

*'He bid me taste of it, and 'twas—the Grape!
from the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam'*



Master St. Germain


Brothers of the Grape

Arnold Michael

Books by the same author:


**BLESSED AMONG WOMEN
DISCIPLINE OF DELIGHT
THREE R'S OF SCIENTIFIC PRAYER**

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Brothers of the Grape

By Arnold Michael, D.D., L.H.D.



2003
Global Citizen Publishing
San Clemente, California

Published by
Global Citizen Publishing
San Clemente, California

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Dr. Arnold Michael

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 76-142525

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Revised Edition 1976

Revised & Updated Edition 1980

1990 Brothers of the Grape/original story and screenplay
by Arnold Michael;
re-write and adaptation of screenplay by Gladys Shackett

Author on copyright application: Carl Arnold Michael, &
Charles Sommer, employee for hire, Gladys Shackett

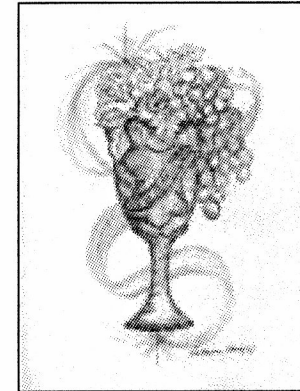
Revised Edition 2003

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*Dedicated to the servants of the Divine,
Known and unknown,
Who have held aloft the Light of Truth
Through the darkness of human ignorance.*



“And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas — the Grape!

“The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The Sovereign Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute!”

From the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam
As translated by Edward Fitzgerald

The Chalice of Peace artwork by Patricia Hurst

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INTRODUCTION

An ancient message of peace reemerges in this Year 2003 edition of *Brothers of the Grape*, in inspiring contrast to New Millennium events that appear to violently shatter the promise of a Golden Age of Peace. The September 11, 2001, terrorist attack on New York City's Twin Towers and other sites heralded another "Holy War" that, in reaction, spawned a continuing "new kind of war, a war on terrorism." Many people around the world bemoaned warring as human nature. Yet this metaphysical novel shows how nature offers proof that humanity can lift itself from fear to faith, from greed to generosity, from hate to love, from war to peace.

Concurrent to this widely televised day when 3,000 lives were grievously lost, a relatively unviewed unholy war continued ravaging 3,000 lives daily in the Congo. In the ongoing battle over the rich resources of the African jungle, more children, women, and men have died in three years than in all wars combined. In January 2002, much less-viewed coverage of this Congolese tragedy aired on ABC's Nightline with Ted Coppel. Late-night television witnesses may well have felt overwhelmed by the terrorizing impact of human greed and hate and felt powerless to effect positive change. Yet readers of *Brothers of the Grape* can embrace the empowering capacity of the individual to bring about the Golden Age of Peace, here and now.

Even though this novel contains a poignant and profound love story, high adventure, and absorbing intrigue, it contributes much more than entertaining reading; its plot

is progressed by the human soul's inherent hunger to ennoble itself. One of the quests of this self-ennoblement is finding the answer to a question almost everyone has asked: What can I, as an individual, do to assist in bringing peace to a troubled world? Another quest is the finding and proving of a simple but powerful way of meditation.

The book's theme develops through the revelation of the true meaning of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam hidden so long in code and symbolism. For example, in the *Rubaiyat*, "wine" was used in a word-symbol denoting spiritual wisdom; the "cup" is the individual's consciousness; "wineseller" means the spiritual guide; a "tavern" is where the drinking of spiritual wisdom inebriates the Pilgrim; and "intoxication" means spiritual ecstasy.

The story of *Brothers of the Grape* centers on five members of the Brothers of the Grape fraternity at the Sorbonne University in Paris. The setting is in France, Albania, and Greece during World War II. Because of the war and the fact that each "brother" is from a different nation, they suddenly find themselves pitted against each other in a conflict of love and hate.

Moneigh, an incarnation of Ascended Master St. Germain, appears when he is needed to guide the members of the fraternity, as well as the reader, to a state of greater self-unfoldment. And Truena, the Albanian village heroine, emerges as teacher, guide, and beloved to the hero, Alex. Together, they join hands and hearts as peace bearers in sacred union. Thus, the purpose of this book is brought to its fulfillment.

The author, Arnold Michael, was always a contemplative person with special interest in spiritual mysticism and

Ancient Wisdom teachings. In *Brothers of the Grape*, he evolves this interest by splendidly blending Eastern mysticism and Western modern spiritual thinking. In 1939, during a nine-month recovery period from a serious automobile accident, he compiled many of his thoughts into five essays. These were published in the Church of Religious Science magazine, *Science of Mind*.

One of his essays, "The Pied Pipers of Truth," contained the ideas and seed principle that, years later, were incorporated into his second novel, *Brothers of the Grape*. The primary thought being: There will never be peace on earth until the seeds of hate in one war are transmuted by individuals, throughout humanity, into love and tolerance for all.

This idea never left Arnold's consciousness. After completing his first novel, *Blessed Among Women*, a transfigurative tale of Mother Mary's life, he wrote the first draft of *Brothers of the Grape*. This work was set aside in 1951 when he ended a successful restaurant owner career to enter the United Church of Religious Science ministry.

In 1967, Arnold met his wife-to-be, Kay, a Science of Mind student and Language Arts high school teacher. He asked Kay to read the now faded, dog-eared draft of *Brothers of the Grape*. It was clear to her that this unfinished project was close to his heart and that he longed to complete it. They had many talks about exciting and inspiring ways to develop the story. After Arnold's 1969 retirement, this now-married couple purchased ten beautiful pine-filled acres in the Sierra Nevada Mountain foothills near Grass Valley, California. They called the property "Talking Pines Retreat," and here, Arnold completed the manuscript.

This was the perfect setting for this nature-honoring work. The location was quiet, peaceful, with soft whispering pines sighing in the wind. Arnold often sat on a special, lakeside bench under the trees where he received further inspiration for the book. He often spoke of how the pine trees “talked” to him.

Evenings and weekends when Kay was not teaching, she typed the manuscript and in 1971, the first edition was published. Arnold had a “following” in metaphysical circles as a minister, writer, and teacher, and this edition was sold out by 1975 when a second, now out-of-print edition, was published.

The Michaels moved south to Ojai, California. There Arnold began the Madonna Ministry that has evolved into an international organization. The Madonna Ministry, in the words of Arnold’s successor, Bishop Charles Sommer, is dedicated to “co-creating a Global Society that lives by spiritual principles of Love, Peace, Truth, Compassion, and Understanding, even toward those deemed as enemies.”

A re-genesis of *Brothers of the Grape* took place in January 2000 when Madonna Ministry Bishop Nicole Christine responded to an inner calling to establish a Global Citizen University (GCU) based on the teachings in this book. Like so many others magnetized to Arnold as a result of reading *Blessed Among Women*, Nicole met with him and opened more fully to the Divine Mother. Though not considering herself “minister material,” she was ordained into the Madonna Ministry in 1986. A short time later, she read, then discussed, *Brothers of the Grape* with Arnold. As a humanistic educator, she shared the book’s vision of “universities designed to: produce gradu-

ates who are international in their approach to the values and purpose of life; form a basic philosophy of human kinship to which all peoples of goodwill can subscribe; encourage students to think and act internationally.”

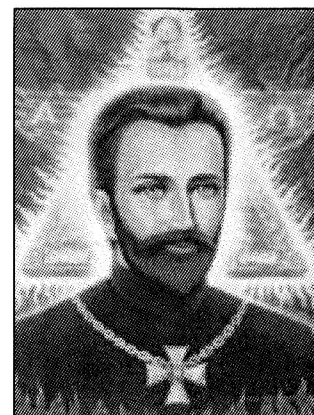
In 1987, when Bishop Arnold Michael, age 81, made his transition on December 12, the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Citizen of the World consciousness was well seeded in the hearts and minds of many peace-seeking individuals. Rereading the book during the first weeks of the New Millennium, Nicole realized that she was to cultivate the blossoming of this vision through Global Citizen University and a Year 2000 Edition of *Brothers of the Grape*. Assisted by the inner realm guidance of the Divine Mother, St. Germain, and Arnold Michael, the manifest realm collaboration of Bishop Charles Sommer, Bobbe Sommer, Kay Michael, Karen Riker, Lisa Michaels, Prescott Hill, Ursula Gurau, and the encouragement of many others, seen and unseen, Nicole joyfully became a divinely inspired conduit for this sacred work. A limited edition was republished, and Nicole developed companioning GCU curriculum that she field-tested with other Sisters of the Grape in Tucson, Arizona. They include Virginia Bergfalk, Carolyn Brent, Irma Call, Carolyn Castro, Sereena Hogan, Leah Mortensen, Karen Riker, and Catherine Van Deusen.

Then came a germination cycle that ended on September 11, 2001. Clearly, now was the time for every person to live the answer to the question: What can I, as an individual, do to assist in bringing peace to a troubled world? Now is the time for Planet Earth and All Life hereon to flower forth in Peace.

Bobbe and Charles Sommer contributed anew to a Year

2003 Edition in collaboration with June Cravenn, Virginia Essene, Carol Knight, and Suzanna Neal. Editor Kellene Adams polished the pages, Patricia Hurst artistically created the Chalice of Peace frontispiece, and Marie Klement contributed her visionary rendering of St. Germain for the new cover.

Thanks are given to all who are drawn to these pages in any way, for together we generate an alchemy of love which transmutes baser warring ways into Golden Peace.



PROLOGUE

Arnold Michael is a true Brother of the Grape. He learned to take his guidance from the Sovereign Alchemist and from the discoveries of his predecessors. His writing is highly intuitive. I shared this wonderful fictitious novel with a tennis friend named George. I have a screen play based of this book and was interested in his opinion. After reading *Brothers of the Grape*, George said, "Wow, Alex, one of the main characters, precisely fits the description of a Greek relative of mine and the part he played in World War II." This was uncanny, yet confirming, feedback that Arnold's intuition taped into information that was not ordinarily know by him. Arnold had never been to Europe or Greece, yet he was inwardly prompted and inspired to write this masterpiece!

"Even as the alchemist builds on the discoveries of his predecessors, so there is an inner teacher within every heart who tutors the outer self, subduing it when necessary and guiding the fires of the mind in their search for the

oftentimes invisible strands of reality.”* Comte de St. Germain, the Wonderman of Europe, is accredited with this quote and for starting this long forgotten fraternity called *Brothers of the Grape*. Count St. Germain’s words are reflected in the wisdom of Moneigh, a central character in this brilliant novel. Some readers feel that Moneigh and St. Germain are one and the same. The author did not dispute this possibility.

All enlightened or awakened beings draw from the same Source. The teachings are consistent. The Sovereign Alchemist is the Universal Source, the well from which the truth of being is revealed to those who seek It. An inner reference beyond the conflict of the carnal mind is attained. It is a direct knowing where cooperation becomes more important than competition. This is where our propensity towards goodwill, right human relationship, grows as we learn to apply the principles buried deep within ourselves and this novel.

Global brothers and sisters are learning to yield to the Sovereign Alchemist who teaches us to bring peace where there is discord, healing where there is hurt, nourishment where there is want, shelter where there is homelessness, and hope where there is fear. It sparks our creative genius. It defuses seriousness, self-importance, isolation, and prejudice. This dramatic novel sparks our interest, imagination, insights, and inspirations.

Nicole Christine, who is truly a Sister of the Grape, has refined the material in *Brothers of the Grape*. She was inspired to create a *Brothers of the Grape* study guide and seed Global Citizen University (GCU) on the basis of this book’s teachings and vision. Her editing skills and her work with GCU curriculum field test participants and

other readers had considerable input in revising the book. She asked for and attentively incorporated input that enhanced the flow and clarity of Arnold’s masterful tale.

In closing this preamble I have one more observation. A renaissance of a new order of Global Citizen is imminent, emerging and is necessary. The old ways of hierarchical governing are giving way to group endeavors. A spirit of All for One and one for All is growing in our global consciousness. ‘He bid you taste of it, and ’twas – the Grape!’

Charles Sommer

* Saint Germain on Alchemy, Summit University Press, Malibu, CA 90265. 1985

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FOREWORD

By Mashaik Fazal Inayat-Khan
Sufi Master/Teacher/Lecturer

The principles of brotherhood have always existed in the definitions of various cultures and philosophies. Real brotherhood, however, is not a measurable relationship; it is a spiritual relationship.

What Arnold Michael develops in his *Brothers of the Grape* is the spirit of brotherhood, which is a feeling that grows in the heart of each person individually. This book is a major contribution to the growing awakening of humanity, and we can only be thankful for men such as Arnold Michael. Dr. Michael possessed both the sensitivity and the balance to bring forth high ideals in beautiful, inspiring, simple terms; yet he remained true to that deep feeling in all of us of loving, understanding, and belonging one to the other. In a sense, brotherhood always is, was, and shall be. Its realization is simply that we are all fruits from the same tree, rays from the same light, emanations from the same spirit.

This kind of unity can never be organized, cultivated, or developed. It must grow out of the heart of every person, individually, so that humanity, collectively, will overcome the root causes of its limitations, the sense of separateness from people and the Divine.



CHAPTER ONE THE QUEST

“There is never more than the individual, so whatever is done must be done by an individual.” For an instant Alex stared at the stranger sitting at the other end of the bench. How could this man speak so accurately into his private thoughts?

The man turned to Alex and smiled. It was not so much a smile of lips but of eyes and quickened radiance of face. Alex felt himself automatically respond. And his response was strangely thrilling as though he and this man he had never seen before shared a wondrous secret known only to them.

Even through his astonishment, Alex was aware of an unusual quality in the man's voice. Though quiet and gentle, there was a deep resonance of authority that seemed to come from depths of tried and proven wisdom. The man spoke again, “Frustration comes not from being denied our answer, but from our refusal to pursue our quest. From the persistence of your desire will come your answer ... and you will recognize it when it comes.”

The man rose and again Alex felt his smile. However, this time something was added. For deep within his eyes, Alex detected a twinkle – as though something had pleased the man very much, something that was important to him. With a nod of farewell, he walked toward the garden exit. As though in a trance, Alex watched him go.

There was an undeniable distinction about his figure and bearing. He was dressed as a civilian of moderate circumstances; he seemed neither young nor old. Alex was

certain that this man was the most impressive person he had ever met – and under the most exciting circumstances. Not only had Alex's own secret thoughts been spoken into by a complete stranger, but he had been give a principle through which he could find the answer to a life-long question. Now he could understand why he had wondered for so long what one individual could do, because now he could see that whatever was done had to be done by individuals. Furthermore, now he felt there was actually an answer to the individual's particular contribution. Alex knew that the words "From the persistence of your desire will come your answer." were stamped indelibly upon both his heart and his mind. He was determined that henceforth the persistence of his desire would be progressively increased.

"What can the individual do about world peace?" Now the question that had demanded an answer in Alex's mind was satisfied. For as long as he could remember he had lived with this question. It caused him to leave his native Greece and become what he was today: a student of archeology at the University of Sorbonne in Paris. By studying the patterns of the past, he hoped to find the reason why the culture of his Greece was no more. He believed he had found the answer to this question – war! War always destroyed beauty and culture. But what was the cause of war? Now, due to a mass hypnotist named Hitler, the most devastating war of history was reaching forth its tentacles, and what could he do about it? Until now, he had wavered between feeling there was absolutely nothing he could do and believing that surely there was something he could do, no matter how small ... but what?

Three students passed by the bench where Alex was sitting. Each wore the reserve officer's uniform of his native country, for this was the last day of school and

everyone was in full dress. Arm in arm, they strode through the gardens of the Tuileries, the bright colors of their uniforms radiant against the green background.

Alex wished he could warm to their joy, their eagerness to feel once more the full flavor of camaraderie before separating for the summer. However, their laughter only saddened him as he thought that they may never see each other again ... except as enemies on a battlefield. Then, suddenly, he felt profound gratitude for the man who had eased the deep frustration of his once unanswered questions: Why must war come? What can an individual do about it?

These questions had lived with Alex for so long and their answers had evaded him for so long that as far back as he could remember, his life had been under a shadow of unreality. He felt there was a feeling he should be feeling that he was not feeling. He was in the world but not of it. A basic reality had been missing, a something that deprived his life of meaningfulness for which he constantly hungered.

The three students passed by again, this time singing a song in rhythm with exuberant strides. He watched them until they were out of sight, gradually realizing that his former depression was lifting. Warming to his own joy, he knew this was so because he had insight to his once unanswered questions.

Alex struggled to bring his new exaltation under control, for in a few moments Riggio, his roommate, would arrive. Riggio had gone to say goodbye to one of his girlfriends in the neighborhood and was to join Alex on their way to a meeting of the *Brothers of the Grape*. This was the name of a fraternity, older than anyone could remember, and their meetings were held in the upper room of an ancient tavern.

Riggio appeared at the entrance to the gardens and waved. Alex hurried to join him. As president of the fraternity this year he should not be late. When he and Riggio were on their way he inquired, "Successful farewell?"

Riggio's usually happy-go-lucky attitude grew suddenly serious. "No. And I've decided it's impossible to say goodbye to a woman successfully." A few strides later, he added, "Why do women refuse to understand love? They're supposed to be its champion. Yet they think it is something that can be corked up in a bottle and labeled this and labeled that. Love is like sunshine. It shines on everything and everything it shines on is brightened and made more beautiful. Just because the sun is also shining on a mountaintop doesn't rob a sunlit lake of any of its beauty. Because I love what is loveable in one person does not mean I can't love what is loveable in another. Love IS. And it responds to itself wherever it finds itself ... for the simple reason that it can't help itself."

Alex glanced affectionately at Riggio's darkly handsome face. The volatile nature of his Italian friend always fascinated him. Riggio's gay spontaneity enlivened any gathering, and Alex felt that his gaiety sprang not so much from an irresponsibility toward life as from a keen appreciation of life's deeper values.

They arrived at the tavern and ascended the private stairs to the upper room. The others were already there. Alex took his seat at the head of the well-worn table, hewn from a cedar of Lebanon. This was the final meeting before summer vacation, and as president, Alex should have his entire attention on the ceremony of merriment about to begin. Instead, his heart pounded with a compulsion to introduce the subject of the impending war and what could be done about it. But how? He could not just get up and say, "Listen, Riggio, you Italian; Karl, you

German; and Richard, you Englishman; and Jean, you Frenchman; listen to me, Alex, the Greek. Why don't we face it. Before this vacation is over we could all be mortal enemies seeking to destroy each other on the battlefield. Let's do something about it ... now. Before it's too late!"

