

After Dr. Sydney Caldwell discovers a powerful new energy, associates team up with terrorists to steal her discoveries so they can dominate the world. Now she must stop them before they misuse this energy and destroy the planet. But, she is not alone. Her friend, Jonathan, and intergalactic friends arrive with otherworldly technology to assist her. This action-packed, high-adrenalin Sci-Fi adventure will propel you across Russia, the U.S.A., Canada, the Bahamas and England.

## **Never Regret Tomorrow**

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# Never Regret Tomorrow

**THE OMEGA CHRONICLES**

**BOOK ONE**

a high-adrenalin action  
sci-fi adventure

**G. Paul Grondin**



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# 1

## **LATE SPRING 2020**

Dressed in a khaki flight suit, Gryphon sat in the double cockpit of the space pod, known as the Star-Thunderbolt. At just over six feet, he appeared to be in his mid to late thirties, but he was much older as measured in Earth years—dark hair, angular human facial features, deep blue piercing eyes, broad shoulders and muscular body. A kaleidoscope of colors streamed by the Star-Thunderbolt mutating their textures in vibrant flashes. Up ahead at the end of the alpha-omega corridor or wormhole, a circular purple-black plasma door pulsated.

He relaxed in the leather command chair perfectly contoured for his body to eliminate mental fatigue and body stress. Both sides of the interior cockpit were identical. Directly in front of Gryphon, data flooded across the three heads-up monitors. The image of our solar system dominated the center screen labeled HELIOS STAR SYSTEM.

Gryphon's left hand rested on a crystal dome. Its inner luminosity changed through a spectrum of blue, green and yellow. The tips of his nimble fingers touched five crystal rods—navigational controls. His index finger tapped twice followed by his ring finger.

At the bottom of the right monitor, OMEGA GATE ALERT flashed summoning his attention. He ignored the keyboard deciding not to use the Voice Recognition and Activation systems. Telepathic messages flashed from his agile mind to the cognitive receptors in the control panel. OMEGA GATE ALERT was replaced with OMEGA GATE COUNTDOWN — ENGAGED — 10 — 9 — 8...

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The plasma gate grew closer with each passing second.

Momentary darkness enveloped the Star-Thunderbolt as it pierced through the plasma gate. The gate's turbulent translucent surface returned to normal and vanished.

The Star-Thunderbolt was the size of an over-the-road tractor trailer—about seventy-five feet in length with a contoured twin bubble cockpit. It was nine feet at its widest point and shaped like a giant silver-colored almond.

The Star-Thunderbolt turned in a wide sweeping arc. Our welcoming solar system appeared in the far distance with the asteroid belt floating between Mars and Jupiter.

The image of our HELIOS STAR SYSTEM on the center heads-up monitor was replaced with an image of Earth, although the planet was labeled TARA, which was its galactic name. Again Gryphon's fingertips tapped on the crystal rods. With extreme acceleration the Star-Thunderbolt hurled itself toward Tara.

Knowing the advancements in Tara's radar technology in recent years Gryphon engaged the impenetrable cloak of invisibility—absolute stealth—around the Star-Thunderbolt as it entered the planet's atmosphere. There were no friction, no heat, no flaming tail of fire as Tara became larger and larger.

The Star-Thunderbolt slowed for a picture postcard view of the aircraft carrier USS Harry Truman floating in the dazzling blue waters of the Arabian Sea. The F/A-18F Super Hornet roared off the flight deck, dipped, caught air and soared by the invisible Star-Thunderbolt. Gryphon smiled at the pilots' high-tech adrenalin rush knowing a new super-technology would eventually be offered to the main branches of the US military.

An image of the town of Baymak, Russia, with its population of 17,000 and known for its gold mines in the Ural Basin appeared on the center heads-up monitor. His thumb slipped off the crystal rod and tapped the luminous orb as he

continued to send telepathic commands to the navigational systems.

“Command Base Bahamas, this is ST One-Two-One,” spoke Gryphon to the heads-up monitors. “Come in over—frequency delta, theta—nine-six-one.”

“This is C-B-B,” said Mikaela’s formal voice. “Copy that ST One-Two-One. Your frequency is secured.” Her attractive voice relaxed into informality. “How was the trip from the Dog Star Sirius?”

“Uneventful,” responded Gryphon. “Just the way I like it. Am I on schedule?”

“The experiment has been pushed up to ten-zero-zero C-B-B time. It’s now zero-nine-o-five Zulu, mark. I hope you’re feeling OK.”

Gryphon shut his mind to the painful memory of his gorgeous pregnant wife and two children. He sensed the emotional compassion of Mikaela’s loving heart concerning the tragic loss of his family.

“Mikaela, what are the probabilities?”

“Ninety-nine-point-nine percent. It will be a total disaster.”

“Intercession capabilities?”

“I’ve run the numbers many times.” Her voice sounded as if she was in the cockpit. “Don’t even worry about the experimental site. But you shouldn’t have a problem accessing the north side of Baymak, Russia.”

“Copy that. Anything new to report from living among the Tarians?”

“It’s still primitive, but the variety of emotions is very complex and interesting. Actually, there’s never a dull moment. I still can’t believe how big sports are here. And I still don’t understand modern music.”

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“You either like it or you don’t,” said Gryphon. “I don’t think there’s a middle ground. But Beethoven’s interesting. Oh, your mother sends her regards.”

