him what he has known for some time that he was much in need of a day off. Tolliver knew, however, that staying home was not an option for him on a busy day like today, and that it was unlikely that his staying home would enable him to sleep anyway. Fortunately, or unfortunately, as Tolliver sometimes feels, he does not have to worry about sickness or old age, so pain and suffering were the only things he needed to concern himself with, and both were things he was accustomed to.

As he shaved, Tolliver made mental note of the fact the first thing he needed to do before 9 a.m. was to deliver the Blume contract to Clive Sykes, his boss, to effectuate the contract on schedule and make it binding. From there, he had a breakfast meeting with Sylvan Crowle, who was as close to a friend as Tolliver had and who happened to be a broker as well, but a bit to the north, in West Palm Beach. Thereafter, he needed to pay a pre-closing visit to a client, Amelia Gomez at Mercy Hospital. Finally, for his final set appointment of the day, Tolliver was having lunch at the “Café on the Floor” in Coral Gables to follow up with a lead he had been working on for a few weeks. Although his final appointment of the day was set for a late lunch, it would be unlikely that his day

would end there, however, as Tolliver knew something always came up.

Upon finishing his morning bathroom routine, Tolliver walked, now with much more energy and purpose than when he first woke up, over to his closet. As he switched on the closet light, he looked into the large 15' by 15' area that was his closet, with three independent suit racks, each holding at least twenty suits, all in dark colors and began his daily selection process. After a few moments of deliberation, Tolliver decided on a charcoal Italian suit and chose the remainder of his attire for the day, including his favorite Bruno Magli shoes, to match the suit. While tightening his Yves Saint Laurent tie, Tolliver heard his cell phone, which was still on his nightstand, ring. With his tie still unfinished, he picked up his phone without checking the caller ID. He now realized it was odd to get a call this early.

Upon hearing the voice on the other line, Tolliver's anxiety was heightened rather than relieved when he heard the voice of Virgil Anselmo on the line. Anselmo, in addition to being a Regulith, a greater daemon from the Fifth Rung, Caina, he was essentially the director of all operations in five states including Florida. He was not only Tolliver's boss he was Sykes' boss too. Therefore, Tolliver knew that now more than ever it was highly irregular for this call to take place and this must be for something monumentally important.

"Um...Mr. Anselmo?" Tolliver asked without needing to.

"Yes. Tolliver, I am in Miami and need to meet with you today, it is of the highest priority" the older man said in his somewhat burly voice.

"Certainly sir. Where and when?" Tolliver asked, knowing that the request was hardly that and Tolliver having conflicting plans would not be an option.

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“4 p.m. Café Van Newsie on South Beach. You know it I presume?” Anselmo asked while knowing of Tolliver’s reputation and thereby the answer to his question.

“Yes sir, I do. I shall see you there,” Tolliver said more from instinct than anything else. After hesitating briefly, he added, “If I may sir, this is highly irregular. Is there a reason this matter is not going through Sykes or through the chain of command in general? Shall I inform Sykes or bring him with me?”

“No,” Anselmo said in an obviously agitated tone.

“This matter is to be discussed with absolutely no one. No one is to know that I am in town or even that you have a meeting at 4. Is this clear?”

“Yes, of course sir!”, Tolliver replied almost sheepishly before hearing the other end hang up.

He called down to the Valet to bring his car forward, then Tolliver quickly finished adjusting his tie and otherwise gathering himself and his belongings for the day ahead. As he walked toward his front door, Tolliver stopped for a moment to glance at a black crow that had been perched on his window sill for the past few minutes, murmuring to himself something about wanting to fly away too. As he opened his door and walked out of the room he says to himself, “Yup, it’s going to be a long day.”

Outside, on the window sill, Carmilla can only smile inwardly as she thinks to herself, “You have no idea.

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