Alex gripped the silver goblet before him until his fingers ached as he strained against the compulsion to jump to his feet and say these words. But suppose he did? What would be their reactions? Cold resentment? Polite tolerance? After all, not only were they representatives of five different types of prejudices, prejudices that remained hidden beneath the surface until challenged, they were also the flowers of their respective lands, modern in attitude, highly intellectual and genteel of manner. They probably would just smile affectionately at the Greek directness of Alex's proposal and ask him what he suggested doing about it. And Alex had no answer.

The door swung open with a bang. It was too late now. Leo, the tavern keeper, stood in the door, his chubby face beaming with pride. Upon his shoulder rested the crock of wine. Leo's appearance was the signal for the opening song, which was a stanza from the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Waving their goblets in time to a rollicking melody, they all sang:

*And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder: and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas – the Grape!*

Then Leo poured into each goblet purple port from the slopes of Portugal. When the last was filled, Riggio, the Italian, leaped to his feet.

"A toast to the Angel." he exclaimed merrily, pointing the goblet toward the exceedingly pleased Leo. "To Leo, our Angel." he cried. "Each year may he continue to look

more and more like a cherub." The clinking goblets added their rich and resonant overtones to the gay cries of approval.

After the wine had been tasted, Riggio, heaving a sigh of satisfaction, beamed at the Frenchman. "Jean," he said, "no one but you could select such a perfect vintage." Turning dancing dark eyes around the table, he continued, "Every time Karl selects the wine, it tastes like beer. Every time Richard selects it, it tastes like tea. But Jean! He knows where good wine hides its treasures."

Alex led the singing for the other verse of their ritual:

*The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two and Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The Sovereign Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute!*

Then, lifting his goblet to Jean, he said, "Jean, we shall miss you and your accurate appreciation of the temperamental grape. Jean graduates at this time, and according to our tradition, he brought with him a French freshman to take his place. As we know, this is the way *Brothers of the Grape* has been perpetuated. So, Jean, we bid you farewell and drink to your health and happiness."

Again came the resounding click of the goblets upon which the embossed coat of arms had long since worn thin.

Jean introduced the new member by placing a hand on his shoulder. "This is Pierre," he said. "To him I entrust the French goblet of *Brothers of the Grape*, which was entrusted to me, with full confidence that he will drink from it naught but good fellowship."

As Pierre received the goblet from Jean's hand, Alex lifted his own. "We welcome you as our brother, Pierre. We give you a toast and invite you to share it with us ... to Pierre." Then, to this goblet, already well-worn by the

grasp of untold numbers of French students, was added the grasp of still another.

When Alex and Riggio returned to their room they both found letters awaiting them. Riggio suddenly leaped from his bed, throttling a letter with both hands as though he could choke back the effect of its contents.

"Bad news?" Alex asked.

"Bad news." Riggio echoed. "The worst. I planned to spend my vacation here in Paris with Jean ... and Marie and Renee. But this is an order from my parents to visit my uncle in Albania."

He fell back into the chair with a groan. "Albania, of all places."

"Why Albania?" Alex asked.

"My uncle is an official of our government stationed in Tirana, the capitol. Albania is a protectorate of Italy." He shook the letter again. "Supposed to broaden my military training in some way or another. Poor Marie! Poor Renee!"

Alex believed Riggio's command to spend his summer in Albania was definite preparation for the inevitable war. Riggio was an officer in the military reserves of Italy, just as all the *Brothers of the Grape* were reserve officers of their respective countries. Alex glanced at Riggio. Even in his dejection the Italian's face was vital and radiant. A surge of resentment gripped Alex. That letter in Riggio's hand was the shadow of coming events. Would those events shape so rapidly that before their vacation ended, he and Riggio would no longer be roommates at the University of Paris ... but a Greek and an Italian, dedicated to the task of exterminating each other?

Alex made a sudden decision. "Maybe I'll go along with you," he remarked casually.

Riggio turned momentarily hopeful eyes toward him,

then wryly smiled and murmured, "Who'd be stupid enough to go to Albania ... if he didn't have to?"

Alex answered, "Albania would provide me with the material for my graduation thesis on archeology."

Hope again struggled feebly in Riggio's eyes. "How?" he demanded incredulously.

"I need ruins for my thesis, and Albania has ruins."

The hope in Riggio's eyes grew stronger. "What ruins?" he asked.

"Skanderbeg's Fort, near Kruja."

Riggio leaped excitedly to his feet. "Do you mean you will actually go with me to Albania?"

Alex nodded. At that instant Jean, the Frenchman, pounded on the door, then came into the room followed by Karl, the German, and Richard, the Englishman.

"Jean," Riggio exclaimed, "I must visit my uncle in Albania."

Alex wondered if the silence that hung for an instant over the five young men was ominous or if it were but his own imagination.

"And I'm going with him," he said, "Someone has to take care of him."

"Well, from what I hear," Jean quipped, "Albania is about the only place in the world Riggio couldn't get into trouble. No women, just mountains and goats. Don't worry about Marie and Renee. I'll take good care of them."

Riggio laughed good-naturedly, "That's very consoling."

"What will you do, Karl?" Alex asked.

Karl was short and square, his answer deliberate. "Visit my relatives in the country and serve my time in the militia."

Alex turned to Richard who was tall and slim. "And you, Richard?"

Richard removed his pipe and smiled his slow smile. "Mostly sail my boat and think of the good times we've had together."

As the good-byes were said, Alex again wondered if it were his imagination that everyone seemed uncomfortable.

After they had gone Riggio noticed Alex unconsciously staring at the door. "Sorry you said you'd go with me?" Riggio asked gently.

"No," Alex exclaimed instantly. He did not want Riggio to suspect that one of the reasons he had chosen Albania's ruins was to be with Riggio, to spend one last vacation together before their lives and the lives of their friends might be completely changed. In his effort to conceal his thoughts he almost gave them away.

"Certainly, I'm not sorry. I was doing the gay spots of Paris with Jean, dutifully visiting my country relatives with Karl, and sailing into the sun with Richard and hoping nothing would happen to interrupt it all."

"What could happen?" Riggio asked automatically. Then he caught himself. Suddenly their eyes met but only for an instant.

Riggio laughed and shrugged his expansive shoulders.

"Nothing could happen to those three."

"That's right," Alex echoed. And each busied himself with his packing.



CHAPTER TWO A PRISTINE LAND

“There it is.” Alex cried, pointing with elation up the mountainside.

Riggio moved quickly up the precipitous path to see where Alex was pointing. Scanning the mountainside to where its peak disappeared through the morning mists, he turned back to Alex with excited impatience. “Where? I see no fort. Neither do you.”

“On that ledge,” Alex pointed very emphatically. “That’s the foundation of Skanderbeg’s Fort.”

“Not any more,” Alex laughed, as they drew closer. “Only ruins. Otherwise we wouldn’t be here in the first place. I’m an archeologist, remember?”

“It’s as hard to remember as it is to believe,” Riggio retorted amiably. Then, with an incredulous sigh, he muttered, “So that’s what we’ve come all this way to find, a handful of ruins perched atop the ‘jumping-off-place’ of the world.”

“Those ruins are of a very famous fort.” Alex said. “After all his allies in the war against Mohammed II abandoned Skanderbeg, he held out against the Sultan here at this fort. All of Albania was captured except this fort and the village of Kruja that it protected. Therefore, since 1466, Skanderbeg has been their national hero and this fortress their symbol of freedom. In its architecture, construction, and artifacts I expect to be able to read the characteristics of these people, who were able to preserve their freedom in that war.”

Alex gazed up at the misty majesty of the mighty peak, brooding over the mysterious secrets of this land. His voice was warm and fervent with sincerity.

“Before you lies the smallest and proudest nation in Europe. Their pride is in their freedom.” Alex paused and, with a chuckle of indulgent understanding, stated, “They even claim that Alexander the Great was the first Albanian. This territory has been the bone of contention among its neighboring nations since the fall of the Roman Empire. Before the Romans conquered it, its arms spread majestically over Epirus, Yugoslavia, and Macedonia. Then it was called Illyria, a name that moves proudly through the annals of philosophy and mythology.”

“Whew.” Riggio exclaimed. He was more impressed with Alex’s knowledge than with the country. Again, remembering why Alex was there, he asked, “Do you suppose you’ll find what you want on that ledge?”

Resuming the climb, Alex said, “Let’s go and see.”

Riggio called out from behind, “Hope you get enough material for your thesis. Otherwise, you’ve sure spoiled my day. I had plans to go sight-seeing in the village.”

Grasping a sapling to steady him, Alex filled his lungs with crisp, spicy mountain air and said, “You should have stayed with your uncle back in Tirana, the capitol. It has more to offer those jaded appetites of yours than the village of Kruja.”

Riggio, gripping the same sapling, took several breaths before he answered. “My uncle had a couple of things on his mind that I didn’t like. One was to take his place as official of our government; the other was to please a woman he wanted to influence.”

Alex’s eyebrows went up. “Now I know you should have stayed in Tirana.”

Riggio shook his head vigorously. "You should've seen her!"

Alex laughed. "I didn't think the woman lived who could make you run ... especially to a country where there aren't any women at all."

"Aren't any women?" Riggio echoed with outraged incredulity.

"Of course there are women," Alex explained, "but as far as we're concerned, there aren't. All women in this country are betrothed when they're infants. And if anyone implies differently, by even a glance, there's trouble. Remember these people still live in tribes. The code of the feud is their law, and most of their feuds are over their women."

This information stunned Riggio into utter silence. They resumed their climb. Finally, he remarked, "Well, in three months, we'll be back at the University. A person can stand anything for three months, even Albania."

The path leveled off through a lush thicket, and suddenly they stood among the ruins of Skanderbeg's Fort. Brush, stone, and disintegrated mortar vied with each other to conceal all evidence of design or purpose.

Alex was transfixed with interest. Riggio glanced from Alex's glowing eyes to the meaningless mass of half-hidden masonry. "Is that what we struggled all the way up here to see?" he asked, with a trace of concern for the success of Alex's hopes.

Alex did not answer. He was glancing from one remnant of formation to another, his face eager with satisfaction at what he saw.

Riggio, watching him intently, sighed with relief at what he read in Alex's face and then suggested roguishly, "Beautiful, huh? Just plain beautiful. I don't know whether

to pity or envy you."

Alex automatically nodded his head, too engrossed to catch the irony of Riggio's remarks.

"He really thinks it's beautiful," Riggio told himself with astonishment.

"What did you say?" Alex asked with an apologetic grin for his abstraction.

"I said you were staring at that jumble of debris as starry-eyed as a girl gazing at her first love."

"Riggio," Alex exclaimed with emotion, "it has everything I hoped it would."

Riggio, glancing over the ruins again, shook his head and agreed dubiously. "Yes, I guess you're right."

Alex moved into the center of the ruins, picked up a piece of hewn stone of peculiar shape, and held it up for Riggio to see. "Part of an archway. Their knowledge of stress and strain was very elementary. Indicates their feelings and principles were simple, uncomplicated, and direct."

Riggio's interest was quickened. He walked over to Alex and, taking the stone, turned it in his hand. "Do you mean that you can look at the way this stone is cut and tell the emotional or character development of the person who cut it?"

Alex nodded, smiling with pleasure at Riggio's interest. "I guess those are the things that first appealed to me about archeology. That and my desire to learn what really happened to the insides of my country's people to bring about our cultural disintegration."

Riggio was thoughtful. "How can you tell from archeology what was inside people?"

Alex took back the stone. "Everything a person creates

has to be conceived within before it can be brought into outer manifestation. It follows that a person can't build what he or she can't conceive. And it also follows that someone can't build with one part of the mind and live and think with another part. We do everything we do with the same mind and heart. Everything that comes from us, an archway or an attitude, comes from the same source and must be related. So if the designer of the archway did not comprehend the relativity of balance and counter balance, it shows that the designer did not comprehend the relativity of right and wrong. To the designer, right was right and wrong was wrong; there was nothing relative about it. Therefore, it would never occur to this person not to give his or her life for what he or she thought was right."

For a moment, Riggio contemplated what Alex said. There was a new respect in his tone as he asked, "You've never been satisfied with what happened to the innards of your ancestors, so you decided to study it out for yourself through archeology? Guess I never understood exactly what archeology was."

"Very few people do," Alex replied. "Without archeology, history would be primarily a record of wars and reigns of kings. Many secrets of human evolution are locked up in hieroglyphics and cuneiform inscriptions, discovered and undiscovered, deciphered and undeciphered."

Alex selected another odd-shaped stone. "Take this, for example," he began but suddenly stopped, raising his hand for attention. From the direction of a nearby chestnut grove came the sound of a flute, its gentle, melodic notes enlivening the woods to the tune of the timeless Italian song, "O Sole Mio."

Riggio and Alex stared at each other in astonishment, listened with enchantment for a moment, then simultane-

ously started toward the grove. They were transfixed by what they saw. Upon a grassy knoll, an Albanian woman was dancing to the music she played on her flute.

Alex was struck by her grace of movement. Then he was conscious of motion, rhythm, and color. As the young woman swirled, her bright blue skirt clung to her slender loveliness. Gold, lustrous hair was held by a sunny, yellow scarf that fluttered behind her. Above her skirt was a tight-fitting bodice of purest white.

Alex tried to see her face. It was difficult to isolate it from the swirling maze of color. Finally he did. Her features were fine; her face oval; clear blue eyes flashed and sparkled with obvious joy at what she was doing.

The dance revealed a pattern and a purpose and the young woman was completely absorbed in its expression. Suddenly it was finished.

"Wonderful." Riggio exclaimed breathlessly.

Hearing Riggio's exclamation, the woman turned and stared at them, her face as guileless as an infant's. She smiled slightly, a sort of puzzled, pleased smile.

No one had ever affected Alex as definitely or as strangely. About her was that unconscious beauty of blooming flowers, with the added, fresh aliveness of sun-brightened evergreens stirring in a cool breeze.

He felt as if a light were reaching into hitherto unknown depths of his being, illuminating and stirring those depths into awareness. A part of him that had long been asleep was suddenly awake and, with the awakening, came the startling conviction that this slumbering part of him had waited long to be stirred and quickened by this particular woman. It was a thought difficult for Alex to accept, a feeling difficult to understand.

The welcoming woman bowed, spread her skirt, and

knelt. Alex felt they had been greeted with open friendliness.

Then she spoke. Her voice was low, vibrant, and warm. In Italian she said, "I am Truena, daughter of Tyrak, of the village of Kruja."

Riggio answered immediately. "I am Riggio; this is Alex." Then, with jubilation, he said to Alex, "Don't forget your ruins ... they're expecting you back. I'm just a simple fellow who knows nothing of the charm of old stones and must be content with a beautiful woman dancing in the woods to the tune of her flute."

Riggio stepped forward and bowed gallantly.

"Sometimes I sing," he announced, the Riggio charm at its height. "And never in my life have I felt more like singing 'O Sole Mio.' Please play and dance again to its tune while I sing. I've dreamed of such as this but never believed it could happen."

"If you wish," was the straightforward reply, and Truena lifted the flute to her lips and moved into her dance.

Alex was annoyed at himself for resenting Riggio's forwardness, especially since he understood exactly how he felt. Things like this happened only in fairy tales. A stage of verdant grass. The dancer, a beautiful maiden of an unspoiled land, costumed in vivid colors flashing against the pristine green background. But more radiant and stirring than all this color and motion were her innate beauty and charm.

Alex wondered why she seemed so radiant and concluded it must be because she was utterly unaware of herself, conscious only of the pleasure of dancing, the spontaneous joy that comes from motion attuned to music.

Riggio's baritone filled the arena, blending into this

primeval scene the rich overtones of the culture of the outside world. The music stopped. Truena's dance was finished. Riggio's song completed. Truena turned to Riggio. From her eyes shone admiration and appreciation.

"Glory be to your voice," she exclaimed.

The sincerity of Truena's exclamation and the archaic manner of her speech added enchantment to the scene.

Suddenly she seemed to remember something. She glanced anxiously at the sun.

"I go to speak with Moneigh. When the sun has passed the mid-heaven, he is in his shrine near the summit."

"We would like to explore the mountainside," Riggio exclaimed quickly. "May we come along? You could show us the easier trails."

"If you wish," was her friendly, gracious reply. With no further word, she turned and started up the trail.

Alex and Riggio found it required all their strength to follow this lithe child of nature as she effortlessly ascended the half-hidden trail. Finally, it emerged suddenly upon a level clearing. At the other end arose a sheer wall of rock against which was a small stone chapel.

As they approached the chapel, the door opened and a man came out to meet them. When Alex saw him, he stumbled and almost lost his footing for it was the same man who had spoken into his thoughts on the bench in Paris. Alex felt he was greeting a very old friend instead of a person he had seen but once in his life. How strangely familiar was his noble bearing as he strode to meet them. Alex had forgotten how deep and pleasantly glowing his eyes were, but he had not forgotten the strange strength of his face. It was not stern, authoritative strength but a strength of quiet joy. A joy that seemed sustained by wisdom so deep that all claims that life was not supposed

to be joyful were automatically invalidated. Alex was surprised as words formed in his mind: Here is a man who has found that missing meaningfulness you have hungered for so long.

"Truena, my child," he greeted, his voice warmly resonant with delight. "Good go with you and with your companions."

Truena gave a little curtsy. "Thank you. A long life and a smooth trail to you."

Moneigh glanced at Alex. For an instant the penetrating gaze of his clear eyes dazzled Alex. Then they twinkled with pleasure, and Alex felt that Moneigh was giving him a special greeting of recognition.

With a gesture toward each, Truena introduced Alex and Riggio.

"Welcome." Moneigh said, and Alex saw him momentarily study Riggio. He seemed pleased with what he found and turned to Truena. "Come into the chapel and tell me what brings you so far up the mountain."

Truena started for the chapel, but when she realized that Alex and Riggio were not following, she stopped.

"It would be better if you came inside where there are seats to rest."

"Perhaps we would interfere," Alex answered.

Truena's only answer was to wait until they joined her.

After they were all seated in the chapel, she spoke to Moneigh. "It's my brother, Nik. He's now grown and bears a man's gun." For a moment she was gently pensive. "It seems but yesterday that he was all eyes and red cheeks as I sent him scampering out on oak limbs to cut their leaves for fodder."

She brought herself back to the present and continued.

"When our country was last invaded, all the feuds were suspended. As you know, the suspension is now over and our family is in blood. Nik, as a man bearing a gun, can repay blood. He's strong-willed and foolhardy and intends to go into the territory of my family's enemies so as to repay the blood."