“I talked to Suryal last night, so I’m up to date. I’ll see you later today.”

“Copy that,” said Gryphon. “I’m on my way to Russia. Keep this frequency open and secured.”

“I have programmed it as a Standard One Relay,” said Michaela. “The technology is somewhat primitive here, but you know that. May you pass every test. Signing off.”

Under the intense Arabic sun, Gryphon smiled to himself, tapped his fingers on the crystal rods and the Star-Thunderbolt shot to Mach Five in a few seconds. He felt no G-forces in the cockpit. Soaring north the barren desert of eastern Iran churned into a blur.

It was a beehive of activity in the USS Harry Truman’s Communications and Tactical Warfare (CTW) room full of scopes and the latest electronic equipment. Navy personnel of all ranks studied their monitors and technical data. The latest installation was the large vertical Satellite Imaging Screen (SIS) displaying a 3-D image of the orgon experimental site nestled in the foothills north of the town of Baymak, Russia.

Orgon was a recently discovered energy source as unpredictable as it was powerful. The race to control orgon could be compared to the race to the moon in the 1960’s, except for the resulting disasters during the experimentation to control orgon.

Commander Neely, Mission Coordinator of this top-secret operation, was in his mid-thirties standing at the SIS. A good-looking man at six-two, his light blue eyes flashed to the entrance of the CTW room as Admiral Barrington and General Isaac Icar entered in khaki uniforms.

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“Admiral on deck.”

Before everyone could pull their attention away from the mission at hand, Admiral Barrington said, “As you were. Carry on Commander Neely. We’re here only as observers.”

The Admiral and General were an odd pair, but with the same hard-line military philosophy. At six-three, tall and slender with baby-faced features, the Admiral dwarfed the five-eight tall General with a wide girth, rugged facial features and dark penetrating eyes.

General Icar turned and looked up catching the Admiral’s downward glance.

“Let’s see if the Russians know how to control organ energy,” said General Icar doubtfully.

They shared an enigmatic smile.

In a cloak of absolute stealth, the Star-Thunderbolt soared over the sleepy town of Baymak and the first ridge of foothills continuing to slow as it dropped into the second valley and settled into the green foliage. Gryphon’s section of the cockpit disengaged from the Star-Thunderbolt as a two-seater sidecar racer, nine feet long, extremely streamlined, with a tapered front and rounded rear-end. Its clear domed canopy was already in place over the cockpit. A pulsating vibrant sapphire-blue energy encased the Star-Thunderbolt as an impenetrable auric shield.

The sidecar racer maneuvered at high speed up the second ridge flashing through trees and brush with great dexterity and stopped at the top. The canopy slid open and out stepped Gryphon, Captain of the Galactic Rangers.

He was camouflaged in a hooded cloak of invisibility. Even his footsteps moved in stealth, not leaving any footprints on the ground. He grabbed the super-tech binoculars with attached headphones and hustled to an ideal observation spot near an

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outcropping of rocks and bushes with red berries and overlooking the expansive valley below.

Down in the center of the peaceful clearing, sunlight reflected off the razor wire crowning an electrified double fence. Armed guards in Russian Army uniforms manned four lookout towers. Inside this fenced off area, a large structure the size of an aircraft hangar towered over three smaller buildings. A variety of compact automobiles filled the gravel parking lot.

There were four heavy hitting T90S battle tanks, two menacing AK-50 Black Shark attack helicopters and three deadly-looking V-750 anti-aircraft missiles. This was a very strange array of killing power for a scientific research facility.

In camouflaged gear, a five member Special Forces Delta team dotted the far sloping side. Captain Weber, Delta Force Team Leader, with a fed issued haircut, looked into his high-tech binoculars focusing on the large building. His communications field man typed on a laptop with a small concave disc antenna that was connected to the Captain's binoculars by a computer cable.

Commander Neely's voiced filtered through Captain Weber's headphones, "This is the Birdhouse to Hawk One, come in, over."

"This is Hawk One," responded Captain Weber. "We are in position, over."

Back in the CTW room aboard the USS Harry Truman, Commander Neely standing at the SIS said, "Hawk One, give us Surface Penetration Imaging on the main target, over."

Under the anticipatory glare of General Icar everyone heard Captain Weber's response, "Roger that. Standby Birdhouse."

With Captain Weber's binocular vision targeting the hangar, the images became a sharper zoom-in focus as it penetrated the walls of the building revealing vague outlines of personnel and scientific equipment.

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Across the valley, Gryphon aimed his super-tech binoculars at the hangar. The internal images were crystal clear—like watching a big screen HD TV. In his earphones, Gryphon heard filtered voices speaking the harsh tones of the Russian language.

Without warning, Russian personnel and scientific equipment were thrown across the hangar and slammed against the walls! There was no visible explosion, only a shockwave that had emanated from the orgon apparatus in the center of the hangar. Then they were sucked back to the center. Death invaded the immediate area like an unwanted intruder.

Gryphon had seen this before. There was no doubt what would happen next. He hustled to the sidecar racer, jumped in and shot through the air toward the north side of Baymak.

Pulsating energy blew out and then back into the hangar. Twice this ebb and flow took place in an eerie silence. Then the energy flared out in a three-sixty causing the hangar to explode!