Alex thrilled at the loveliness of Truena's face lifted in selfless supplication to Moneigh. Her lustrous hair curved away from her sensitive brow in a way that caused the blue of her eyes, the light of her brow, and the gold of her hair to form an harmonious contrast of beauty and tone that Alex had never before seen or felt ... or known he was capable of seeing or feeling.

"I came to ask you to speak to him," she pleaded, "to quiet his spirit of adventure and save him for those who would see him grow into a noble man."

Moneigh turned and gazed out the arched doorway into the limitless space below the mountain. "So Nik has reached the age where he's no longer protected by the besa pledge." For a moment, his brilliant eyes were dull and his voice was sad.

"I had hoped the suspension would not be lifted." Then he sighed, stirred in his chair, and continued. "Feuds would not be so difficult to overcome if men did not associate retaliation in blood with their pride and honor, an association that has no true relationship. Would that the echo of a shot lasted no longer than the flight of the bullet. Instead, its echo resounds from generation to generation, from father to son to brother, and then all over again."

He looked with affectionate assurance into the eyes of all.

"It is regrettable that most of us refuse to learn except through bitter experience. I fear this land will not be cured of the feud until there comes to it such pain that, in com-

parison, the feud will fade into insignificance."

Then he chuckled and it was a heartening sound to hear. "Nik, the arrogant little buck." He rose and took Truena's hand. "Don't worry, I'll keep him from going if I have to dehorn him. Send him to see me."

Truena pressed his hand to her forehead. "Glory be to your heart," she murmured gratefully.

Moneigh released her hand and touched her hair. "Bless you, my child and now, you and your companions better start or the sun will descend before you do."

He turned to Alex and Riggio. "I'll see you two lads again."

Alex found himself nodding his head in enthusiastic agreement. Riggio bowed respectfully, a puzzled expression on his face.

As they retraced their steps down the trail, Alex's thoughts whirled with conjectures that could not get very far because of Truena's charm.

The steep trail prohibited conversation until they reached the grove where Truena had danced. Alex asked, "Does Moneigh spend much time at his shrine?"

"No," she replied. "Once a year he's here for a few weeks. Whence he comes or whither he goes, no one knows. This he has done for as long as anyone can remember."

Then with a note of relief, she added, "But he never departs until he has helped those who have appealed to him."

"Do you mean," Alex asked, "that when the old men of your tribe were young, he came just as he does now?"

Truena nodded and said, "I now return to my home. It is near Kruja. The path is easy. Follow me if you wish."

Riggio ran ahead and cut a walking stick from a beech sapling. Stepping out from behind a tree along the path in front of Truena, he knelt and held forth the stick as though he were presenting a sword. With a gallant flourish, he said, "Fair princess of this fairy land, I surrender to you this magic wand. You have but to raise it in command and anything you wish will be yours."

To Alex, Truena's laughter was like the sound of a brook dancing joyously over bright-colored stones: spontaneous, selfless, and overflowing with the joy of simply being.

In Riggio's same spirit of fun and with royal dignity, she accepted the wand. With pleasing grace, she made a sweeping curtsy and replied, "In my mother's books, such as you are called 'knights,' so I thank thee, Sir Knight."

Riggio's laughter echoed through the woods, and Alex was suddenly aware that in it was the same quality of freedom as in Truena's. Then in a stage whisper, Riggio confided to Truena, "I must warn you that the magic wand works only if your wish is to see me again."

Alex saw concern momentarily shadow her face as they continued their way.

At the outskirts of the village of Kruja, the path forked, one path following the mountainside to the left, the other leading down to the wooded plateau in which was clustered the village.

Truena stopped at the fork. With a dainty nod of farewell that included them both, she said, "A long life and a smooth trail." Then she instantly disappeared into the wooded trail along the mountainside.

Alex and Riggio stared for a moment at the point where she disappeared and then took the other direction to the village. In silence, they strode toward their lodgings in

Kruja's largest residence that served as an inn when that rare need occurred in this remote community.

Riggio broke the silence. "Why so glum?"

Alex took several steps before he answered.

"I was thinking how easily we could ruin Truena's life and get ourselves into serious trouble at the same time."

Riggio stopped in his tracks. "How," he demanded, attempting to conceal his utter exasperation with Alex, "could we possibly ruin her life?"

"By making her discontent with the husband her family has already chosen for her, for one thing."

Riggio was outraged.

"Do you mean that lovely woman is to be given to some ... mountaineer?"

Alex nodded then explained, "Not given – sold. She's been 'bought and paid for' since she was an infant and it is part of the bargain that she have no male associates in the meantime. In fact, someone disrespecting those bargains causes a large percentage of the feuds. You heard her plea for her brother. There is nothing more serious to these people than their honor."

Riggio was exasperated. "Why, I never heard of such a thing. It's inhuman, barbaric!"

When they resumed their way, the silence between them was a bit heavy and uncomfortable. A subtle uneasiness began to grow in Alex's mind. He knew it was almost impossible for Riggio to maintain a serious attitude toward the customs of this seemingly docile land, especially if those customs deprived him of the free expression of his natural impulses. Alex also knew that Riggio was incapable of deliberately hurting anyone. However, regardless of Riggio's motives, the results could be very tragic to all concerned.

Alex knew that the responsibility was on his shoulders because he was aware of the true nature of the situation. It was a responsibility difficult to assume when the one he endeavored to protect refused to believe in the danger.

Riggio had always taken for granted the innate maturity of all women, a maturity that is found in the youngest of women in the "Old World" where he grew up. His instinctive attitude toward women was that emotionally they were able to take care of themselves. His only sense of responsibility toward love was to make it as gay as possible.

No one could provide more colorfully than Riggio the gay charm that Truena had never experienced. Also, no one could walk away from a sense of further responsibility as carelessly as he could, for according to his perspective, no responsibility existed. If none existed, how was one to talk to him about his having neglected it?

Before a crackling fire of spruce wood, the stolid wife of their host served them a supper of roasted kid, cheese, and a bread made from roots and cereals. Alex and Riggio chatted with their old enthusiasm about everything except Truena.

When they retired and their hips gave up the noisy search for a comfortable place in the straw mattresses, Riggio asked, "What do you suppose Moneigh meant by saying he would see us again? Certainly was a strange man. When he looks at you, he really looks. Hate to try keeping a secret from him. However, he makes you feel there couldn't be a secret he wouldn't understand. I believe he's the strangest man I ever saw. Did you feel that way about him?"

"Yes," Alex replied, attempting to keep his voice casual. "He is a very strange man. I have seen him before."

Alex related his experience with Moneigh on the garden bench back in Paris telling how Moneigh had read his mind and spoken so accurately into his thoughts.

Riggio was incredulously excited. "What kind of person can do such things and also move from place to place so effortlessly? Who is he?"

Alex said, "I don't know. I've heard of so-called adepts or masters, highly evolved beings, who have attained supernatural powers and devote their lives to serving the fulfillment of humanity's purpose by working through individuals. He said he'd see us again, and I'm sure he will. And I can't help but feel good about it."



CHAPTER THREE CONFLICTS

At dawn Alex and Riggio were summoned to breakfast. Long before the sun had climbed the mountains surrounding Kruja's wooded plateau, they were sipping herb tea by the flickering light of a cheerful fire. The hot tea was pungent and exhilarating, the fire comforting and companionable.

Suddenly, the outside door was thrown open and the lusty voice of their host rang out, calling to his wife. When she answered she was told that the annual pack train from Tirana, the capitol, had been sighted and the new churn she had sent for last year would be with it. From his wife came an excited exclamation, followed by a short interval of quickened footsteps, the sound of the closing of the outside door, then silence.

Riggio shook his head pityingly. "A burro train is coming from the outside world and what is she hurrying to get? A new shawl? A skirt? Something to bring fire to her eyes and bloom to her cheeks?"

His expressive hands dropped hopelessly to the table. "No. She is rushing excitedly to greet the arrival of a new churn whose strange handle will put new calluses on her hands."

Alex's laugh was warm and deep. Riggio was his old self again, personally challenging every aspect of civilization that did not contribute to romance and his concept of the beauty and grace of living.

Alex offered him some cheese. Automatically, Riggio

took the offering and began eating it, still occupied with his resentment of a country seemingly so barren of the emotions essential to worthwhile living. The piquant flavor of the carefully prepared and aged cheese caused his eyebrows to rise in appreciation. He studied the remaining piece of cheese still in his hand.

"Very good," he murmured appraisingly. "Very good."

"Yes," Alex replied casually. "They make it with a gadget called a churn."

Riggio had nodded his head in confirmation before he remembered his fervid speech of a moment earlier. His next nod stopped in mid-air, and he looked good-naturedly at Alex's expression of feigned innocence.

"Let's go out and meet the train and do the town," Alex suggested. "After that long climb yesterday, perhaps it is in order. Better show ourselves to the populace and keep down as much curiosity as possible."

Instantly, Riggio was filled with enthusiasm. "A messenger from the outside that comes but once a year must be quite an occasion."

As they neared the center of the quaint town, the sun peeping over the mountains made brilliant the yellows, reds, purples, blues, and bright greens of the women's shawls and skirts and the men's vests and ankle-length bloomers. The morning freshness of the surrounding hill-sides was alive with moving colors and the voices of the approaching people calling greetings to one another.

"News of the arrival of the train must have traveled fast and far," Riggio observed, "to bring as many people to town so early in the morning."

"I doubt if they know it yet," Alex replied.

"You mean they just tromp around in the woods before day for the fun of it?"

Alex smiled. "These people consider it no hardship to travel all night in order to arrive in time for the opening market. Most of those you see probably left their remote homes some time yesterday. Those who are first at the market get a chance to trade before the best merchandise has been taken."

"How do you know so much about it?" Riggio asked with good-natured annoyance.

Alex shrugged his broad, lean shoulders. "I've lived next door to them all my life. Greece and Albania are neighbors."

"That's no answer. Kruja might as well be on the South Pole as in these remote mountains. You haven't been here before, have you?"

"Only in my studies of their customs and folklore. After all," he added with mock impressiveness, "don't forget I'm a very erudite archeologist and it's my business to know people, their present as well as their past."

Riggio smiled. "In their case, since they never change, the past and present are the same. By the way, why don't the women wear veils like those we saw in Tirana?"

"That's where Skanderbeg comes in. These Northern Gheg tribes are now Christians and no longer veil their women as is the custom with some other religions."

The marketplace was a colorful antique bazaar composed of two parallel lines of buildings separated by a ten-foot-wide cobblestone walk. Across this walk, the bright shop fronts stared suspiciously at one another's shaded and mysterious interiors. Since they were built in the days when predatory neighbors were more the rule than the exception, instead of windows, they had narrow slits that let in very little light.

As Alex and Riggio started through the noisy, crowded

street, they heard a commotion at its other end, and when they arrived there they saw the first part of the pack train. At the head of a dozen heavily laden burros walked a short man with an unusually long nose. He was stooped as though the weight of his nose was a burden to which he had long ago surrendered.

The pack train stopped in front of the first shop. It was the largest and offered for sale, trade, or exchange very fine, hand-tooled leather goods. A stern visaged man and youth tended the shop. The man shouted a greeting to the leader of the burro train. "Welcome, Milo. A long life and a smooth trail."

The long nose moved in the direction of the greeting. Raising his arm, Milo returned it. "Good go with you, Tyrak." Then he pointed to the boy. "Could that be Nik grown to manhood since I saw him last year?"

"You are correct, Milo," Tyrak answered with solemn pride. "It's my son, Nik, who now bears a man's gun, a long gun whose aim is true and whose bullet is swift to avenge his family."

Alex and Riggio glanced significantly at each other. Truena's father and brother. The young man was Nik, the brother she asked Moneigh to help.

Riggio's eyes searched the interior of the shop, then swept the crowded street. Alex knew he was looking for Truena and the anxiety of yesterday returned. Suddenly Riggio, sensing that his manner was rather obvious, turned his attention to Milo and the burros. Milo was going from one burro to the next, stroking their necks and whispering in the huge ear of each.

As he moved down the line, Riggio asked, "What's he doing?"

"Those burros are his family. He's thanking them for making the trip."

"But why does he whisper? Is he afraid the others will hear? Are the beasts jealous of what he might say to the others?"

"He thinks they are. So it doesn't make much difference whether they are or not as far as his actions are concerned."

As Milo neared the last burro, the first one suddenly lay down in the street, his pack of metal objects clattering loudly on the cobbled pavement.

Milo raised his arms in frantic dismay and rushed back to the calmly reposing burro. The spectators laughed loudly at Milo's predicament, then became silently attentive in their curiosity to see which method would persuade his burro to get up. This dramatic conflict between burro and master was an old and familiar one and always regarded with interest and amusement.

As Milo reached the burro he reassembled his dignity and strode around in front so he could face the burro. Due to Milo's stopped stance, his head and the burro's were about level.

Milo folded his arms as calmly as he could, looked directly into the burro's eyes, and spoke in the soft, confidential tones of a lover. "Mussa, remember the fresh straw I brought you every night? Remember I always hid from the sun the water you drank? Are you not in the lead where you like to be? Sophia also likes to lead, but I put her last so she'd be as far from you as possible. And now, here in the marketplace of Kruja, before all my friends, you disgrace me. Get up, Mussa, please get up."

In reply, Mussa just turned her head as though she found something else more interesting than the plea of her master. At this, Milo began jumping up and down, screaming maledictions.

"You ungrateful offspring of a field mouse. Just because you were raised in the swamp country with the buffalo, do you think you can do this to me forever? When the buffalo became hot and tired, they lay down until their masters poured the swamp water over their backs. But you're no buffalo and we are not in the swamps. Twice you did this to me coming across the plains, and I had to carry water to pour over you. You either select places where the water is the remotest or where I will be the most humiliated. Get up, you overgrown mouse."

Mussa turned an unimpressed glance upon Milo and then again returned it to other objects of more interest.

The crowd began to laugh and Milo to whimper hopelessly. Removing a bucket, he walked dejectedly to the public well and returned with his bucket filled with water. In front of Mussa, Milo drew himself up to the last measure of dignity that his stooped shoulders and long nose would permit, and with all the righteous indignation he could muster, he dashed the water into the burro's face.

Instantly, Mussa scrambled to her feet, shaking her head and switching her tail. Then, as though nothing had happened and as though for the first time she was aware that Milo was anywhere about, she fastened her attention directly upon him.

The laughter of the crowd drowned out Milo's snorts of disgust as he led Mussa and his caravan toward the public house where the merchandise would be delivered.

Alex and Riggio went with the crowd to the public house, which was a large square, log room used for all public functions but mostly for the convening of the tribal chieftains' council. It was built against a steep slope, and across the front was a large, high porch.

Several men assisted Milo in unpacking the burros and

transferring their load to the porch where the crowd could see it. Alex and Riggio remained at the outer fringe. Then the tall, lean figure of Tyrak, Truena's father, mounted the steps in all his stern dignity. It was his duty and honor to conduct the distribution of, and payment for, the merchandise.

On one side of Tyrak stood short, stooped Milo. On the other, erect and proudly splendid, stood Tyrak's son, Nik. First Milo handed Tyrak a small package. Solemnly, Tyrak removed its protective wrapping to find it contained three letters.

"A year's correspondence." Riggio muttered incredulously in Alex's ear. Alex nodded with a smile. "And that's probably advertising from some Tirana merchant."

The reason for Nik's presence was now evident. Tyrak ceremoniously handed him one of the letters. Nik studied the address for a moment, then in a low, pleasant tone murmured the name to his father. Retrieving the letter, Tyrak sonorously called the name of the addressee.

From a man amid the crowd came an exclamation of astonishment and a very wrinkled oldster climbed the steps to claim his letter.

Then the procedure was repeated. This time no one answered, and Tyrak appointed someone who lived near the addressee's home to deliver the letter. When the next name was called, Alex thought his senses were tricking him, and not until Riggio nudged him did he move forward to get his letter.

He could not tell whether Tyrak's face was antagonistic or if it was his own discomfort as a result of the deep feeling he had for Truena that he knew he had no right to have. Alex glanced at Nik. Something about his candid blue eyes and clear brow was similar to Truena. Suddenly, to his surprise, Alex felt his pulse quicken. Not only did it

surprise him, it annoyed him. What was going on in his heart? This woman could never mean anything to him. What had happened to his intelligence?

Then for the first time in his life, he heard what seemed to be a voice coming from within his heart. And the voice said, "Intelligence has nothing to do with it."

He received his letter, thanked Tyrak, and moved back to Riggio. It was in his mother's handwriting.

Suddenly, there was the sharp crack of a rifle from the nearby forest. From Nik came a surprised cry. Alex looked up to see Nik clutch his shoulder and crumple to the porch. Tyrak swept up Nik's unconscious form and disappeared into the building. The people were shocked into silence. But then the stillness was broken by the sound of running feet. It was Truena. Gracefully and swiftly she ran. As she passed him, Alex saw that the piquant beauty of her face gave not the slightest hint of what she might be feeling. It was as calm and open as the new morning, revealing none of the anguish that must be hers. She had visited Moneigh in Nik's behalf. Obviously, an enemy of the family was attempting to remove the threat of a new gun.

A moment after Truena entered the room, Tyrak stormed out. In his hand was a long rifle. With astonishing agility, he vaulted the railing of the porch and sped toward the forest from where the shot had come.

Riggio released his pent-up breath. "Whew. I'd hate to be the fellow in the woods. Did you ever see such fury and purpose in a man's face?"

"These men are not called 'Sons of the Eagle' for naught. Come. Let's go to our room."

Riggio hesitated. "Couldn't we help?" he suggested.

Alex shook his head. "Worst thing we could try to do.

This is strictly a matter of family honor. Let's go before our presence becomes conspicuous. These people don't like strangers, especially at a time like this."

Alex did not open his letter until they were in their room. When he finished reading it, his hands fell to the desk with finality and a sigh of despair came from deep within him.

"Bad news?" Riggio asked gently.

"Certainly is," was Alex's quiet reply. "Mother tells me that it's Father's wish that I return to Athens instead of Paris. My father is a general in the Greek army, you know, and he has never understood or approved of my archeologic interests."

Alex held the letter at arm's length and stared at it as though searching for some solution to its contents.

"Mother says that my father's decision is caused by recent events in Austria and Czechoslovakia, which, in his opinion, make war imminent. He wants me at home with my regiment where he feels I belong."

For a long moment, they both were silently engrossed in their own thoughts. Riggio broke the silence. In a serious tone that was strange for him, he said, "I suppose I've been burying my head in the sand. I should have known that I wasn't sent to Tirana just to visit my uncle. My army commission will involve me also. I wonder what it will really mean to us – and to Pierre, Richard, and Karl. To all of us."

"According to the political trend," Alex responded, "Richard and Pierre could be fighting against Karl." He put his elbow on the desk and supported his forehead in the palm of his hand as though his thoughts were too burdensome to bear. "What it could mean to you and me," he added, his voice almost in a whisper as though the words

were too distasteful to utter, "is that your people and my people will probably be at war with each other, using Albania as a battleground."



CHAPTER FOUR A TRIAL

Determined to accomplish what he came to Albania for, Alex spent all his days at the ruins. He left at daybreak each morning and did not return until dark. Riggio made excuses not to accompany him, suddenly having developed an interest in native art.

Alex was certain Riggio was still trying to see Truena and this sudden interest in native art was an invented reason for not accompanying him. In a way, it was amusing to Alex because, to cover his embarrassment when Alex departed in the mornings, Riggio always stipulated a certain object of special interest that necessitated either producing it or a legitimate reason why he had not. Alex wished Riggio would not make his deceptions so hard on them both. Good old Riggio could never be a successful dissembler. But that which disturbed him most was a genuine fear of the consequences to Riggio's and especially to Truena's future happiness. This caused him to discover a quality within himself that, previously, he could not have conceived of or believed himself capable of, much less experience. It was a quality of his feeling for Truena. Even though he knew she could never be a part of his life, nothing was more important to him than her happiness, peace of mind, and well-being. How could this be? he asked himself over and over. Why did this strange woman from a strange land seem closer to him than anyone else in the world?

As long as he could remember, something deep inside him had been lonely and constantly searching. In fact,

there were many times that this something within wept in a quietly desperate way for the presence of an unfound one. And now, because he had found Truena, this something within him was no longer searching, no longer lonely, as though the long sought, unfound one had been found.

Alex realized that if Truena was his searched-for companion, then he was in for more pain and loneliness than ever, for he had found what could not be his. Now his loneliness would be more acute, more real, more personalized. It did not make sense. And if it were true, it would mean there was deliberate cruelty within the order of the Universe – and this Alex refused to believe. To him, either he was suffering from some form of neurosis or else there was an explanation that, as yet, he did not comprehend.

One night, Alex's sleep was disturbed by the offensive, acrid odor of native-tanned leather, which meant that somewhere in the room was a leather object that Riggio had purchased from Truena's father's shop – in all probability from Truena herself.

The next morning, he found a pair of handsomely tooled gauntlets that Riggio had hidden beneath the bed. As Alex straightened from reaching them, he slapped one gauntlet against the other with feigned interest and appreciation.

"Very fine work," he said disarmingly.

Riggio glanced sheepishly at Alex's discovery. "Yes," he replied, with an effort at being casual. And then, in a most authentic tone, he explained, "They are tanned by the valonia that they obtain from home-grown acorns."

"I know," Alex replied dryly. "That's why they smell the way they do." Alex's expression became seriously meaningful as he gently slapped the gauntlets together. "In

olden days gauntlets had two purposes: duels were challenged and they protected the hands in battle."

He tossed them into Riggio's lap as he moved toward the door. Pausing, he turned back to Riggio and, smiling affectionately, said, "Don't let yourself get challenged to a duel, Sir Knight."

Alex closed the door softly, eliminating the necessity for Riggio to reply.

When Alex reached the ruins, he began to work with feverish haste. He knew the gauntlets were the first tangible evidence of Riggio's recklessness in seeing Truena and that it was now Alex's responsibility to remove any reason for his remaining in Kruja any longer.

He ceased gathering new material and began an inventory of his notes, drawings and objects. One was a finger ring carved from lodestone that held a luster, either from being polished or from being worn a long time. From his inventory, he estimated that today's work could complete the data necessary to prepare his thesis and that if he remained any longer, he would be as guilty as Riggio.

He was startled from his concentration by the sound of a voice, a very special voice, which asked, "Why do you do that?"

Truena stood behind him. Her eyes were wide, her lips slightly parted, as though her interest sprang from within her whole being. The sincerity of her question caused Alex to desire to answer her with accuracy and sensitivity. He began slowly, as though feeling carefully for the truth. Never before had the truth about his work been so important.

"The only 'why' that I'm really sure of is that I like it."

The blue of her eyes seemed to suddenly grow deeper. "I can see that you like it. That's why I want to know why."

Alex pointed to a block of masonry and suggested that she be seated. Then he sat opposite her. Picking up a piece of stone, he rolled it between his thumb and fingers, still feeling his way in answering her question. Suddenly, he realized the need to re-evaluate the answer for himself.

"In archeology, we study the progress people have made toward what's generally called 'civilization.' In stones such as these, I often feel the touch of other people's fingers. Perhaps it's because I want to understand what they were trying to do, what they were seeking, why they built walls to keep out their enemies and temples to appease their gods."

Alex was aware of a sweet fulfillment in his heart, as though communication with this woman provided a reality to beingness for which he had long hungered. With new enthusiasm, he continued "It seems that before anyone could create anything that was truly his or her own, they first had to build two walls: one against those who would destroy them from without and another that would destroy them from within. An individual's first need has always been to be left in peace from human enemies and from the demands of a self-appointed god. When left in peace, the individual's natural yearning to create beauty was released. The design of architecture is music to me, a melody crystallized in time and space. It tells me of humanity's hopes and fears, dreams and aspirations. Each stone, like this one, is a note in the symphony.

"In statuary, the sculptor attempted to enshrine his or her aspirations, desire for nobility, symmetry, and grace. In the faces and forms of the statues, I sense the direction and attitude of the sculptor's mind and heart.

"In the tools and utensils, I sense the person's sweat and hunger. In the trinkets and jewelry, I share the ardor of the love, the rigidity of the pride, the bitterness of jeal-

ousies, and the despair of defeats embedded in them." Alex paused. He was moved by his own words. He had not realized the comprehensive penetration of his feelings about his work. He was thrilled that Truena sat as one entranced by a new and wondrous world.

The lodestone ring came to his mind. Removing it from his pocket, he explained, "This ring is made of lodestone, and it has a particular capacity to be magnetized." He offered her the ring and said, "Perhaps it was made by a man who gave it to his love."

He knew he had never seen anything more sweetly beautiful than Truena's face as she leaned toward him to accept the ring. "If you hold it softly and closely in the palm of your hand," he told her, "you can feel its magnetism. The magnetism of the stone absorbs the magnetism of the person who wears it, and the blend of the two causes it to grow warmer and brighter."

Alex knew he was making this up, from a quickened heart inspired by the magic of the moment and the tender, almost reverent way she was holding the ring. He could not stop his words. They seemed to flow from something within him, in response to what he sensed in her.

"That warmth and luster," he heard himself say, "comes from the happiness of the wearer and her happiness comes from her love. When happy, the magnetism is high; when unhappy, the ring grows cold. The legend is that the ring is a replica of the heart. Her heart knows if he loves her, even though her mind says he doesn't. From this heartfelt knowing, she is happy, and this causes the ring to be warm, regardless of any other evidence to the contrary. She trusts the ring, just as lovers must trust their hearts, not their minds."

He watched her close her fingers slowly over the ring, and then she opened them and, for an instant, gazed ten-

derly at the stone. Suddenly, she snuggled it to her ear and, tilting her head, looked directly into his eyes and said, "When it is very happy, one can hear it sing."

Truena's interpretation of his story so delighted him that, from sheer elation, he threw back his head and laughed. He knew he had made up most of it, but suddenly he realized that he had used the story to express what she really meant to him. He felt a deep relief that he had told her. He needed to so much, and it was proper that she did not know he had told her and could not be hurt by it. For Alex realized that whether it was Riggio or himself who disrupted her life, the result was the same: she would be unhappy and this he did not want. He brought himself back to the moment.

"You asked me why I'm an archeologist, and I want so much to give you the true answer. I believe I am looking for reasons ... reasons why certain things happen, such things as war, such things as why a nation, like my nation, Greece, could soar so high in culture, then lose it. I've always felt that somewhere within these relics of human purposes and passions, I could find the answer."

With an anxious smile, he asked uncertainly, "Did I answer your question?"

Truena was still gazing at the ring. At his question, she raised her eyes. In their dazzling depths, Alex thought he saw a new awareness, a new awareness that brought new warmth to the wonder her eyes made him feel.

"Yes," she answered a bit huskily. "You have answered many questions." She held out the ring to return it.

"Won't you keep it?" Alex heard himself say. And then he added, "It really belongs to you more than to me. It might even have been worn by your ancestors."

Alex could see that the idea of her wearing this ring

was moving through her mind. As it did, he felt her look at him in a new way. He felt that for the first time she was looking at him as a real person, as a man, and he felt more of a person, more of a man, more complete than he had ever felt before.

Then, as though she suddenly remembered where she was, she leaped to her feet. "I must go," she murmured. "Good go with you."

She turned with the quick grace that always thrilled him and disappeared into the woods. Alex felt an excitement that was strange to him. He tried to define it. From within him came the word "holy." Could that be it? What did "holy" mean? How could excitement be "holy"? Whatever it meant, his feeling for Truena was associated with it. Regardless of how impossible it seemed, Alex knew that this remote mountain wildflower had awakened a quality of love within him that he had never conceived of, much less thought he would ever experience.

When Alex finally forced himself back to the task of finishing his work, he knew that it was himself who most needed to leave Kruja, not Riggio. And deep down a hard conviction persisted that leaving would not solve anything. Only one thing could do that, and that one thing was utterly impossible. Truena's life was planned for her, and his was becoming more and more planned for him. Their two lives were as far apart as two worlds could be, even if their native countries were separated by only a range of mountains.

Such thoughts and his work were so engrossing that it was mid-afternoon before he realized the hour. He was gathering tools and equipment for the last time when Truena again stood before him. This time she was pale. Her usual brightness was replaced with solemn purposefulness.

"They have taken Riggio," she announced.

Alex's mind surged incredulously. Another twelve hours and they would have been gone. "How serious is it?" he asked.

"I cannot be certain. In the middle of the day, I went to gather fagots in the forest. Riggio came. The father of the one to whom I am betrothed saw us together. He sent a message to my father. Before my father would have his honor assailed or become in blood with the family of my betrothed, he will kill Riggio."

"You said he'd been taken. Who took him?"

"Because Riggio is from a foreign land and because both my father and the father of my betrothed are members of the council, Riggio's fate will be settled by tribal council."

"What usually happens in a case like this?" Alex asked.

Truena shook her head. "I do not know. In my time, no one from the low country has faced the council."

Moneigh suddenly came into Alex's racing thoughts. "Is Moneigh still here?"

Truena's face brightened. "Yes ... I believe so."

"Hurry. We'll go to him."

Truena led the way up the trail. About halfway up they met Moneigh rapidly descending. He already knew what they came to tell him and, without breaking his stride, spoke to Alex. "Follow me. There's a shortcut."

And to Truena, he said, "Go home and quiet your fears, my child." With obvious relief and without a word she instantly obeyed.

The shortcut taken by Moneigh was exceedingly precipitous, making conversation impossible and giving Alex reason for awe at Moneigh's agility and strength.

A crowd had gathered outside the council chamber. Moneigh and Alex entered quietly and took seats at the back of the room. The square walls were of hewn birch. Upon a bench against the wall sat seven of the leanest and sternest looking men Alex had ever seen in one group. In front of them was Riggio, bound to a heavy chair and facing the members of the council. Obviously, he had not been taken without a struggle for his clothes were torn and one eye was swollen shut; a bad gash on one cheek increased the pallor of his face. Bewildered anger enveloped him, which subdued as he tried to smile gratefully when seeing Alex and Moneigh.

In another chair, a few feet from Riggio, sat a sullen youth also facing the seven judges. From what the council speaker was saying, Alex learned that the youth was Lufka, to whom Truena was betrothed. Beside him stood Lufka's father, and next to him stood Truena's father.

The case was evidently being summarized. If the families of Lufka and Truena became in blood over this, it would mean that many valuable lives would be lost, lives needed by the tribe. So it was being suggested that Truena's father permit Lufka's father to punish Riggio in any way his honor demanded. In this way, there would be no one to repay the blood and the honor of both families would remain in tact.

Before any action could be taken on this suggestion, Moneigh moved to the front. Everyone was so interested in the trial that few had been aware of his presence. But as he walked up the aisle the extent of his esteem was instantly recognized. Everyone made way for him, and the council remained respectfully silent. He stood beside Riggio with his back against the wall so he could see and be seen by every person present.

Both understanding and accusation were in his tone as

he spoke to the assembled council members. "If your ancestral council founder, Lek, stood where I stand, not one of you would go unpunished. For you are about to destroy the very purpose of his law. You are taking the honor he taught you to cherish and making it an excuse to justify whatever act of cruelty tempts you. You have let yourselves believe that honor has but one color, the color of blood, when, in truth, honor is an attitude, not an act, a response of the heart, not the hand.

"In your thirst for violence, you have forgotten that Lek included the alternative of a fine in his law. He did this so that a strong man would not have to suffer the humiliation of fighting an unworthy adversary. He established it for another reason, too. In your zeal for personal honor, you have forgotten that there is a more honorable honor – impersonal honor, which is the honor of your land in its relation with other lands.

"You cannot interpret ignorance of your laws as deliberate attempts to break them, especially in this case, where no harm has been done, unless you regard it as evil for young friends to laugh and play in the sun.

"So if it is truly honor with which you are concerned, you should consider the purest honor, which is impersonal honor. If it is your purpose to comply with Lek's law, you will use the provision he gave for just such a circumstance as this and fine the young man, from a friendly country, thereby sending him home with honor of your land and his undefiled."

His last words were directed to Lufka's father whose stern countenance had begun to show a tinge of sheepishness. Throughout the council chamber, grim fierceness was giving way to reluctant enlightenment. When Moneigh finished, he looked about the chamber again. Satisfied with what he saw, he drew himself more erect

and strode down the aisle and out of the building.

His departure was followed by a moment of heavy silence. Then whisperings began among the judges. At length, the leader rose and, addressing Lufka's father, asked him what fine he felt was due him.

Lufka's father conferred with Lufka, then announced a sum to the council. Alex went forward and paid the sum. Then the leader instructed Alex and Riggio to be gone from Kruja before nightfall.

Riggio was a thoroughly subdued young man as Alex and he packed their gear. Alex's efforts at conversation failed. He talked about their equipment and supplies as they packed them. He tried to joke. He attempted everything he could think of to move Riggio out of self-condemnation, pointing out that no harm had been done.

From his knees where he was rolling a blanket, Riggio said, "I know you'd never say, 'I told you so.' But I wish you would. You act as if there's no harm done. How about your thesis, the reason you came to Albania? And how about Truena's reputation?"

"Don't worry about the thesis. The work is finished, and I had planned to suggest that we leave tomorrow. As to Truena's reputation, in this country, a woman doesn't have a 'reputation' – only a man. In this case, the man's reputation has been saved."

Tightening the final knot in his pack, Alex concluded with a grin "And don't think I'm going to tell you to mend your ways. I know if I tried to change Riggio, I wouldn't like what I ended up with. Your ways suited me before we came here, and they still suit me. That's what makes you Riggio."

With a rebellious grunt at its weight, Alex hoisted his pack and added, "You didn't act any differently here than

from anywhere else. It's just that the people here are different. Maybe they are wrong, maybe not. Who knows?"

He started for the door.

"Come on. Let's go. It'll be downhill going back."

Riggio's eyes glowed with appreciation for Alex as he followed him out the door.

When they were some distance from the village, Moneigh suddenly appeared ahead of them in the middle of the trail. Placing a hand on Riggio's shoulder, he said, "One of the most difficult things for us to accept is that the way man is permitted to express his love is largely a matter of geographical boundaries. But don't let this discourage that magnificent heart of yours, for in time, the boundaries will be removed and your kind of love will have much to do with their removal."

He stepped back from the trail, indicating that they were to go on. Alex wanted to say something but did not know what to say. Moneigh, as though sensing his difficulty, raised his hand in farewell and said, "I'll see you both again. Until then, a smooth trail."

Alex and Riggio walked in silence. With every step that took Alex away from Truena, his heart grew heavier. Riggio and the trail they were descending seemed unreal. Everything seemed unreal. He had found the one for whom his soul had always hungered, and now he was going away from her ... probably forever. How could he face the rest of his life without ever seeing her again?

But he could not stay. He had been ordered out of the country. And even if he had not been, Truena already belonged to Lufka as far as her world was concerned.

He remembered the lodestone ring he had given her and the words he had said. He now said them to himself, in an effort to find comfort. The picture of Truena sitting

on the stone at the ruins tenderly looking at the ring in her precious hand became the only reality he could feel.

Alex began to wonder if the ring was warm. He wondered if it was true that hearts knew things that minds could not know. The possibility gave him a strange hope. For, in his heart, he could not accept that he would never see her again, regardless of what his mind told him. Could his heart know something his mind did not? Suddenly, he thought he saw a flash of yellow and blue moving through the woods – the colors of Truena's skirt and shawl the first time he saw her. He stopped and tried to see it again. Was Truena really out there, following a ways to get a glimpse of him, or was it his imagination? All he could see now were the different shades of the forest green. But a new conviction was in his heart.

As he quickened his pace to catch up with Riggio, he knew he now had a way to live with his problem. He would live within his heart. His heart would be his world, and no matter what the outside world said, he would listen only to his heart.



CHAPTER FIVE A DECISION

It had been a week since Alex left Riggio at Tirana's seaport, Durazzo, where they each took separate ships for their own native lands. They had assured each other that they would, if at all possible, return to Sorbonne when the term began.

Alex had been in Athens three days. As yet his father had not mentioned the army and Alex felt it wise to wait until he did. He had just finished a walk through his beloved Athens and was experiencing a deep sense of depression. As he climbed the landscaped terraces surrounding his home that overlooked Athens, he struggled with his melancholia. He paused and looked down at the city. Its normal beauty and color were still there, but it failed to lift his spirit. He had mounted the Acropolis and stood amid the ruins of the Parthenon to see if he could capture his old elation, for it was there that his life's quest had been born.

Today, as he had done many times in his special place in the Parthenon, he had pressed his back against the cool smoothness of his favorite column and, from amid the ruins of one civilization, looked down at the peak of another. Today, when he again tried to interpret the present in terms of the past, to seek an answer and a purpose to the destruction that had left little of the beauty of the Parthenon, he saw only broken, stubbed fingers reaching piteously toward the sky as though supplicating for the return of their glory.

Modern Athens stretched out below in the endless rows

and clusters of red roofs and cream walls, gleaming in the sunlight. The only feeling he could get from his beloved ruins was that when another cycle of destruction rolled around, his modern Athens would also become but splintered and stubbed fingers, reaching forth to heaven in piteous supplication for the same answer. Why does it have to keep repeating itself? Why?