Guards, vehicles, tanks, helicopters and V-750 missiles were hurled outward like toys in a tornado. The energy wave struck the other buildings. They shattered as if they were made of toothpicks. One of the V-750 missiles exploded, but it was contained within the massive shockwave as a cherry bomb exploding at the bottom of a lake—absolutely no adverse effect.

The members of Delta Force only had time to express absolute disbelief. The concussion wave swept over the sides of the valley, not only flattening everything in its path, but also, destroying all physical objects as they vanished in the all-consuming shockwave.

When the expanding orgon energy reached the north edge of Baymak it stopped and imploded back to the epicenter where the original explosion had taken place. Hurricane-force winds swept over Baymak as air was sucked back into the epicenter.

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A final explosion erupted into a surreal multi-level mushroom cloud of purple-black fire rising in the center of a man-made wasteland twenty miles in diameter. The people of Baymak had been spared, but a few vehicles on nearby roads had been incinerated, not even a footprint or cockroach remained in the twenty-mile blast area except Gryphon's Star-Thunderbolt protected by its surrounding auric pulsating vibrant sapphire-blue energy.

Onboard the USS Harry Truman, General Icar and Admiral Barrington exited the CTW room and strolled down the corridor. Icar's eyes were smiling.

"Good news, bad news or was it what you expected?" asked Admiral Barrington.

"It made me believe in Santa Claus," said the devious and corrupt General Icar.

He pulled out a three-finger leather cigar case and offered a Havana to his good friend, the Admiral, who kept his private thoughts to himself.

## 2

Serious-minded scientists and academics from numerous disciplines filled the lecture hall at Cambridge University. Gryphon sat inconspicuously in the far upper corner.

On stage, a surprisingly beautiful twenty-seven year old Dr. Sydney Caldwell, with intelligence beyond compare, held everyone's undivided attention. At five-ten with long blonde hair, symmetrical facial features, passionate emerald eyes—self-assured and intelligent—she did not appear to be a leading scholar in theoretical mathematics and physics. When she spoke the intellectual community stepped down from their lofty perch in their ivory towers and listened. She had graduated with two Ph.D. degrees, summa cum laude, at the age of twenty-three in both mathematics and physics.

Not only was she the theoretical expert on orgon, she was the only one who knew how to use it safely, although she vouchsafed the vast majority of her practical knowledge for a very good reason. Orgon energy, once controlled, could be turned into a weapon of mass destruction making nuclear energy appear like child's play in a sand box.

Dr. Caldwell had developed a new system of mathematics, now taught in graduate schools around the world that proved the existence of the fifth and sixth dimensions. The fifth dimension consisted of 'light energy' existing in sub-atomic layers or sub-dimensions. The sixth dimension pertained to a 'dark energy' where light did not exist.

The problems for most researchers stemmed from their lack of understanding by thinking the fifth and sixth dimensions were mutually exclusive. Dr. Caldwell knew this wasn't true. The two dimensions were mutually inclusive or interrelated.

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Currently, the attempted development of a new super-technology did not take this into consideration making orgon very dangerous. Since governments were in a race to control orgon because of its weapon's appeal, Dr. Caldwell's star shone in the world of theoretical possibilities.

Dr. Sydney Caldwell pointed the miniature remote at the giant electronic screen dominating the background of the stage. An image of Earth and complex mathematical equations were replaced by a series of multi-colored galaxies and the atomic structure of a single atom.

She continued with authoritative and unwavering confidence.

"Twenty-three years ago, astrophysicists discovered that the greatest quantities of mass in our universe are found between galaxies. This dark mass, named for its absence of light and which we call the sixth dimension, is also found in the space between the protons and neutrons within the atom. Therefore, we can conclude that this dark mass or energy is everywhere. And during our seminar we mathematically proved the existence of the fifth and sixth dimensions where there is an endless source of dark energy, which creates this dark mass and which we call orgon energy."

In his late forties, Dr. Reynolds, an American renegade physicist with dishevelled hair, ample nose and hardened eyes with small irises, made notes. In the front row, the dangerous Bobby Belov was almost mesmerized by the beautiful Dr. Caldwell. At 27, he appeared boyishly handsome with light brown hair and pale blue eyes. He was an ambitious engineer with a secret and treacherous agenda waiting for an opportunity to make his mark in the new super-tech world.

*Migod, she becomes more beautiful every time I see her, thought Bobby. One of these days...*

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“It is here in the fifth and sixth dimensions,” continued Dr. Caldwell, “with their limitless reservoir of orgon energy that we will find a healthy future for our planet. Orgon has no harmful by-products and no radiation fallout. It is green energy—clean and efficient. There will be no hydrocarbons polluting our air. No skull and crossbones slithering into our rivers, lakes and oceans. But like all forms of energy it must be respected. It must be used to serve mankind. This is our future and the future is now.

“Thank you for being such a gracious and patient audience in our three days together.”

The audience responded with a resounding ovation. Bobby caught her eye, snapped a photo with the small digital camera on his cellphone and shared a friendly smile with her. They had been friends as students at MIT.

Dr. Sydney Caldwell stepped back to the podium and picked up two thick text books as the applause subsided. She held the large books as high as her head, her arms forming a U.

“And now a word from our sponsor,” she said evoking a ripple of laughter. “My two books, having just finished their third printing, have arrived in time as promised and are for sale outside this lecture hall.”

She pushed forth the book in her right hand with its twenty-sided spherical design, known as an icosahedron, on the dark blue cover. “Spherical Quantum Mathematics.”

Then she emphasized the other book with its inlay of a geodesic sphere. “And it’s sister, Infinitesimal Mathematics. Actually they’re twins, but we say that with a whisper. They like to think they’re independent of each other.”

Another wave of laughter rose up to greet her humor.

“What about your promised new book,” shouted someone in the first row.

Sydney smiled. “And excellent question.” She set down the two books and picked up a third large book displaying it, as if it was ‘show and tell.’

“Hot off the presses, ‘Perpetual Physics,’ now available outside in the hallway.” She paused for the applause to settle down. “And for those who want to help me develop my vanity I will be available to autograph all purchases, now, if there are no questions.”

Hands shot up immediately as the academics and scientists slowly took their seats again. She pointed to the front row where a small unassuming man in his late fifties felt privileged having been called upon first.

“Yes, Dr. Salinger.”

“Thank you Dr. Caldwell. Will you comment on the parabolic multilevel transition from the fifth to sixth dimension?”

“It's based on a multi-tri-helix pattern of the elliptical splicing of the first three sub-dimensions, which are encrypted in a hierarchical spiral and manifests as a hyper-parabolic function into the fifth and sixth dimensions by a quad-lateral hyper-parabolic matrix.”

“With all due respect, Dr. Caldwell, there's no proof for elliptical splicing into hierarchical spirals.”

“Chapter fourteen and fifteen in my book, *Infinitesimal Mathematics*, refers to M. C. Mendel's early research in parabolic plain integration,” offered Sydney. “But what Mendel assumed to be false is in all actuality true. Do you follow?”

A momentary pause followed a light bulb going on in Dr. Salinger's brain. “Yes, now I see. It's all about bending light.”

“Yes,” smiled Dr. Caldwell. “Something Einstein believed possible eighty years ago and of course, it is. And examine Nikola Tesla's later work, but think in small quantities of organ. Stay under ten syntons of power. Work up from there. If there's

destabilization, add a tri-elliptical core to the magnetic field to eliminate fluctuating marginal variants. Crawl around on your knees for awhile before you try to stand.”

Dr. Salinger ignored the muted chuckles saying, “Yes, yes, I see. Thank you, Dr. Caldwell.”

Four hours later, Sydney sat behind the table in the hallway almost exhausted from autographing just over seven hundred books. Each book sold for over three hundred dollars. Her four assistants who were now breaking down empty boxes had sold a quarter of a million dollars in books. Obviously, there was serious money to be made writing specialized textbooks. But considering her inheritance, Sydney never had to worry about money. Actually, her inheritance had funded the enormous cost of her secret orgon research and the development of a corresponding super-technology.

Sydney poured a glass of water. Gryphon was the last to step up to her table. He handed over the three books with the receipt protruding out of the top book. She opened the first cover and signed her name.

“I’m sure you’re happy to see me,” smiled Gryphon.

Sydney signed the second book as she spoke. “I’m sorry. I’m usually very good at remembering names and faces. Where do I know you from?”

*Your dreams*, thought Gryphon before saying, “No, we’ve never met. My comment was in reference to being the last one in line.”

“Oh, yes, of course,” smiled Sydney signing the last of the three books. “My hand is ready to fall off.” She extended her right hand. “Dr. Sydney Caldwell. And you are?”

Shaking her hand lightly in a firm grip, he said, “My friends call me, Gryphon.”

“Oh,” said Sydney taken by surprise at his informal manner.

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“I’m not an academic or a scientist,” added Gryphon. “But I’m very interested in your work.”

*What is it about him that makes me so curious?* thought Sydney before asking, “What do you find so interesting?”

“Among other things,” said Gryphon picking up the books, “your ceaseless pursuit of excellence. I’m sorry not to have more time. It was a pleasure. Good day, Dr. Caldwell.”

“Maybe we will meet again,”—her voice lowered—“Gryphon.”

He had already started to walk away. He looked over his shoulder. “I’m sure we will.”

*What an interesting looking man,* thought Sydney.

### 3

Dressed in navy-blue Adidas warm-up pants and bra Sydney Caldwell leaned forward staring into the hotel bathroom mirror applying make-up. Ellen Sharp, Sydney's Executive Assistant with a mole on her cheek, appeared in the entryway holding out a cellphone. She was an attractive mid-thirty, dark redhead who considered herself to be sophisticated and indispensable in helping Sydney stay anchored when it came to her public life.

"I have Andre on a non-secured line in Marseilles." Ellen placed the cellphone on the counter having pressed SPEAKER on the keypad.

Sydney's voiced slipped into a friendly tone. "Andre, finally the phone tag is over. What's up?"

"Sydney, I have to make this quick," said the voice with a French accent. "I have satellite coverage of the explosion at Baymak, Russia."

"How did you get that?" Sydney began applying lipstick, while Ellen listened, which wasn't unusual.

Andre Tulson, a forty year old French spy-for-hire and old friend, stood in a hallway of a bar decorated with slum graffiti and accented with peeling paint. His dark brown eyes appeared nervous, a man in a hurry and on a dangerous mission.

"An old reliable friend," said Andre. "Do you want it?"

"Yes," responded Sydney, "but I'm in London. And I have a reception at Cambridge tonight."