He was grateful for his preoccupation with his old seeking and searching for answers, for it helped him hold back mind-thoughts about Truena and let in only heart-thoughts about her.

As he entered the frontcourt of his home, his mother stepped out from the shade of a huge tree to greet him. Her slight, erect figure always impressed him. There was a subtle power in the gentle dignity of this slender woman that always dominated the obvious force of his military father without him even being aware of it. Her face, to Alex, was symbolic of the basic character of Greece: cultured, refined, and yet capable of fierce strength. A smile was on her lips, but Alex detected a purposeful anxiety about her eyes.

He bowed playfully, exclaiming with mock incredulity, "Ah, a dark and mysterious beauty alone in the forest. Could it be I have at last found my dream princess."

Alex and his mother had always played games with each other. His knowledge of Greek mythology and culture was a result of the games they had played in his youth.

"Is everything all right?" she inquired casually. But Alex knew she was so sensitive to his feelings that she had already detected he was having difficulty within himself.

"Certainly," he assured her. "I was just out to see what kind of mood our Athens was in today."

"Does she brood?" his mother asked, a shade of concern in her tone. "Is her mood due for a change?"

Alex realized he had failed to disarm her. "Certainly it will change," he chided. "Athens is a woman, is she not?"

His mother gave him a knowing look that told him she understood and appreciated his efforts but that she realized something was disturbing his peace of mind.

"Speaking of the feminine," she said, "Claudia called. She and her family have just returned. They have opened their summer home at 'Kephisia-in-the-Hills.' She wants you to call her immediately." Then with a meaningful smile, she added, "She seemed very excited when she learned of your return."

Claudia's family, and his, had expected a match between Alex and Claudia for as long as he could remember. He had grown to accept it as inevitable and assumed she had also. At news of her return, he realized he had not thought of Claudia once since his arrival. His mind began reasoning with him by relating Claudia to Truena. After all, Claudia was of his own people, his own traditions, and very beautiful. Why should he hold onto the picture of an Albanian maid dancing in a primeval forest? He kissed his mother and went into the house to call Claudia.

When Claudia was at the other end of the telephone, Alex found himself listening more to the animation of her cultured voice than to what she was saying. Her subject was one Alex always associated with Claudia – social activities. Her animation was due to the promise of a spectacular season: dinner at the legation plus lavish receptions given by the many diplomatic representatives striving to out-do the other.

Alex suddenly realized he had developed a strong aver-

sion to the pomp and pretense of these receptions that he now saw as kaleidoscopic parades of affection for the purpose of picking political plums. Because of this, he summoned the courage make a suggestion. "I'd like a kiss from the sea. She must think I've forgotten her. We could spend the afternoon on the beach and leisurely have dinner."

"And miss one of the most important receptions." was her horrified reply. Then with obvious distaste, she added, "Besides, sticky salt and grimy sand don't make a very nice kiss."

Alex wondered if his sudden aversion to these lavish functions was a subtle form of faithfulness to the simple honesty of Truena's way of life. Again his mind attempted to assert itself by whispering, You must forget Truena and become absorbed in the life you've always known, which, until now, seemed quite adequate. After all, Claudia is charming, and the social activities can be entertaining.

So, for awhile, his mind was in control, and a day did not pass that he and Claudia were not in the midst of pomp, parade, color, music, and formality. At first, Alex put his all into enjoying it, but each time it became more of an effort. And with the increasing effort, he was less like himself. He knew he would never be able to make this his way of life, and he could see that, increasingly, Claudia was taking his part in it for granted. Several times, she implied to their mutual friends that she and Alex would be enjoying these things together the rest of their lives.

As the days passed, Alex became more certain that Claudia's main interest in him was as a companion for her social triumphs. It was not that she was deliberately deceiving him. It was just her point of view, her set of values. To her, there was nothing more important.

Finally, the time came when Alex saw very clearly that in permitting her to continue this attitude toward him, he

was contributing to her eventual disappointment, as well as to his own. So it had to be stopped. Tonight they were attending an outstanding affair. Perhaps an opportunity would present itself for bringing his true feelings to her attention.

The ballroom lights gleamed brightly on bare, smooth shoulders and colored uniforms laden with high-ranking insignia. Restrained voices and laughter punctuated the lilting tones of stringed instruments.

Claudia's cool, classic beauty always made an impression. Alex was a bit startled every time he saw her. In between times, he would forget how impressive she really was, and it always surprised him that he had not remembered.

Shortly after they arrived, Claudia was claimed by several masculine admirers. Alex thought how perfectly she graced the life she liked so well: her fine features, proud posture, graceful carriage, and slender figure delightfully accentuated in a gown of the latest design.

As Alex continued to watch her, he grew more uncomfortable. He found he was observing things he would prefer not to see. Claudia seemed overly conscious of the impression she made. Her seeming spontaneity was with purpose and design. Alex found he could anticipate when she would toss her head and laugh; when she would turn wide eyes full upon an admirer; when she would look at another from the corner of her eyes; when she would demurely bow her head.

He was at the same time fascinated and disgusted with himself. Claudia was, in all probability, no different than she had always been, so why should he spy upon her feminine antics and judge them? However, regardless of his self-condemnation, he continued to watch with somewhat morbid fascination. He had the feeling that a play was

being enacted for his special benefit since he was the only one watching it from his point of view.

Alex's disgust with himself increased as he observed her skill at the approach of a new admirer. She first gave him the impression of being completely carried away with joy at his arrival, then artfully relegated him to the category of the others without him or the others having their individual ambitions seriously hampered. At this point, Alex realized how entirely his analysis was getting out of hand. So he took himself to the patio.

It was a glorious night, a new moon sailing in a sea of blue-white stars. The stars were large and seemed to flicker with a fresh abundance of energy.

He had often seen stars like this on the goat farm his grandfather left him. Why hadn't he thought of it before? He would go to the farm. Suddenly, his yearning for the farm and for Mike and his wife and family was so acute that it was actually painful. In his mind, he saw the green slopes of pasture rolling down to the little cove and he heard the goats' plaintive baa floating on air pungent with the aroma of crushed grass. The smell of the animals, blended with the fragrance of the green meadows, always gave Alex a sense of well-being, a sort of confidence in the overall scheme of things.

He felt that what he needed was to re-establish this sense of confidence. He would go to the farm tomorrow. Why not take Claudia? She had never been there and had often told him she would like to go. He would find her this instant and tell her his plans.

As he started back to the ballroom, he took a shortcut through the shadowed patio shrubbery. In his haste, he almost ran into a man and a woman. As he began retracing his steps in order not to embarrass them, he suddenly stopped. The woman in the officer's arms was Claudia.

Alex expected the conventional emotion of an outraged male ego. But he did not feel it. Instead, he felt only curiously amused at himself and the situation. After all, he had spent very little time with Claudia in the past few years, just a few weeks in the summers when they were in Athens at the same time. Perhaps the solution to the entire problem was to spend some time together on the farm with no one around but Mike and his family. He would still ask her to go.

Later, he found her in the ballroom. Her warm greeting would have been pleasing to him had he not known she had just come from the arms of another man. He led her to the patio and told her his plans.

"Goat farm!" she echoed in a tone somewhat akin to horror. Then, in more moderation, she added, "Not now, dear. You wouldn't want me to miss the State Dinner tomorrow night, would you? Then there's the Palace Ball the next evening. Wouldn't they be more interesting than goats?"

Alex shrugged his shoulders good-naturedly. "Depends on which kind one prefers. There are goats and there are goats."

"Sarcasm doesn't become you," she remarked with coolness.

Alex did not pursue the matter. Suddenly, he knew that to continue the misrepresentation of his feelings would be unjust to Claudia. There were many young men who would share her enthusiasm for this kind of life.

She became restless with their silence and started back to the party.

"Claudia," he said gently, "archeology will keep me in remote places of the world most of the time. Places that would have no charm for you. We both know that our

families have made plans concerning our future. In fairness to you, I'd like to release you from any responsibility regarding those plans."

Claudia stepped back and stared at him with quizzical disbelief. Then anger swept across her face. Haughtily, she drew herself erect and with acrid sweetness said, "That will be most satisfactory, my little goat-herder!" Disdainfully, she whirled and hurried across the patio, back to the noise and brilliance of the ballroom.

It was with a strange sense of relief that Alex watched her return to the world into which she fit so well. He saw Claudia tilt her perfectly groomed head to one of her most effective angles as she approached the state awaiting her, and his thoughts flashed to Truena. The contrast of Truena's sparkling wholesomeness and genuine sweetness caused Alex's heart to sing. But the song was short-lived for it was instantly followed by the knowledge that Truena could never be anything but a memory.

As he drove home, he was aware of his new loneliness, that very kind of loneliness he warned Riggio they might bring to Truena by causing her to be discontent with her life as it had been planned and must be lived. How ironical that, instead of it happening to Truena, it happened to him.

His mother and father had not yet retired. They looked up from their reading with questions in their eyes at his early return.

Alex did not answer their questions. Instead, he kissed his mother's smooth brow and said to his father, "If you have no objections, sir, I would like to go to the farm for a few days."

As a member of the Greek Parliament and a high-ranking officer of the militia, his father naturally wore an attitude of impervious dignity, but Alex sensed a stiffened reaction to his request to visit the farm. Even though they

had never been very close, Alex admired the strength of his father's convictions and held a sincere affection for him.

Clearing his throat authoritatively, his father spoke and as he did so the restraint necessary to keep his tone level was obvious. "General Scobie is making a speech to the young officers of the Royalist Party in a few days and I'd like you to attend."

Alex did not answer at once. A glance at his mother revealed that she intended to keep her eyes on the book. The tranquil expression on her face belied the fact that all three knew his father's resentment of Alex's career choice was now out in the open ... and much depended on what happened in the next few minutes.

"I'd prefer to go to the farm," Alex stated very quietly.

His father's suppressed feelings gave way. He snapped the book shut and, rising to his most military posture, spoke with contempt. "If you had not permitted your mind to become as decadent as the subjects you waste your time studying, you'd realize that Europe is on the verge of another war."

Alex was unmoved. It was not that he tried to be; he just could not help it. In the same quiet tones, he replied, "I know, Father. History is about to repeat itself again. The reason I'm unimpressed is that regardless of the results of this war, another will follow and change the results of this one. The subjects I study testify to this truth."

His father's contempt grew to anger. His mother's eyes remained on her book; her forehead stayed smooth. Taking several deliberately precise strides about the room, his father halted before him and, with folded arms, looked into Alex's calm face accusingly. "Often I've heard you profess your love for Greece. Now that she's threatened,

you choose to be unconcerned. What are you?"

"It isn't that I'm unconcerned, Father. It's just that I'm more concerned with why the aggression periodically recurs than with personally participating in the next one."

Alex's tone became a plea for understanding. "Archeology has uncovered layer upon layer of civilizations such as ours, each of which was destroyed by war weapons in the hands of people who loved their country as much as we do ... enough to fight for it.

"So you see, Father, loving your country enough to fight for it isn't enough. It isn't the answer. Love of this kind destroys both you and your country. There must be another answer besides armies. There has to be. To try to find that answer is why I study the subjects I do. In the patterns of the past, I hope to find the solution to the future."

His father lifted his arms and stormed so loudly it shook the book in his mother's hands but did not cause her to look up. "I should have stopped this archeological nonsense years ago. Do you expect to defeat armies with books?"

For a moment, his father was so exasperated he could not speak. Then, in hopeless resignation, he muttered, "Go to the farm. Go anywhere you like. But if you ever return to that school again, it will be without my permission. You are a disgrace to me and to the commission you hold in the Greek Army." Then he strode from the room.

As Alex watched him go, his dominant emotion was sympathy for a father's disappointment in a son. He would have liked to make his father's life full by achieving a brilliant military career, but if he did, his own would be empty and he would be false to everyone. The next thing he felt was a sense of failure. When the silent conflict between his ideology and his father's had finally come into the

open, he had failed to justify his attitude in his father's eyes. He felt his mother's fingers firmly and warmly clasp his arm.

"It had to come," she consoled, the dry huskiness in her voice the only evidence of what the long-awaited scene had done to her.

"Yes," Alex replied as lightly as he could. "Glad it's over." The smile he turned on his mother did not hold up so well as he added, "I won't have to do all that hard work to get a degree that probably wouldn't do me or anyone else any particular good." He grasped her shoulders playfully, kissed her forehead, and exclaimed, "Now we can do all those things I've planned so long for us to do together."

His mother returned his smile. But hers was one of appreciation for his efforts to conceal his true feelings and not for that which his words suggested.

"You will still do the things you really want but not yet. Go to the farm. Drink deep of its peace and of Mike's affection. Forget what has happened here. I will do my best to heal your father's self-inflicted wounds."



CHAPTER SIX EXPECTANCY

It was dark the next day before Alex reached the end of the road. He left his car and, with bag in hand, began the half-mile walk up to Mike's house. There was not a cloud in the sky; the stars were so close he was tempted to reach for one. A balmy wind blew in from the sea, bending the tall, lush grass in gentle curtsy. With every step and every breath Alex felt more alive. The grass under his feet became little coiled springs, throwing his steps higher and faster.

He wondered about Shep, the big collie. He hoped Shep scented him before he heard him; otherwise, he would set off an alarm, and Alex wanted to surprise Mike. He gave a low whistle as the silhouette of Mike's two-story house loomed into view.

A shaggy shadow ran swiftly toward him. With frantic whines of joy, Shep leaped into his arms, and they fell to the ground to cuff and hug each other until the first layers of gladness were worn off.

Shep continued to jump up one side, then the other, as Alex quietly approached the house. Mounting the steps, he tiptoed across the porch and looked through the window. Shep moved back to watch with confident curiosity.

Mike sat in the old armchair reading his stockman's magazine. Alex smiled as he recognized that it was the same issue Mike had been reading when he was here over a year ago. Mike had read that same magazine for years. His shoes were off and every so often he wriggled his toes contentedly as he glanced at his wife, Marta, and their

twelve-year-old daughter. In Sarah's lap was her four-year-old brother, fast asleep. His daughter looked up, and Mike grinned at her, nodding his head approvingly.

Mike was short and stocky with an abundance of wiry, unruly salt and pepper hair. His eyes were clear and seemed constantly on the verge of crinkling into a smile. His complexion was of the sea and sun, and his cheeks glowed with ruddy color.

As he whispered something to Marta about Little Mike, she raised her head from her darning and smiled warmly. She was of a coloring and constitution that never grows old. Sitting erect in her chair, she was obviously a happy woman.

To Alex, the scene was more meaningful than it had ever been before. A family group living with and for each other. Very seldom did they see anyone else in their isolated home but found in one another sufficient interest and pleasure to make each day a happy one. For a moment, Alex withheld his presence, savoring his newly discovered appreciation. Sarah rose and carried sleeping Mike to his bed.

Alex opened the door, stuck his head in, and whispered quietly. "Hello, you old bear."

Mike and Marta bounded to their feet as one. With cries of incredulous joy, each grabbed one of Alex's arms and did a maypole dance about the room.

Marta ran to the kitchen to prepare a snack, and Mike pushed him into the master's chair. While Alex refreshed himself, Mike and Marta told of the incidents and changes that had taken place on the farm since his last visit. Alex shared their joy until it was bedtime.

The most comfortably furnished room in the house was always held in readiness for Alex, though he seldom came more than once a year. He lay between clean, crisp sheets

and gazed out a window at the heavens, his heart warm in appreciation of the love of these sturdy people, a love that poured forth with unrestrained abandon from sincere and open hearts.

The breeze from the sea murmured assuringly in the trees around the house. It would start softly as if far away, then slowly, gradually, grow louder and stronger, as though growing more and more excited as it told the trees of the things it had seen and done in the open sea.

Next morning, the fragrance of breakfast coffee, a laughing, sunlit sky, the urgent twitter of birds, the proud pic-pic-pic-caw of an industrious hen, and the lusty shouting of Little Mike served to hurry Alex downstairs and onto the porch to become part of it all.

Little Mike, his tousled head erect and his short legs pumping sturdily, was marching back and forth across the yard. Close behind Mike was a duck, followed in single file by five ducklings. Wherever little Mike led, his faithful feathered army followed. If he climbed an object that his followers could not manage, they frantically and noisily found some means of skirting it then, with proud dignity, resumed their positions at his rear. It was little Mike's game to confound and confuse them, then to march away shouting accusations at their laziness for not keeping up with him. After a few minutes, Marta retrieved him with her cheery breakfast call.

With breakfast over and their lunch basket filled with Marta's wholesome food, Alex and Mike set out to look over the farm. For hours, they inspected herds scattered across the green pastures that sloped down to the sea.

They came to where the meandering slopes formed a beautiful valley. Where the green of the valley met the blue of the sea, a stream emptied into a protected little

cove. A rowboat Mike used for fishing pulled gently at its moorings.

Mike pointed his arm with pride over the valley with its grazing goats. "Some herd, eh, Alex," he exclaimed.

"Splendid, Mike," Alex answered enthusiastically. "One of the reasons for the saying that there are more goats than Greeks in Greece."

Mike laughed appreciatively and then frowned, as the drone of airplanes grew audible. They were military planes flying in formation. Some of the goats ceased grazing and became nervous and fidgety.

"What do these airplanes mean?" Mike demanded. "They come most every day and frighten my goats."

"The government is training pilots," Alex replied. "It looks as if Europe will soon be at war again."

"By the Hawk of the Horns," Mike exclaimed irritably. Then, with perplexity, he declared, "Sometimes I think the whole world is insane. Why are men always fighting and killing? What do they want? Do they know? If they had as much sense as old Agnes there," he said, pointing to a large brown, white-headed goat, "they'd be as peaceful and contented as she is. She lives in the sunshine, eats the grass, and drinks the water. She doesn't try to change it, and she doesn't doubt that the grass is growing just to be eaten by her. Her world is good to her because she accepts it just as it is."

Mike stared at Agnes a moment, then repeated with emphasis, "Yes, the people who make so much misery for themselves and others could learn from old Agnes."

Suddenly, Mike turned and pointed to the northern crest of the valley where an inviting cottage perched. "Alex," he accused, "you used to tell me you expected to spend a part of each year in your cottage. I get tired keeping it pretty

for no one to see. Can't you find a sweet girl who would like old Mike's family and our goats?"

Alex gazed at the cottage, then over the peaceful valley and down to the sea. For a long moment he did not answer. Then in a hoarse voice he said, "I've found her, Mike ... but I wish I hadn't."

Mike was shocked into concerned silence by such words coming from his beloved Alex.

"Yes, Mike," Alex explained with his eyes fixed on the cottage. "I see her in the grace of every tree and in the gentleness of every cloud."

Mike was puzzled. "But you have found her and you love her."

"I'm afraid just finding her and loving her isn't enough. We are separated by insurmountable barriers."

"She doesn't love you?" Mike asked incredulously.

Alex smiled with appreciation for Mike's disbelief. "I don't know. The barriers would have to be removed before I could even ask her."

Mike was dejected. He had to find a way to help his friend. Automatically, he lifted his eyes to heaven, then lowered them to the mountains in the distance. His gaze fixed on the perpendicular cliffs of Mount Parnassus, several miles away. Suddenly, his face lit with a thought.

"Alex," he exclaimed, "from here we can see the spot on Mount Parnassus where the Temple of Delphi stands ... the Oracle of Apollo."

Alex nodded and glanced at Mike, puzzled at his mentioning the ancient temple at this particular moment. "Yes," he answered indulgently, "but there isn't much left of it. Nero removed statues, and Constantine took the sacred tripod."

"Just the same," Mike persisted, "at one time or another, kings from every land went to the temple for help ... and got it. The oracle helped many people, great and small. The glory of the temple itself is gone, but I believe its power will always remain to serve those who have the faith to seek it."

Alex stared at Mike, the significance of his subtle suggestion becoming more obvious. Suddenly, he lifted his eyes toward the shining cliffs and said, "Ever since my mother told me as a child of its glorious past, I've wanted to visit the Temple of Delphi, but never before have I had the need and the opportunity at the same time."

"Why not right now." Mike exclaimed, handing him the lunch basket. "Take it. I'll be home in time to eat with my family." Then, soberly, he added, "Be careful. I've heard strange stories about what has been seen and heard in those dark gorges leading up to the Sacred Way."

As Alex took the lunch, he felt as though the decision had already been made for him, as though he had nothing to do with it. "Don't worry if I'm not back by dark," he heard himself say.

"We won't." Mike started to say something else, then quietly turned and strode rapidly down the slope toward his home.

Slightly dazed at the suddenness of it all, Alex watched him go, then set out in the direction of the brooding and long silent Oracle of Delphi.

About four miles northwest of his farm, Alex arrived at the edge of a deep, precipitous gorge through which flowed the ancient stream of Pelisses. The source of the stream was the Castilian fountain, bubbling from a rugged cliff high up Mount Parnassus.

The significance of where he was caused his heart to

thump with excitement. On the southern slope of Mount Parnassus, shaded by towering cliffs, were the ruins of what was once a magnificent temple faced with marble and adorned with vast numbers of beautiful statues and murals.

Because of his inclusive knowledge, he was able to recapture its majesty in color and tone and imagine the brilliance of royal processions as they climbed the Sacred Way to the temple, bearing gifts to Apollo. He saw them pass through the door to the inner shrine over which was inscribed the deathless motto – Know Thyself. Here, those seeking entry handed a written query to a priest in official attendance.

Then the Pythia, the Priestess, bathed herself in the waters of the magical underground stream. Afterwards, she chewed on a sacred laurel leaf and slipped into an altered state of consciousness as the leaf's trance inducing properties took effect. Entering the temple following these rites, she sat upon the golden tripod, inhaling the vapor that arose from the magical stream below that was believed to be Divine Apollo's breath.

Thus the Priestess was inspired to mutter strange sounds that were interpreted by priests skilled in this way of wisdom. Their interpretations were recorded in verse to be presented as the Oracle's answer to the question posed by the eager visitor.

Alex was stirred from his reverie of this ancient ritual by the gathering of threatening shadows in the gorge. It was as though the shadows had remained deep in recesses and caves just waiting for the fading of day to come forth in some ominous pursuit from their nether world.

With the darkness, Alex began to doubt the wisdom of his presence there. What did he really expect to gain? When he started he had a vague hope that even in this modern day he might receive guidance from Apollo's

shrine. Was not Apollo supposed to be the god of Light and Wisdom? And was not he sorely in need of enlightenment? Every pathway of his life had suddenly dead-ended. He had to give up archeology or his family. He had released Claudia because of a new sense of values inspired by Truena, a woman he could never have. His former, well-ordered, purposeful life seemed, to his troubled mind, wrecked in every department.

He glanced down again at the gorge. The bottom was now completely enshrouded in shadows. He could hear the whispering murmur of the stream as it tumbled from one little fall to another, but he could see it no longer. He found he could easily doubt whether he had ever seen the stream and that the murmurs and whispers now climbing the foreboding gorge walls could be the voices of long dead souls, lingering and pleading for Apollo to grant them the earthly happiness for which they still wept.

He turned and started to retrace his steps in the direction of the farm and the security of Mike's hearth and family. He stopped. If he did return, he would take his problems with him. It was fantastic, this thing he was debating within himself, but perhaps a solution could be found. At least, he was near that spot on the earth that had long stood forth in humanity's consciousness as a guiding power in the search for happiness. Why not go on? He had everything to gain and nothing to lose. It would be a warm, clear night. He would eat the remnants of his lunch then decide what to do. After all, he was almost there.

Marta's piquant cheese made him thirsty. Slowly, he ascended the gorge wall in search of a cave or crevice where he might find water. In the remaining light, he found a perpendicular fissure large enough to let him walk into a narrow passageway. After a few steps, he heard the sound of water. He moved carefully in that direction.

Suddenly, the narrow passage opened into a wide cavern. The water sound was coming from a swirling pool about five feet in diameter. He knelt and drank. The water was cold and sweet. When he stood up again, he had the strange feeling that the cavern was growing lighter. He could see the ceiling some thirty or forty feet above, sweeping upward, forming a dome.

The light continued to increase and he saw the walls of the cavern. It was more than a hundred feet wide and circular as the pool was circular. The light seemed to carry its radiation with it for all parts of the cave were illumined in the same degree. One part was not brighter than another was. There were no high points. There were no shadows.

A phosphorescent quality within the geological structure was the only explanation Alex could give himself, and there were many illogical aspects to this solution. Maybe the purpose of his being there was affecting his senses. After all, only that which was considered supernatural could make his visit worthwhile. If the Oracle were to speak to him, it would have to be in a manner contrary to orthodox reason. Could it be that his desire for help was so deep that it was bringing forth these strange manifestations? Or could it be that he really was to find his answers? Was this strange light the means of leading him to it? One way or the other, imagination or reality, he must find the source of this light and see what was in store for him.

Suddenly, he was aware of a passageway in the wall beyond the pool. The light seemed to originate from this passageway. It now began pulsating as though to beckon him onward. With a strange and deep confidence, he crossed the underground theater and entered the passageway.

Steps had been cut, making a stairway that proved to be

circular. It seemed to Alex that he had made two complete circles when suddenly he entered a small square chamber. A man was seated at a table writing in a large book. His back was to Alex and at his left shoulder burned a huge yellow candle. The nature of the light from the candle was such that Alex instantly knew that this was the source of the strange light. The walls of the chamber were covered with hieroglyphics. In one corner was a miniature of the Great Pyramid of Egypt.

All of this Alex observed as if in a dream.

He caught his breath with astonishment when the man spoke. He would know the gentle authority of that tone anywhere ... even in this strange unexpected place. It was Moneigh.



CHAPTER SEVEN UNDERSTANDING

“Greetings, Alex,” Moneigh said without even looking up. “Be with you in a moment.” Gradually, Alex’s astonishment gave way to his fascination with the symbols on the walls.

Moneigh closed the huge book and turned to Alex. Noting his interest in the figures, he said, “They’re all there, Alex. Symbols of humanity’s accomplishment in self-realization.”

Alex recognized some of them: The Chinese Yang and Ying, the Candelabra of Moses, the Caduceus of Mercury, the Kabala’s Tree of Life, the Zodiac, and many variations of the Holy Trinity. There were too many to see at once, but he felt Moneigh was right. They must all be there.

“How did you happen to come here?” Moneigh asked with a genial twinkle in his eyes.

Alex thought a moment. Then slowly and sincerely he answered, “As long as I can remember I have had two great desires: one, to learn what happened to the glory of classic Greece; and the other, to learn why the repetition of war. The reason for this quest was to find out what I could do as an individual to help. I thought I might find the answer to both in studying archeology. But now, there’s the threat of another war and I still haven’t found my answer. Furthermore, my father forbids me to continue my studies.”

Alex hesitated. To be completely truthful, he should also mention the “missing meaningfulness” of his life now accentuated by his hopeless love for Truena. But he felt

that anything so personal might be out of order. Instead, he said, "It seems that the fulfillment of all my desires has suddenly become impossible. I though perhaps this place might still retain some of its magic of old and in some way give me guidance."

There was a note of gentle purposefulness in Moneigh's voice. "Remember the first words I ever spoke to you were that frustration comes not from outer denial. The greatest frustration of all is the lack of any desire to express. Nothing can stop us but the weakness of our own impulses. This is true frustration for this is when we are humiliated internally. Thus, from the persistence of your desire will come both your answers and your opportunities. Being here is the result of your desire, and from your effort, you will receive some answers. For instance, you would be more persistent in your desire if you could understand that it does not originate with you. It originates from your capacity to fulfill it. That which you feel as desire is fulfillment seeking to use you for its expression. The fulfillment of your desire already is your potential, else you couldn't feel its absence so keenly. There has to be a boy before there can be a boy absent from school, doesn't there? Beauty, wisdom, and love already are, and they constantly seek people, such as you, through whom to express themselves. They choose you. You don't choose them. Therefore, that which you feel as your desires proves they desired you first. And they wouldn't have desired you unless you had the capacity for their expression."

Moneigh pointed to the symbols on the walls.

"These are symbols of what humanity has learned about its capacity coming into manifestation through desires. The mystical meaning of the Search for the Holy Grail is humanity's search to find the cup of their capacity

from which they can drink of life's fulfillment. But the cup of capacity had to come first.

"If the desire could come first, the capacity might not exist that could satisfy that desire. That would mean our Creator condoned the misery of unattainable desire. But since desire is but capacity urging us to recognize it, then misery can exist only as long as we desert or misinterpret the desire."

Alex's mind was awl and his heart began to sing with hope based on this new wisdom. He was astonished that he was able to follow Moneigh as well as he had. How simply and masterfully had Moneigh explained it. As though reading Alex's thoughts, Moneigh asked patiently, "Do you still believe your desires are impossible?"

A surge of new faith in the order and purpose of the universe as it applied to the individual swept over Alex. He was thrilled with gratitude as he said, "I certainly don't. I see the Oracle of Delphi has not lost its magic." For an instant, he glanced appreciatively around the room. "I came here seeking guidance, and I have received, just as the seekers of old. It is even more meaningful to me that you are the one to help me."

Moneigh explained in a lively, more conversational tone. "Unusual things have always happened here for this is one of seven highly sensitized centers within the body of the earth, corresponding to the seven centers within the human body known as chakras. These centers of the earth have a magnetic attraction for those individuals who seek the wisdom hidden within them with the desire to use it for the welfare of their world."

Alex was moved by the thought that he might have been drawn here by such a magnetic influence and for such a reason. His eyes rested on a miniature pyramid. Of all the structures known to humankind, the Great Pyramid

interested him most. He had always felt his interest was caused, in great measure, by his inability to understand it.

"What is the true significance of the Great Pyramid?" he heard himself ask. Moneigh seemed pleased with Alex's question and placed the miniature on the table.

Indicating the symbols on the wall, he said, "What you see on these walls are symbols of what humanity has discovered about itself." He turned back to the pyramid. "This is the symbol of what humanity has discovered about its environment."

Moneigh lifted the pyramid and placed its base on the palm of his hand. "The base of the Great Pyramid rests in the precise center of the land mass of our earth. When it was built, its apex pointed directly at the Pleiades."

Lifting the pyramid to eye level, Moneigh sighted through the miniature inclining passageway. "By using the pyramid's passageway as a telescope, we can see which star is on the ascendant. Thus the pyramid is a mystical sextant. When it was built, its apex pointed at Alcyone of the Pleiades. Its telescope pointed to Draconis, which was the pole star at that time. To those who know how to use it, the Pyramid is a sextant with which they can shoot the stars and determine at what angle the land mass of the earth, which is humanity's environment, is receiving Divine influences.

"The angle determines the quality of Divine influence that our environment receives as we journey through space. That quality of influence reveals what is most needed for our growth at any particular time. Therefore, the mystical sextant gives our location in time and space, the age we are in, what time it is in the evolution of humankind.

"The telescope is now pointing toward Polaris, the

North Star, indicating the present age. It will next point to Vega, which will mean that the earth has then arrived at another point in its development."

Alex was stilled with the wonder of it all. The earth moving through the infinite like a loving mother seeking the influence needed most by her child, looking here and there, turning first one way, then another, in accordance with the cycles within cycles of the Great Guiding Hand. No wonder he had never understood the Pyramid. No wonder it had always fascinated him.

"Now then," Moneigh said with new purpose in his tone. "Let's, in a sense, use a mystical sextant to locate you, so you will no longer be lost to yourself. You said you desired to know what happened to cause Greece to lose its glory. The answer is both basic and simple. Greece played the most glorious and, at the same time, the most tragic role in the mystical drama unfolded by the nations of the ancient Western world. For a brief period, the Greeks accomplished heroic deeds in the realm of mind. No other triumph has been quite so bright and shining. But thereafter, the descent to self-destruction was swift and complete. The descent came from a defect in character for the Greeks had no religion or, more accurately, no common spiritual faith.

"The ancient Greek tongue had no word for religion. Today's books of the sacred writings of the world include no chapters from the Greeks. Or if an editor ventures to insert, for the sake of coverage, a selection of myths and stories, they prove to be superficial, romantic, and unworthy in comparison with the spiritual literature of the Chinese, the Hindus, and the Hebrews.

"The Greeks conceived their gods and goddesses as they did their art, in the image of man and woman. The measure of their image was not big enough. They believed

in gods and goddesses but not in a Supreme Being. They celebrated divinities symbolizing natural powers, but they knew no Divinity. The gods and goddesses of Olympus were human beings magnified and embellished. They were human beings without mystery. They acted from common noble and ignoble motives, often from envy, jealousy, lust, or caprice. These of which, least of all, should be attributable to Deity. Your ancient Greece failed to recognize its Oneness with Divinity. They never realized the difference between the mind and the spirit. They distinguished themselves in achievements of the mind but ignored the reality of the spirit.

"However, Greece produced many magnificent individuals who still contribute to the unfoldment of the individual, and the unfoldment of the individual is the only way the world can grow, for the world is composed of individuals. A level of thought or mentality was reached by Homer and Plato, by Pythagoras, Socrates, and Aristotle, that has never since been equaled.

"Democracy, which is humanity's natural form of government, was born here, even taking its name from your Greek word *demos* meaning people, and Alex, it was within an individual Greek that democracy reached its flower."

Moneigh's hand tightened on Alex's shoulder. When he spoke, Alex had the conviction that he was receiving a special message.

"Both the seed and the flower." Moneigh elaborated gently. "Do you remember in which of your illustrious forbearers the flower of democracy first bloomed?"

Alex nodded his head, deeply impressed.

"It was Socrates. He described democracy in its flower when he said, 'I am neither Athenian nor Greek but a Citizen of the World.'"

Moneigh paused a moment, then continued. "Yes, your Greece has given a tremendous contribution to our present civilization. As a Greek, Alex you have a great heritage; also a great responsibility. Your answer to the question of what happened to the classical glory of Greece is that beauty and the Creator of beauty cannot be separated."

Moneigh let the meaning of this answer find a resting place deep in Alex's consciousness before he spoke again. After a long moment, he said, "Finding this answer will encourage you to persist in finding the answer to your other quest: What an individual can do to help world peace."

Alex nodded in understanding. How wise this man was. He thought, for the first time, of the outside: of his friends in the *Brothers of the Grape*, of Mike and Marta, of his military father and understanding mother, and of precious Truena. He felt a tightness in his throat when Truena came into his mind. In a husky voice, he said, "I must start back. It is late. My friends will be looking for me."

Moneigh said nothing but turned and descended the steps. As he led the way back to the outside entrance, he stopped at the circular pool. He knelt and drank. Lifting himself, he said, "Rare artesian water, Alex. Our earth has both veins and arteries that flow to the surface from which we can drink. This water is from one of its arteries."

As they crossed the huge cavern, the light gradually disappeared. When they emerged from the passageway out into the night, the entrance through which they passed became invisible. Alex wondered if he could ever find it again. He was reluctant to leave this man who brought the answer to what had happened to the glory of Greece. However, all his lifelong questions lost much of their significance compared to the one that remained unanswered: the question of his hopeless love for Truena. He wondered

if Moneigh had seen her, if she was all right. Oh, if only he had the courage to ask.

"Goodbye, sir," he said, turning to go.

"By the way, Alex," Moneigh said. "As I left Albania, I passed the ruins of Skanderbeg's Castle."

Alex's heart leapt. Had Moneigh again read his thoughts?

Moneigh continued, "As an archeologist, would you say there was anything particularly sad about those old stones?"

Alex was now facing him. Perplexed at his question, he shook his head.

"Neither would I," Moneigh concluded as though that were all he had to say.

For a breathless moment, Alex waited, hoping against hope. Again he turned to go. As he did so, Moneigh added, as though in an afterthought, "That's the reason I couldn't understand why Truena would be sitting right in the middle of them weeping as though her heart would break."

Alex could no longer remain silent. "Moneigh," he said, "if desires come from their potential fulfillment, why do I so deeply love a woman who is lost to me?"

Moneigh looked down the mountainside, then lifted his eyes to the star-swept sky for a moment before answering. "In using the word 'lost,' you spoke the truth. The intensity of this unsought and unencouraged love means it already was. Your souls have loved each other before but became lost to each other because of certain developments needed within each of you. The developments must have been at least partially accomplished or else you wouldn't have found each other at this time."

"I don't understand," Alex said.

"The explanation is in the very foundation of the world," Moneigh replied. "In the beginning you and Truena were one. That One was an individualization, a replica, an image and likeness of the Universal Soul. This image and likeness is both male and female. In order to provide the motivation for human experience this One, which was both male and female, divided itself into two, a man and a woman, and began separate lives. The desire to find each other and become One again is the compulsion behind everything that man does and everything that woman does. All human experience springs from this motivation.

"The unfoldment of the soul comes from mental and emotional response to this activity. Thus, this urge to reunite provides both the means and the end. For the two souls, in their search for each other, automatically create circumstances and experiences, and it is their deliberate constructive response to these experiences that provides the necessary unfoldment that will enable them to find each other and again become a team, or a twin."