Viktor Daniloff, early thirties, a tall, tough guy with a tattoo sleeve and wearing a tight black tee shirt over a muscular torso, stepped into the main room of the smoke-laden joint and surveyed the riffraff you wouldn't want to meet at any time of the day. Andre had eluded him. Now Viktor was confident Andre was somewhere in this bar.

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“Not a problem,” said Andre into the phone. “I’ll meet you tomorrow night.”

“Perfect,” smiled Sydney. “I’ll call you with the details tomorrow afternoon. Thanks for calling.”

A few cautious eyes followed Viktor as he stepped into the empty hallway. His mean look turned into frustration as he continued toward the washroom. Then he paused at the telephone and wrote down its number.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jonathan Christensen, sat on the sofa in the main room with its cookie-cutter luxury—white furniture with dark trim and cream-white carpet. In his early thirties, six feet tall and ruggedly handsome, he inspected sheets of paper with complex mathematical formulas converted into a computer program. He checked off numerous lines and made a notation, here and there. His hazel eyes focused with an unshakable concentration. He paused to sip the red wine in the crystal glass.

Similarly to Sydney, Jonathan had lost his parents, in his early teens before living with his uncle who worked in Silicon Valley south of San Francisco. Where Sydney excelled beyond measure in science and math, Jonathan was a computer protégé.

At fifteen, Jonathan designed his first video game—a blood and guts warrior take all or die in disgrace. He was a multimillionaire by the age of sixteen. Fourteen months later, his second video game was on the market—a football game where you took on the program or another opponent. In subsequent versions, a player could choose from three hundred professional football players and insert them into the game. Each player performed according to his statistical data on the gridiron. Software was updated every two years. Currently, it was the best selling computer game for the male market, twenty years and older.

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Jonathan's envious life, according to his friends, was rudely interrupted in his freshman year of college. It was as if he possessed a genetically encoded wild side. Previously, his uncle's influence and the best lawyers money could buy kept him out of jail, although these mishaps were not related to malicious or destructive behaviour—minor drug possession, driving under the influence—what the wealthy called sowing wild oaks before settling down.

Jonathan walked under a star of destiny.

His last car accident injured a pedestrian—a few broken bones, but not life threatening. Behind closed doors a deal was struck. If Jonathan was to enter the army where he would mature, according to his uncle, the judge agreed to suspend sentence.

Jonathan shunned anything to do with computers or electronics perceiving this as an opportunity for adventure. Two years later at the age of twenty-one, he became a member of Delta Force, a branch of the US Army's Special Operations. Four years later, a near-death experience cast light on a new future. He entered a secret military program dedicated to stealth research.

Jonathan was independent, but never callously reckless. His mind and body demanded high-adrenalin stimuli. At the age of twenty-eight, he attended a computer show in Las Vegas and met Sydney's Uncle Max. Instantly, they became buddies with the same philosophy—give me something new. “Tell me what can't be done.”

On his twenty-ninth birthday, Jonathan turned his back on the military, went to work for Sydney and Max and never looked back. Max taught him things about super-technology even the US military and NASA didn't know. Mentally, Sydney kept the door open, so he could step into the future where the cutting edge of science was always being defined and redefined

by Dr. Sydney Caldwell. It was heady stuff, and he was in heaven—never a dull moment to say the least.

Jonathan poured a glass of wine for Ellen, who sat on the center of the sofa with a pulp fiction paperback.

Sydney strolled into the room wearing a hotel bath robe with its logo monogrammed on the breast pocket. Her blonde hair was piled on her head with tendrils cascading down in front of her delicate ears.

“I might have made a mistake,” said Sydney accepting the wine from Jonathan with “thanks.”

She sat in a wing chair, stretched and crossed her legs at the ankle with her bare feet and red painted toenails resting on a coffee table separating her from Jonathan and Ellen. Part of the lower robe fell away revealing long shapely legs.

“How so?” asked Jonathan.

Ellen’s curious eyes left the page glancing at her boss.

“Maybe the world isn’t ready for organ energy,” said Sydney. “During the Q and A this afternoon I was asked how organ could be used in a military application.”

“How did you handle it?” asked Jonathan.

“Everyone knows where I stand,” offered Sydney. “I told them if they were tired of worrying about nuclear energy, like what happened with that Japanese tsunami and those nuclear reactors nine years ago, organ could be used to blow up the planet and change the meaning of the Big Bang theory. It wasn’t what they wanted to hear, but I received a few approving nods from those who took my point seriously.”

She pressed her lips together, then relaxed taking a sip of red wine.

“There’s still too many nuclear weapons on this planet,” she added as a frustrating afterthought. “How much killing power do they need?”

“You need to relax,” offered Ellen.

“Yeah, you’re right,” said Sydney. “After our final test with orgon let’s cruise the Greek Islands. I could have the yacht there waiting for us.”

*How many times have we heard that,* thought Jonathan and Ellen in silent two-part harmony.

Glancing at her Omega Speedmaster watch Sydney stood up sauntering to her bedroom looking over her shoulder, “Or we could cruise the Riviera for a few weeks. Think about it.”

When Sydney disappeared into the bedroom Ellen turned to Jonathan, who was about to focus on his notes. “Did you want to do something tonight?”

“Hit a club?” asked Jonathan.

“Let me grab a shower and I’ll tell you what I come up with.”