Alex's mind was awl with the wonder of such a concept. He and Truena One! This could be the reason why his heart had such intense convictions that his mind could not accept. But how could he know for sure that Truena was his twin soul? And if it were true, why had they been born into circumstances that made it so unlikely that they would ever meet again? His feelings were a mixture of hope and incredulity.

Moneigh spoke kindly into Alex's thoughts. "You have already answered the question as to whether or not you are One. The voice of the soul speaks through the heart – and your heart, with its unwavering conviction, has convinced you that you are One, in spite of arguments brought forth by your mind. And as for the other questioning, your

present separation from Truena provides opportunity for the necessary unfoldment that will make you both worthy of the reunion."

"What kind of unfoldment?" Alex asked.

"Unfoldment of the needed qualities that will enable you to work together when you are united. Remember, Alex, it is not the experience but your response or reaction to the experience that provides the necessary unfoldment."

Alex knew by Moneigh's tone that their visit was over. With a final farewell, Alex began the return journey to Mike's, the wonder of his experience enlivening his whole being.

From the crest of a hill a gleam from Mike's house appeared. Alex paused to catch his breath and take in the beckoning sight. A shadow moved toward him. It was the brown and white goat Mike called Agnes. Her ears flopped inquiringly at Alex. Something about that night made her eyes look abnormally luminous. They seemed to accuse him for being responsible for the house being lit up at this time of night.

"All this disturbance is my fault, Agnes," he explained, companionably. "Mike promised not to wait up for me, but he's lit every lamp in the place. As if I couldn't find my way home." With an assuring wave at the still staring goat, he said, "As soon as I get down there, things will be normal again."

As Alex approached, Mike stepped off the porch and silently waited. "One lamp would have been enough," Alex admonished affectionately. "No need to light up the entire place and disturb the goats. Old Agnes is pretty sore about it."

Mike looked around at the lamps as though he had not noticed. "Oh, that. Little Mike hid my stockman's maga-

zine ... was trying to find it."

"I see," Alex laughed. "And there's no time like the middle of the night to conduct these little searching parties."

Mike did not reply. They moved about the house blowing out lamps. When Alex started up to his room, Mike asked, "See anything besides Agnes that could jump over barriers? Such as the ones that keep your sweet woman away from us?"

Alex stopped on the stairs. Without turning, he replied, "Yes, I did. I found a man who told me there's no such thing as outer barriers, only those that come from the inside – and those can always be surmounted."

"Splendid." Mike exclaimed. "Splendid. Then soon you will bring her to the farm." He turned toward his own room.

Alex started to protest Mike's utter conviction. But Mike had heard all he wanted to hear. Muttering pleased sounds into the chimney of his lamp, he quietly opened the door to his and Marta's bedroom.

Mike's delight in thinking Alex had found the answer to his love for Truena touched Alex deeply. As he climbed the remainder of the stairs to his room, he permitted his mind to dwell on the possibility of Truena being here with Mike and Marta. It was such a satisfying speculation that he stood in the center of his room savoring it until his glance revealed a letter on the lamp table.

The letter was from his mother. A sense of anxiety swept over him as he opened it. What could have happened to cause her to send a letter when it had to be sent by special messenger?

The letter was short. Its contents caused him to sit down on the bed with astonishment. It stated simply:

Dear Alex,

Your father asked me to inform you it is his wish that you return to school. I am packing your trunks.

Love, Mother



CHAPTER EIGHT
GUIDANCE

Alex arrived at the upper room in the tavern ahead of the others. It was the first meeting of the *Brothers of the Grape* since his return to school a month ago. Each day he had searched for a way to present the idea of becoming “Citizens of the World” to the *Brothers of the Grape*. In a few minutes, they would arrive and the meeting would begin, and he had no thought of how to make his proposal sound mature and convincing instead of sentimental and dramatic.

Riggio and he were now closer than ever in friendship since their experience in Albania, and yet he had not even found a way to mention the plan to him. From his summer visit with Moneigh had come the idea that his fraternity had the ideal background for implementing a “Citizens of the World” plan because each was a citizen of a different country with its own particular prejudices. *Brothers of the Grape* was a perfect garden in which to plant the seed of Socrates’ flower of democracy – Citizens of the World. In a few minutes his opportunity would come, and he did not know how to use it.

The other four fraternity members entered the little upper room of the tavern, each expressing joy at seeing the others again in this familiar place. The picture of these young men standing erect and motionless behind their chairs always impressed Alex. About them was a certain refinement and the vigor of their well-kept bodies. At this moment, Alex was more impressed than ever before because today he was keenly aware of their Citizens of the

World potentialities.

There they stood, each a personification of the flower of his nation, each filled with the spirit of camaraderie, each waiting to burst into song and a boisterous banter of genuine affection. If only he could think of a way to unite their potentialities in his high purpose, some way to propose that which had filled his mind and heart for so long. He sensed their eyes grow mildly curious at his hesitation.

With a concealed sigh of despair, he opened the well-worn copy of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam and turned to the page containing the two verses. Leo appeared at the door with the wine on his shoulder and their song rang out:

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder: and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas – the Grape!

After the wine was poured, the second verse was sung:

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two and Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The Sovereign Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute!

In desperation, Alex stared at the book. To him, the verses had always been but a jumble of words giving the impression that smothered within their vagueness was a worthwhile sentiment. The fact that the fraternity was founded upon the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam had always been sufficient without his bothering to attempt to decipher its hidden meaning.

But now, with all his being he challenged its meaning. For the first time, he questioned how the "Grape" could

possibly do the things ascribed to it in the ritual, such as dissolving and making into one all the seventy-two different sects, with their jarring prejudices against one another.

Suddenly Alex thrilled. He experienced the same subtle joy that moved through him when he first felt Moneigh's smile. It was as though Moneigh were present.

The last two lines of the ritual stood out from the rest:

The Sovereign Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute!

A sharp stinging came to the crown of his head as a new meaning of those words swept over him for the first time. He marveled that the new meaning, now so crystal clear, could have evaded him all this time. Life's leaden metals were the baser natures of humanity, natures to be transmuted, changed, lifted into the golden qualities of Divine Love.

With pounding heart and soaring spirit, he realized that within the book right before him was the answer for which he sought ever since returning to the university: the means of presenting to the *Brothers of the Grape* the proposition of becoming Citizens of the World.

It was the perfect answer. And it had been here all the time. He did not need to introduce some new proposition or attempt to get their approval by force of his personal desire. It was already here in the very by-laws, so to speak, of their fraternity.

For a thrilling instant, Moneigh's words moved through him. "From the persistence of your desire will come your opportunity." And here in truth was the opportunity. It had been here all the while, just waiting to reveal itself to his persistent seeking.

As Leo left the room and closed the door behind him, a draft of wind caused pages of the open book in front of Alex to turn themselves. Alex continued to stare at the book. Suddenly, he realized that everything was blocked from his vision except a single verse on a different page. The words of that verse stood forth dark, sharp, and clear, as though demanding his undivided attention. They were:

Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits – and then
Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

With a deep sense of awe, Alex realized he was being given confirmation of the truth of his discovery of what was meant by "the Grape!" It was Love. Divine, brotherly Love. The Love that could grasp the sorry scheme of things the way they were in the world and remold them nearer to the heart's desire within every individual.

Quietly Alex said, "Would everyone be seated? There's something that should be brought to our attention." He was feeling his way. He had no definite plan. "It couldn't exactly be called new business," he stated. "Neglected old business would be closer to the truth."

He gazed with open frankness at the politely curious faces of the others.

"Regardless of our reluctance to recognize it, the fact remains that soon the peoples of our respective countries may turn their capacities for hate upon each other. And the destructive pattern of war will repeat itself over again."

He touched the book with his hand. "Until this moment, I thought the *Rubaiyat* was primarily a book for lovers of life's pleasures. I'd like to suggest we take a more direct look at the words we've been singing all this time."

Slowly he read. His new awareness of the hitherto hidden meaning enabled him to accentuate and articulate the words in such a manner that their true portent stood forth in shining significance. When he finished, he laid the book down.

"There's but one thing that can dissolve the jarring prejudices of different sects and transmute the baser metals of ignorance into golden enlightenment ... and that is the Wine of Brotherly Love, the Wine wherein all Grapes become as One, as in the Vessel from which the Angel bids us taste."

Alex knew his presentation was launched, and great was his relief. It had gone better than he thought possible. Proof of its effectiveness, however, was yet to come. How would it be received? What would be the response?

At the moment, his friends' minds were suspended, open, and caught off guard by the unexpectedness of what they had just heard. Alex sat down quietly so as not to distract their mood and then, in the same calm tone, continued.

"Our rediscovery of the true meaning of our ritual puts a responsibility upon us. If we hadn't rediscovered it, we could have continued as we were. For some reason, perhaps because of the threatened war, this group of *Brothers of the Grape* has been shown its deeper meaning."

He paused, took a deep breath and softly continued. "So I suggest that for a few minutes we turn the whole thing over in our minds and see if we can think of something to do about it."

Surreptitiously, he watched the different faces as he uttered these words. How passive and impotent the words sounded in comparison to the long intensity of his feelings dammed up behind them. From now on, the success of the

launching depended on the degree of brotherly love, conscious or unconscious, within the natures of the other young men and their willingness to express it at this specific moment.

Karl, the German, was first to speak. "What can we as individuals do against the highly organized war machine?" he asked, his blue eyes wide with sincerity. Karl was of medium height and inclined toward stockiness. There was nothing spontaneous about Karl, but because the channels through which his responses always passed were well worn with integrity, one could always expect what was honest and sincere from him.

Alex knew the proposition could be won or lost right here. The eyes, full upon him from around the table, told him so. Alex's inner attitude of sincere desire allowed the needed wisdom to speak through him.

Slowly he answered "Without the individual's capacity for hate, the war machinery couldn't be organized and maintained. It is of individuals that the machinery is comprised. Either they hate in some degree or they are willing to condone another's hate to the extent of killing or being killed.

"Since that which makes war possible is within the individual, it follows that that which will make war impossible is also within the individual. Every individual needs but to remove the capacity to hate from within. Every individual needs but to remove his or her individual capacity to hate. A simple statement, but a tremendous task."

"But we don't hate anyone." protested Pierre, the French youth.

To Alex's surprise, it was Richard, the Englishman, who answered. "Wait till the propaganda agents start beating their drums. We'll all dance to their tunes."

Alex was so pleased with Richard's remark that he felt all warm inside. He had been afraid of Richard's response. Richard was tall, lean, and lackadaisical. He spent his spare time alone, and nothing seemed to penetrate him any deeper than to bring forth a pithy remark or a laconic observation. Now, the seriousness of his face and the directness of his gray eyes told Alex that something had at last reached where the real Richard lived.

Pierre defended himself. "All of us won't dance. Some of us have outgrown our weakness for dancing to another's tune."

"Very few of us," Richard replied. "Don't forget that intolerance and prejudice are a couple of Europe's oldest and dearest institutions."

Everyone smiled at Richard's way of putting it. Then Riggio spoke. "I read somewhere that both of these institutions keep themselves going from an attitude of self-righteousness. That is, one group thinks it is better than the other because it happens to be born in the right country, or by virtue of its own right actions, right thinking, or right religious beliefs. It forgets that being right is always relative. Therefore, it seems that the germ of war is intolerance and hate. The hate germ of one war carries over and becomes the contagion of the next one. So if this cycle of hate could be broken, then the disease of war could be cured."

Bless you, Riggio, Alex said to himself and waited for what would happen next. There was a long moment of silence. Then Karl spoke "If we knew the nature of the germ, we could combat it more effectively. Hate is like other emotions. It can come and go at times without our being able to do much about it."

Karl was obviously asking for knowledge that might help him accomplish a sincere desire awakening within

him. Alex could almost feel the force of the others' minds as they, too, turned their attention to the significance of Karl's question.

"What is hate?" Alex asked, echoing the question. "Hate is a product of fear," he heard himself answer with confidence he did not at first feel but which gradually increased. "Fear of losing what we want," he continued. "This fear is generated by memory of how we have been robbed of what we see as our good, our security, or our loved ones."

Karl was still not satisfied. "What could we do to break the cycle? How could we kill the germ and remove the contagion?"

Again Alex heard himself reply, "By refusing to hate – no matter what is done to us by our so-called enemy. If we have to fight for our country to do so, not with hate, but with understanding, the understanding that it is lack of understanding that we are really fighting. By fighting with this understanding, we are breaking the cycle, killing the germ, removing the contagion of the next war."

"I see," Karl murmured, half to himself. Then he lifted a shining face to Alex and asked, "What would you have us do?"

"I propose," Alex stated in clear, ringing tones, "that in the light of our new understanding of what really is in the Angel's Vessel, we rededicate ourselves to become true *Brothers of the Grape*"

He held forth his goblet. "With wine as a symbol of the unity of all peoples, we pledge ourselves that, as *Brothers of the Grape*, we shall also be Brothers of All Humankind, all peoples. Thus, we become more than German, French, English, Italian, and Greek – we shall become Citizens of the World."

Riggio was instantly to his feet, followed by the others. All lifted their glasses. "To the true *Brothers of the Grape*!" Alex proposed.

Alex lifted the goblet to his lips and drained its contents. The others did likewise.

When the five splendid youths walked into the sunshine, their faces were still radiant from their pledge of high purpose. But that radiance was short-lived. A cry came from behind, and they turned to see Leo running after them. Tears streamed down his twitching cheeks. His voice was little more than a whisper as he announced, "Germany has marched on Poland."

For a moment, Leo stared into the solemn faces of the five youths, then he stumbled dazedly back into his deserted tavern.

Stark sadness filled Alex for a long moment and then deep within him a voice began singing. In tones of humble gratitude it sang, for he had made his proposal to the *Brothers of the Grape* and it had been accepted. Another day, another hour, and it would have been too late. But it had happened, and none would ever again be the same. Regardless of the experiences that would come to each of them as a result of war, they would respond differently to those experiences than if this meeting had not occurred.

For they were now initiated into the true significance of the *Brothers of the Grape*. And this new expansion that had taken place within them could not be removed. Consequently, their attitude toward war and hate would henceforth be different.

Moneigh had been right. From the persistence of his desire had come Alex's opportunity, the opportunity to pledge the brothers of his fraternity to become Citizens of the World.



CHAPTER NINE A CONTRIBUTION

The brooding European war had become a reality. Alex went home to take his place in his regiment. As had been expected, Italy joined Germany, and Italian troops poured into Albania. The Greeks interpreted this as the prelude to an invasion of their country. He felt more a witness than a participant until events began pointing toward his regiment being sent to Albania to oppose the Italian troops.

The day finally arrived when, from his field table, Alex gazed out over the mountains of Truena's homeland. Was it really possible that less than a year ago he was here with Riggio?

Alex's regiment set up fortifications on a thickly wooded foothill on the southern slopes of the mountain country. Between Alex and the distant peaks was the territory of Kruja. And somewhere in that territory was Truena. He felt a sweet squeeze within his heart every time he thought of her nearness, and then it would beat heavily as he realized the dangers she would be subjected to in the days to come.

Often, he found himself gazing toward the location of the shrine near the mountain's summit. He wondered if Moneigh was back. Truena said he returned once a year. And it had been about a year.

Also, due to Riggio's association with all these things, a part of him continued expecting Riggio to appear. It was a pleasant expectation, like suddenly waking with a feeling that the day holds something especially delightful.

But of course, Riggio would not, at any moment, come bouncing up with a lighthearted comment. It was highly possible that Alex would never see him again. The stupid futility of war, with its horrible ramifications, swept over him, and he trembled with angry exasperation that humanity could be sufficiently influenced by an individual, or a group, to believe that good of any kind could come of it.

He remembered that the reason that Riggio was sent to Albania last year was vague, even to Riggio. But the purpose behind it was probably to familiarize Riggio with the country in preparation for when he might see action here. The mountains in front of Alex contained many Italian officers, and one might be Riggio.

Alex was startled with an alarming thought. What if they ran into each other in battle? This frightened him more than any other battle probabilities.

However, Alex had little time to think of anything but present demands. The fighting was continual. Italian and Albanian prisoners were a problem. Alex's duties were to guard and feed them.

One day he noticed three Albanians among them. They were boys in their teens trying desperately to take the adversity of their fate like grown men. Their backs were straight and their heads high, but their eyes fearfully followed their captors' every move. Alex's heart went out to them. Young men, who were shepherds in normal life, had suddenly become sheep; caught in a predatory grip they did not understand with only manly impulses to guide their behavior. Just bewildered sheep, helpless against their destiny, and yet determined not to bleat to their captors.

Alex had them brought to him. They were from the Shala country, far to the north and deep in the mountains.

The two older boys would not talk. They maintained what they intended to be manly silence, a soldierly resignation to their fate. But the third was the youngest and most frightened. Alex finally got him to talk.

"Is there someone to tend the flocks while you men are away?" he asked gently.

"No," the youngest answered, and a faraway look crept into the eyes of the other two.

"Now that you've been captured by the Greek army, what do you expect us to do with you?"

This question caused an automatic fear reaction in all three. The youngest released his lower lip and tried to speak in a firm voice. "Do you have to put our eyes out?" he implored.

"Put your eyes out?" Alex echoed. "Why do you ask that?"

"We've always been told that the Greeks put out the eyes of their prisoners, that you had a king called 'Basil the Bulgarian Killer' who did this. Whenever he captured a hundred Bulgarians, he put out the eyes of ninety-nine of them and put out just one eye of the last one. Then he tied them all together and the man with just one eye led the ninety-nine prisoners back home to their families."

Alex was amazed at the reputation his people had among these remote neighbors. However, he could easily understand it because what the boy said was true. Old King Basil had done just that when the Bulgarians invaded Greece. But that was ages ago. How fertile a field of hate and fear were ignorance and misunderstanding. No wonder these boys were frightened when they abruptly realized that war was not a sporting game and that they were actually in the hands of the "cruel Greeks."

"Does everyone in your country think that the Greeks

put out their prisoners' eyes and send them stumbling back to their loved ones?"

All three answered, "Yes."

Alex rose from his stool and strode twice about his tent, then sat down again. That is how long it took to make up his mind.

"Are all three of you either married or betrothed?"

They indicated that they were, and the reserve of the two older boys began to crumble. Alex smiled understandingly as he witnessed how reference to marriage, with its deep flowing emotions, could crumble the assumed courage of the two splendid young men.

He explained, "The Greek people do not want your people to think them cruel and barbaric. Of course, this is war and everyone has a responsibility toward his country and his country's people. But it happens to be a war in which your people do not belong. You did not ask for it, and you cannot possibly benefit from it. Your land is just being used as a battlefield. How would the three of you like to return to your homes as goodwill ambassadors?"