Ellen took her book and disappeared into her bedroom.

After Sydney departed for the reception at Cambridge University Ellen sashayed out of the bathroom and stood in front of Jonathan wearing a hotel terrycloth robe. Her scent was intoxicating. Jonathan gazed up in time to watch the robe slide off her shoulders dropping to the carpet.

“This is what I came up with.”

“Aren’t you afraid this could complicate things?” asked Jonathan cautiously as his eyes admired the firmness of her well-shaped body.

“Johnny, I’m going to be the best one-night stand you’ve ever had.”

Smiling vivaciously, she straddled his lap and kissed him passionately. The sheets of paper joined the robe on the floor.

## 4

Darkness approached under a layer of turbulent dark grey clouds. Pedestrian traffic sporadically flowed in front of the upscale hotel. Ellen, in a green trench dress with a matching short trench jacket folded over her arm, stood near the taxi watching the bellhop gently place her designer luggage in the boot of the black taxi.

Sydney, with a black leather backpack slung over her shoulder, and Jonathan, both dressed in jeans and designer leather jackets, although he wore a large western-style belt buckle, emerged from the revolving doors and joined Ellen, who tipped the bellhop before turning to the duo.

“Any last minute instructions for the charity fundraiser?” asked Ellen.

“Nothing I can think of,” responded Sydney. “Have a safe trip home.”

Sydney and Ellen shared a farewell hug.

Three beautiful ladies—black, white and Asian—in their mid to late twenties and dressed in the latest summer fashion sashayed by Jonathan giving him an approving look. Sydney turned as two of the ladies glanced back with a flirtatious smile. They spoke to each other—obviously about Jonathan. Sydney raised her eyebrows curiously, although this was nothing out of the ordinary. With a coquettish laugh, the three continued to the hotel entrance.

“Do you want me to call them back?” teased Sydney. “Maybe you’ll get lucky.”

Jonathan was up for the challenge. “Does it matter where I get my appetite as long as I eat a balanced meal?”

“What?” jostled Sydney. “Meat, veggies and rice?”

Ellen chuckled. “Jonathan, life would be tedious without you around.”

“Ellen, he doesn’t need encouragement,” retorted Sydney in a humorous tone.

Jonathan shared a smile and hug with Ellen, who whispered in his ear, “You were amazing last night.”

Upon separating, Jonathan kept his thoughts private. He opened the taxi’s door for Ellen fulfilling his old fashioned need to be a gentleman. She kissed him on the cheek before slipping into the backseat. She waved through the window as the taxi pulled into the early night traffic. Sydney and Jonathan offered a short farewell wave.

“Ellen’s in a friendly mood,” offered Sydney.

“Just showing her appreciation,” smiled Jonathan. In response to her piercing curious gaze, he added, “For opening the door for her.”

Jonathan raised his hand signally a cabbie that pulled up to their position at the curb. He opened the door for her. She climbed into the back seat thinking, *Did those two have sex last night? That took four years in the making.*

\* \* \* \* \*

With manicured lawns, decorative flower beds and pathways of crushed white stone, the park appeared deserted. Sydney sat on the bench between Andre and Jonathan. The laptop rested on her lap with images of the Baymak explosion filling the monitor.

“Andre, this is excellent,” she exclaimed. “I’ll be able to calculate how much orgon power they’ve generated. It’ll tell me how far they’ve come in their research.”

“But they’re all dead,” said Andre Tulson.

“Yes, but the Russians won’t abandon their research,” countered Sydney.

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“Their former superpower status keeps eroding, and they want it back,” affirmed Jonathan. He took the laptop and replayed the explosion pausing it at different intervals. “There could be more to learn from this.”

“Like what?” asked Andre.

“Not sure,” said Jonathan replaying it and noticing the interesting blimp on the screen again.

Sydney removed a business-size envelope from the backpack and handed it to Andre, who offered a slight nod.

Lana Quinn, a pretty thug in her late twenties, hid behind a tree surrounded by green leafy bushes. With mysterious cold eyes, she looked like the girl next door with a never-give-up spirit, but in need of a serious attitude adjustment. She watched the trio through small binoculars.

“Always a pleasure to do business with you,” said Andre slipping the envelope into the inside jacket pocket. Being old friends with her Uncle Max there was never a need to count the payoff.

“What’s happening with the U.S. government?” asked Sydney.

“After what happened last year?” said Andre referring to the military’s disastrous test of orgon energy in the Nevada desert. “Absolutely nothing. But I heard the Chinese plan to test orgon within a year. If I hear anything to the contrary, I’ll let you or Max know immediately. Time to push off. Au revoir.”

“Merci bien, Andre,” smiled Sydney as the spy-for-hire rose. “Au revoir.”

The two men shared a nod before the Frenchman marched off in a hurry.

In light traffic, a taxi pulled up to the curb in front of the stone and steel archway. Viktor, the tall thug with the tattoo sleeve, and Serg, six inches shorter than his partner and a

hardened thug with a scarecrow's brain, exited the cab and hustled into the park.

With the leather backpack hanging from her shoulder, Sydney and Jonathan strolled down the lane. Dark ominous clouds cruised over the area. The sound of distant thunder rolled across the park's cooling atmosphere.

"Are you happy working with Uncle Max and I?" asked Sydney ignoring the threat of rain.

Jonathan paused before speaking having been taken aback by the curious and out of place question. *She can't be leading up to Ellen and me being together last night, can she?* thought Jonathan. "Is there a purpose to asking a question you know the answer to?"

"I want to talk about something other than orgon energy," responded Sydney casually.

"So you want to sound normal," smiled Jonathan. "I can do that. Go ahead."

They strolled by a couple kissing on a bench. A slight tint of envy colored Sydney's intelligent and pretty emerald eyes.

"Why haven't you married?" asked Sydney.

"Married?" exclaimed Jonathan. "That doesn't make for normal conversation."

"You've had a gorgeous line-up," continued Sydney as if he hadn't spoken. "I've even approved of a few. You have the brain of a creative genius, the body of a warrior and the heart of a romantic."

"I like this game," smiled Jonathan. "Keep delivering compliments like that and I'll buy you dinner."

"C'mon, Jonathan, take me seriously."

"OK, I'll indulge your insanity. I believe in the Eleventh Commandment: 'Thou shall work with computers 'til the day

you die.’ And as great as some of the women have been I’ve never felt that way about any of them.”

“Jonathan, you can’t compare women to computers.”

“Why not?” challenged Jonathan. “You do it. Maybe—”

“I do not,” interrupted Sydney adamantly.

“And the Pope’s not Catholic,” flashed Jonathan. “Wait, I’ll keep this serious. Answer me this. Why don’t you date more? And don’t give me, I’m too busy.”

“But we’re always busy,” flashed Sydney.

“No, you’re not always busy,” corrected Jonathan. “We do a lot together. And you could spend that time developing a relationship, but you don’t. You’re beautiful, a lot of fun, adventurous. That adds up to a good time and a great catch.”

*You think I’m a good time?* she thought curiously.

*How did we get on this topic,* thought Jonathan before breaking the silence. “So why aren’t you married?”

In the distance up ahead, appearing to be engrossed in their conversation Viktor, Serg and Lana, sauntered toward Sydney and Jonathan.

Lightning streaked across the sky. Rolling thunder reverberated within the ominous clouds threatening a downpour.

“I’ve told you what it was like in Boston,” said Sydney referring to when she was a doctoral student at MIT. “Those Harvard Ivy League brats. I was the daughter of the late Gerald K. Caldwell, tenth richest man in America. Guys staring at my butt in tight jeans only saw a money sign.”

“Dollars or Euros?” teased Jonathan.

Their smiles vanished as they stopped abruptly staring at Viktor’s silenced 9mm pistol.

“Hand over your money and valuables!” demanded the Russian thug.

Instantly, Jonathan was cool and focused. Unexpectedly, Viktor was a little unnerved by the cold steel in Jonathan's eyes.

"Sydney, do what he says," commanded Jonathan trying to calm her since this was her first encounter with violence.

At the same time, he was trying to draw Viktor into a false sense of confidence. In a very brief moment, Jonathan had prioritized the hierarchy of the kill—first Viktor, then Lana and Serg—an old lesson he had learned from his days with Delta Force.

Jonathan removed money from his pocket. Serg snatched it taking his courage from being on the side of the gun. Jonathan waited to strike, if this simple mugging twisted into a nightmare.

Sydney followed suit removing a wad of Euros from a side pocket on the backpack. Jonathan kept recalculating the battle data flooding his mind in logical sequence. A split-second in timing favored Viktor's focus preventing Jonathan from kicking the pistol out of harm's way.

"Gimme the backpack!" demanded Lana. A deadly stare shot from her eyes at what appeared to be a helpless victim.

"I'm a scientist," pleaded Sydney. "I have my notes in here. It has no value."

Viktor fired the silenced pistol at Jonathan's gut! Pfuft! In surprise and anguish, Jonathan grabbed his stomach and fell to his knees.

Jonathan waited for the familiar sharp stabbing pain and sickening burning sensation, but it didn't arrive. The bullet had smashed into his large western-style belt buckle. His mercurial mind rapidly recalculated his options as he faked being wounded in the upper intestines. His leather jacket concealed where blood should have been oozing from his body.

“Hand over the backpack, or the next bullet is in his head!” There was no mistaking the seriousness of Viktor’s deadly threat.

With lightning speed, Sydney round kicked the pistol out of Viktor’s hand, spun around and kicked Lana in the chest sending her sprawling to the path.

Jonathan jumped up with a sidekick to Viktor’s head. He crashed to the ground. Serg scrambled for the gun.

With Sydney focusing on Serg, Lana reached for the backpack. Sydney grabbed Lana’s arm and spun her around to use her as a shield. Sydney forced Lana’s arm up and behind her back. Serious pain flashed across Lana’s face.

Serg aimed the 9mm pistol at Sydney, but Lana blocked most of his target.

“I’ll break her arm in a way it’ll never heal!” warned Sydney. Adrenalin rushed through her mind and body.

“The bullet hit my belt buckle!” yelled Jonathan. “Break her damn arm. Now!”

The sound of a double crack was followed by a death curdling scream from Lana!

Serg expressed surprise dropping his mental guard allowing Jonathan to kick the gun out of his hand followed by a devastating kick to the face. Serg went down hard. Blood gushed from his nose—unconscious.

The sound of thunder rolled over the area.

Sydney kicked Lana’s feet from under her. She smashed her broken arm and face on the path—tears from intense pain!

Viktor recovered, but Jonathan pointed the pistol—in your face! It’s decision time. Fear! Viktor ran away as it began to rain.

Lana tried to stand. Big mistake! Sydney kicked her again. Her head snapped sideways pinching the jugular vein causing instant blackout.

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“C’mon, let’s get out of here,” ordered Jonathan shoving the pistol in his waistband.

They picked up the money before rushing for the exit as the rain intensified.

## 5

Wet from the rain, Sydney, who appeared a little frazzled and Jonathan, on high alert, marched into the immaculate hotel lobby of art nouveau with Edwardian highlights. A businessman in his late thirties talked with a pretty professional-looking receptionist in a blue blazer with its logo embroidered on the breast pocket and grey pleated skirt. A decorative basket of bright green Granny Smith apples rested on the corner of the counter.

Sydney and Jonathan hurried to the bank of polished brass elevators. She pressed the up button, while he surveyed the area. Nothing appeared surprisingly out of the ordinary. The doors whisked opened and they disappeared inside.

Alone and going up, Jonathan, lost in thought, stared at the floor. Sydney held his belt examining the mangled bullet embedded in the western-style belt buckle.

“You could have been killed,” said Sydney. The hand holding the belt relaxed at her side as she continued, “I don’t even remember kicking the gun out of that guy’s hand.”

Her surprising lack of memory was a result of an intense adrenalin rush under conditions of mild shock from thinking Jonathan had been shot in the stomach. Although she held a black belt in martial arts, thanks to Jonathan’s training and encouragement, this had been the first time she had employed her multi-faceted talents of self-defense in a real life and death struggle.

Jonathan remained silent, as if he didn’t hear, but he did, while his mind swiftly calculated a few important scenarios.

Her voice was soft, caring and yet cautious. “Jonathan?”

He looked up flashing a serious stare. “How well do you know Andre?”

“Our grandfathers worked together during and after World War II. Andre and Uncle Max are good friends. He would never betray me.”

“Our money didn’t mean anything,” continued Jonathan with his probing mind. “They had to know about the satellite disc.”

“Thinking there’s valuables in the backpack is a normal assumption,” said Sydney a little defensively, “but knowing about the satellite disc is a major stretch.”

“Where’s your laptop?”

“It’s here in my backpack,” said Sydney with a curious look since he already knew that.

“Maybe they wanted your laptop,” proposed Jonathan.

She pressed her lips together signalling in the negative.

“Stop being naïve. With all the—”

“Naïve?” snapped Sydney. “Only you, Ellen, Andre and Uncle Max know about this. So who’s the traitor?”

He couldn’t answer. The elevator stopped, pinged and the doors whisked open.

Normally, the place satisfied all discerning tastes, but Sydney and Jonathan were greeted by a ransacked room.

“What ’n’ hell?” shot Jonathan standing next to Sydney as they stared at the dishevelled room.

Although Jonathan’s pieces of the puzzle were falling into place, she did not want to believe what was becoming nakedly true.

“Oh no, my notebook,” spoke Sydney with alarm.

She hurried toward her bedroom stepping over a lamp that Jonathan picked up and placed on a table. He thought, *This looks like it’s been orchestrated.*

Inside the bedroom with its four poster king-size bed, clothes were spewed across the floor. The chocolate left by the maid had been eaten, its wrapper on the pillow, as if it was the thief's signature.

Sydney rummaged through the undergarments in a chest of drawers as Jonathan approached.

"Which notebook?" he asked.

"My notebook. The green one. The one with the sub-dimensional processor and specific target imaging." She sighed feeling defeated as her voice lowered. "And it's not here."

It felt as if she had been emotionally punched in the stomach with the wind knocked out of her. She plumped down heavily on the edge of the bed with devastation in her shocked eyes.

"How complete were your notes?" asked Jonathan.

"What?" Her eyes darted up to meet his inquiring eyes.

"Your notes, how complete were they?"

"Too complete," responded Sydney raising her shoulders and stretching her stomach muscles to ease the pain. But it was emotional pain, not physical. "The processor with target imaging was designed to safely remove pollution from rivers, lakes and oceans as you know. But if you know how to control orgon, the processor with target imaging can be used to destroy any target in the world. And you don't need to know where the target is physically."

She stared at the floor contemplating just how serious this was. A common thief would think the notebook had no value and discard it in his search for saleable valuables.

"Max was right."

Sydney's eyes shot up to Jonathan. "What?"

"Max. He was right. Once you discovered how to control orgon energy people would come calling."

Sydney fell into her thoughts. *But how would anyone know how far I've come with my research? I trust Uncle Max and*

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*Jonathan with my life. Ellen? She worked for Uncle Max before she became my assistant. Andre Tulson? No, he and Max had saved each others lives. But who?*

She felt a chill deep within the marrow of her bones—a portentous prophecy she could not interpret. Sydney ran her hands through her long blonde hair—serious stress.

After Dr. Sydney Caldwell discovers a powerful new energy, associates team up with terrorists to steal her discoveries so they can dominate the world. Now she must stop them before they misuse this energy and destroy the planet. But, she is not alone. Her friend, Jonathan, and intergalactic friends arrive with otherworldly technology to assist her. This action-packed, high-adrenalin Sci-Fi adventure will propel you across Russia, the U.S.A., Canada, the Bahamas and England.

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