The three boys stared at him in suspicious amazement.

"Of course you don't understand exactly what I mean, but I think I can help you understand enough to accomplish what I want. I know that if you promise me something, you will do it. Your own people wouldn't take you back if they knew you didn't honor your word. So this is what I want you to promise: that you will never, as long as you live, fight in another war. If I turn you free and you kill someone, then it is I who actually killed that person.

"The next promise is that you must tell your country people, all the people who come to see you, your children and grandchildren, that you were captured by the Greeks and that the Greeks turned you free to return to your wives, sweethearts, mothers, fathers, and flocks. Not

because you are Albanians and not because the Greeks were Greeks, but because you are men and the Greeks are men. The time is here when we must stop thinking of ourselves as Albanians, Greeks, Italians, and Germans, but as Citizens of the World.

"You must promise never to hear anyone speak of Basil, the Bulgarian Killer, without telling them that Basil has gone with the ancient dragons, and in his place are now men just like yourselves. If you promise me these things, I will allow you to escape. After you escape, you must not stop until you get home. You must be as careful of the Italians as the Greeks, for if the Italians find you, they will force you to fight again. Is it a bargain?"

The three stared at him and then at one another. Three faces that had not smiled for a long time were suddenly aglow with incredulous joy.

Alex made each repeat his own name and promise on his honor to do as he had instructed. He personally fixed a package of food so no one else would know of his actions. Then he marched them toward the prison corral as if he were returning them there but instead turned off into the woods. When he approached the sentry, he explained that the prisoners were to show him the location of an enemy concentration.

"But there are three. Shall I go with you, sir?"

Alex assumed an angry manner. "No, they have all told different stories. I intend to find out which one lies."

The sentry, understanding that, promptly forgot about Alex and his three young prisoners. Alex accompanied them for a couple of miles until he was sure they had passed beyond the Greek patrol. Then he prepared to send them on their way.

He could see in their faces a desire to express their

gratitude. The oldest finally assumed the spokesman's role and said, "We will remember and do as you bid. Our children will not be frightened by the tales of Basil the Killer and our people will be grateful for what you have done. A long life and a smooth trail to you."

He turned and led off into the woods.

The second oldest said, with embarrassment, "Good go with you," and followed the first.

The youngest had tears in his eyes. Quickly he grasped Alex's hand and pressed it to his lips. "Glory be to your heart," he murmured and fled in pursuit of the other two.

Alex watched them disappear into the thick underbrush. He felt that he had shot three arrows into the air. He was not sure where they would fall to earth, but he was sure of their trim and design. He knew that the shafts were straight and firm and wholesome and that the feathers would hold them true to their course. He liked the idea of the arrows and gave it free rein in his imagination as he walked through the woods without much thought of direction.

Those three boys were his first act as a member of the new *Brothers of the Grape*. They would return to their part of the world and start a story of brotherly liberation that could become a legend influencing the thoughts, attitudes, and opinions of all who heard it, as the stories of Basil, the Bulgarian Killer, had done. There was no way to estimate the extent of its effect through the years.

The restful drumming of a waterfall interrupted Alex's speculations on the possibilities of what he had done. He stopped to check his bearings and realized he had been following a little stream that wound itself further into enemy territory. He smiled at having wandered thus and carefully examined his surroundings for possible danger. The drumming of the waterfall ahead fascinated him. He

wanted to see it. He was this far. A little farther would scarcely make any difference. Rapidly, but cautiously, he moved toward the sound of the falls.

When he arrived at the point where the water disappeared over a fissure, he looked down. The falls formed a beautiful little pool below. His heart soared. Kneeling on its green banks, washing clothes, were three women ... and one of them looked like Truena! Could it be? He stared, breathless, hoping that she would raise her head from the clothes before the tumult in his heart smothered him. Finally, she lifted her face to speak to one of the other women. It was Truena!

Alex sat down suddenly in the thick underbrush and stared. He was weak and trembling. After a few moments, the hammering in his heart changed to an exquisite ache of anticipation. The falls made so much noise that no one below could hear his movements and would not be likely to look straight up. The women were working several feet apart so that each would have clear water. He moved to where he was directly opposite Truena. He tossed a pebble into the pool. It was a gentle splash, only a few inches from her hand. Quickly she looked up.

Her eyes went wide with shock at the unexpected figure of a man. She half-turned to warn the others, then stopped. Alex knew she had recognized him. She glanced again at the others who were still bent over their washing.

Cautiously, she lifted her eyes to Alex. Long she stared; her eyes wide and fixed. Alex made excited gestures to her, signaling for her to leave the pool and meet him upstream.

But she continued looking in his direction as though she saw nothing but forest. Alex stopped signaling as he realized she was not going to respond. Frantically, he tried interpreting a message, or meaning, from her blank

expression. But her stare was inscrutable.

Without change of expression she returned to her work. Deliberately, she selected an orange shawl from the unwashed clothes at her side, and dipping it into the pool, she began rubbing it against a huge, half-submerged rock. In this way, she definitely told Alex she had no intention of leaving her washing.

Numbly he watched her, hope struggling against reason. Finally, his hope was overcome, and rising to his feet, he moved back along the way he had come.

Suddenly, he was stiff and sore. Every movement was a mighty effort. The luring laughter of the falls now mocked him in a dozen different voices.

What a fool he was. The only emotion she had displayed was fright. To her, he was just another Greek soldier – a threat and a menace to her and her people. And what could he expect? She had never contributed to this feeling he had woven around her. Every rosy cloud, every shining castle, had been woven from threads of his own imagination. Oh, what a schoolboy he had been. What infantile emotionalism he had indulged in. Moneigh's story of them being twin souls had to be but a fairy tale.

Suddenly, he was brought back to the present by a nearby sound that was clearly battle activities. This final proof that his dreams of Truena were impossible was no reason to get himself killed through carelessness. He was in enemy territory and he had better conduct himself accordingly. Life must go on, even though, as far as his was concerned, there did not seem to be much reason at the moment.

Remaining in hiding for several minutes, he resumed a cautious return to his camp, making sure he re-entered past a different sentry than the one who saw him leave with the prisoners. As he approached his quarters, he was aware

that his interest in the pristine beauty of the country and the courage of its people had faded. Everything was now hollow and meaningless. He knew he was being morbid and irresponsible and resolved to begin an entirely new life. But how?

His morbid depression increased his old sense of unreality to an intensity bordering on shock. He knew he had to do something about it. Other people depended on his awareness and alertness. But what could he do? To what could he direct his attention that would realign his viewpoint closely to the world in which he was living? Skanderbeg's Fort came into his mind, along with his archeological thesis. Perhaps exposing himself to a communication with the ruins would help. The fort was on the edge of territory occupied by the Greeks, so there was no problem in getting there.

Alex approached the ruin site with caution and was glad he did, for he saw a figure sitting among them. He started to return to camp when he realized the man wore no uniform. Keeping out of sight, he approached closer to get a better view. With conflicting emotions, Alex recognized him. It was Moneigh. Alex's delight at seeing him was mixed with discomfort. He felt that Moneigh had somehow contributed to his unhappiness by allowing him to hope where there was none.

Alex walked into view. Moneigh rose, lifted his arm in greeting, and strode to meet him. In spite of himself, Alex was again warmed by the charm of quiet joy radiating from him. Alex's sense of morbid unreality faded away. It could not sustain itself in the presence of the vibrant aliveness of this man. Also what he was saying to Alex, as they seated themselves on a log among some trees, was so gratifying and exciting that everything except the thrilling now was crowded from his consciousness. Moneigh knew what

had happened at the last meeting of the *Brothers of the Grape*. How he knew, Alex told himself, he would think about later.

"What you accomplished, Alex," he said, "means much to many. Especially to me. *Brothers of the Grape* was formed for a very special purpose about two hundred years ago when the University was known as Sorbonne, an International Theological School. Khayyam's original *Rubaiyat* was designed to reveal the truth of the Creator as a Spirit whose nature was Love and only Love and to expose the fallacies of orthodox theology with its anthropomorphic God of good and evil.

"The fraternity was formed long before there was an English translation of the *Rubaiyat*, so in the beginning a copy of the original was used. Since the original was written in the Persian language, it was the responsibility of the fraternity to provide, from among its members, someone who could read Persian and translate the verses for the others.

"For many generations, the translation was provided by the French member of the fraternity. When he graduated, he provided a new freshman class member to take his place who could carry on this function.

"However, the time came when there was no suitable student available who could translate Persian. This occurred about the time the English translation appeared. So the original Persian manuscript was replaced by the English translation in 1860.

"Since the author of the English translation was not aware of the higher teaching of the *Rubaiyat* and did not comprehend its use of satire, mimicry, metaphor, and allegory, the true message of the original was lost. Only a few verses of the English translation even approached the hidden meaning of the *Rubaiyat*. So, you can see how

anxious we have been to have the high purpose of *Brothers of the Grape* rediscovered and reactivated. And it was you, Alex, who opened the door for this to happen.”

Alex was elated at Moneigh’s confirmation of what had happened at that last meeting. However, he felt no personal pride in it – only pride in being a member of the group through which it happened. Suddenly, he knew what he would do with the rest of his life. He would forget Truena and dedicate himself to the true purpose of *Brothers of the Grape* – the expression of Divine Love in his thoughts, feelings, and deeds.

He said, “I’m grateful for my part in it. Grateful that I am a member of a fraternity of such historical and spiritual significance. Henceforth, my greatest desire shall be to become worthy of its membership by serving its purpose.”

Moneigh gazed deeply into Alex’s eyes. Alex felt Moneigh was aware of areas of his nature that even Alex was unaware. He thought he detected a special tenderness in Moneigh’s voice as he repeated the same words he said the first time Alex had seen him. “From the persistence of your desire will come your opportunity.”



CHAPTER TEN FRIENDSHIP

Alex, seeking to find a way to be helpful as a fellow human being, studied the expressions of fear and hate on the face of each new Albanian and Italian prisoner. The only opportunities that presented themselves were to provide additional physical comfort wherever possible.

The Italians were fighting a war of conquest for which they had little heart. The Albanians were fighting a war they did not understand and in which they could see no future, while the Greeks were fighting to save their homeland. The Greeks, consequently, fought with fervor and purpose, with the result that their more indifferent adversary was progressively defeated.

Word came of German reinforcements en route to Albania. This meant that Germany planned the immediate invasion of Greece, using Albania as a gateway. The Greeks were determined to oust the Italians from their remaining mountain strongholds so that when the Germans arrived, the Greeks would at least have the best positions on their side. Greece brought in all possible air and artillery support, and the bombardments began. Alex tried not to think of the danger of its inhabitants and inwardly cringed with each tearing wound to the wooded glory of this mountain land.

Gradually, the Greeks neared the summit. Relentlessly, they advanced, determined to be in complete control of the higher positions before the Germans arrived. Day or night, there was no let up. The morale of the Italians was broken. They surrendered in great numbers, and it was but a matter

of time until their defeat was complete.

The wave of Greek advancement passed near Moneigh's shrine where Truena had taken him and Riggio the first day they met her. Alex was on the flank nearest it. The resistance they encountered was spotty and half-hearted. The shrine pulled at Alex, and he swerved off to include it in his advance. Moneigh would hardly be there, in the midst of all this fighting, but the shrine would be, and he wanted to see it again.

He did not realize he was so weary until he left his company behind. For three days and nights he had not slept. His clothes and beard were matted with dirt and grime. He found the clearing and there, leaning against the face of the mountain, was the shrine. How peaceful it seemed. Its familiarity tugged at his heart, and suddenly it was difficult for Alex to believe that the distant sounds were caused by the weapons of men seeking to kill one another.

He opened the door and stepped into the cool serenity of the little stone room.

"Looking for someone?" a low voice challenged him merrily.

It was Riggio. In the corner behind the door was the dirtiest face Alex had ever seen and stretched across it, the broadest grin he had ever seen.

"Riggio." Alex exclaimed joyously. Riggio lay on his stomach, chin resting on one hand, a pistol in the other.

Quickly Alex glanced over Riggio's prone body in search of a wound. "Are you hurt?" he asked anxiously.

"No." Riggio replied. "Just tired. Don't you fellows ever know when to quit?" He seemed to be aware for the first time of the gun in his hand and returned it to its holster.

"You fellows shouldn't be so stubborn," Alex quipped, laughing aloud with relief that Riggio was unhurt.

"Pull that bench around so you can sit on it," Riggio suggested. "You don't look so good yourself. I wasn't sure it was you till you were all the way through the door. My. My. You used to be so tidy. Just proves what association will do to a person."

Alex smiled, then looked about the empty outer room of the shrine. "Have you seen Moneigh?"

"I didn't open the rear door to his quarters, but I called loud enough. He'd hardly stick around with this mess going on."

"Have you seen him at all since you arrived?"

Riggio shook his head.

"I was sure you had. I saw him. He knows what happened at the last meeting of the *Brothers of the Grape*. I concluded you must have told him."

Riggio's eyes widened with interest. "What did he say about it?"

"He said the original purpose of the fraternity had been lost for many generations ... and that we rediscovered it. He is very, very pleased."

For a moment both were thoughtful. Riggio said, "Wonder how he knew about the meeting."

Alex shook his head. "He seems to be able to know anything he wants to know. I feel he has plans for the present fraternity members and is capable of seeing those plans fulfilled."

Riggio nodded his head with approval. "That could be very exciting."

Alex moved the bench so he could see through the door without being seen. Riggio seated himself on another

bench facing Alex. This enabled him to see out the window. Thus, one or the other could see any direction from which the shrine could be approached from the outside.

"Heard you were here," Riggio said. "One of my scouts from Kruja saw you." Then he chuckled. "You should have been on hand when those men at my trial saw who their commanding officer was: the same foreigner they ran out of town instead of shooting. At first, it was obvious they regretted letting me go. But we're fairly friendly now. These cantankerous old eagles are just doves if you dig into their feathers deep enough."

Riggio moved to a more comfortable position on his bench. Alex noticed a purposeful steadiness coming into his eyes as he asked with disarming lightheartedness, "Like to hear about it?"

"Certainly," Alex answered. "Everything."

"Well," Riggio began enthusiastically. "In the beginning they felt that under the circumstances they were doing all that could be expected of them by just being civil to me. So you can imagine what happened when I began giving orders.

"But the real trouble came," Riggio chuckled, "when I began telling them how to fight. Every one of them is a definite individual and each has his own personal ideas concerning his favorite pastime: the art of killing.

"They'd sneak out singly or in pairs to see who could bring back a weapon or piece of clothing, proving that one of the enemy had been accounted for. Every time organized resistance was needed, half of them were out conducting a personal war of their own.

"I hit on the idea of appointing some of them officers and selected the two who disliked me most: Truena's

father and Lufka's father, Bozark. When I finally convinced my two new lieutenants that it wasn't a trick of some kind, they really went to work for me. Thereafter, anyone who carried on private warfare had another war on his hands – with them."

Riggio paused. Glancing at him, Alex saw the purposefulness in his eyes increase as he continued. "Lufka, as you remember, was betrothed to Truena. It seems his mother's disappearance years ago was attributed to a band of marauding Greeks. He was a bitter, vengeful lad, and even his father, Bozark, couldn't stop him.

"One morning at dawn, I saw Bozark and Tyrak, my two lieutenants, headed for the woods in the direction of the enemy. I hailed them and inquired about their destination. Very matter-of-factly, they told me that Lufka had not come back from one of his sojourns and naturally they were going after him.

"I drew my gun and told them they were naturally not going to do any such thing; that if they did, in an hour there wouldn't be an Albanian left in camp. Everyone would be out conducting a private war of his own. They didn't agree. So I had to lock them up.

"As I locked them up, Bozark accused me of stopping them because I wanted Lufka dead because of Truena." Riggio paused. Regardless of his attempt to keep the narrative casual and light, Alex could sense Riggio's purposefulness.

Shrugging his shoulders as though Bozark's accusation was not to be treated too seriously, Riggio continued. "At first I paid no attention. Figured he was just resentful. Then I began wondering what would happen to my hard-earned authority if Lufka did get killed and my lieutenants turned on me."

Riggio glanced surreptitiously at Alex, and their eyes

met for a fleeting, uncomfortable second.

"As a man...." Riggio said, as though his words were the result of sober reasoning. "As a man," he repeated, "Lufka wasn't of much value." Then he corrected himself confusedly. "I mean as a soldier, he wasn't of much value." But both of them knew that he meant that as a husband to Truena, much could be desired.

Riggio squirmed on the bench as he continued. "I saw that the fate of Lufka represented quite a problem. It involved my responsibility to the other soldiers, to myself ... and to Truena. I didn't want the blood of her betrothed on my hands, even in an indirect way."

Twice Riggio started to continue and stopped. Then, with a tremendous sigh that seemed to release some inner tension, he turned a boyish grin to Alex and said, "It's no use. It can't be done. I was trying to tell my story without admitting I am in love with Truena. I thought I had a way to do it, but it won't work."

Alex shook his head imperceptibly as if to clear it of a tiny, buzzing pain caused by Riggio's confession. He asked himself how he could have expected otherwise? Everything that had happened, as far as Truena and Riggio were concerned, were things he had thought of and considered as the probable turn of events. So why did he let himself continually be knocked about emotionally just because his expectations were coming true?

Again, he could not help but wonder about Moneigh's fantastically beautiful story of his oneness with Truena, that they had loved each other before, and now, if certain soul unfoldments were achieved, they would be reunited and work together in some lofty activity. What could Moneigh have possibly meant by telling him such things? If only he had found the nerve to ask him the last time he saw him.

Now, as he looked at the charm of Riggio that the grime of his face and beard could not conceal, he had no doubt that Truena returned Riggio's love. At least Riggio was not her enemy, killing her people and laying waste to her land.

When Riggio continued his story, he was his old self again. "So," he blurted out, "there I was. All that stood between Truena and me was Lufka. He believed Greeks took his mother from him and his fanatical determination to kill as many Greeks as possible made him my biggest problem. He went into the woods daily on his private vendetta, and it was just a question of time until he wouldn't return.

"So ... for about an hour I congratulated myself. I began wondering where I could find Truena. Then I saw I was acting like the villain in a melodrama. Finally, I decided that if Providence chose to remove Lufka, it would have to be done without my assistance. This left two roads open to me. I could release Tryak and Bozark and let them try to find him: or I could go myself.

"I don't know whether it was concern for my hard-earned authority or impatience to see if Providence had really taken a hand that made up my mind. Anyway, I decided to go in search of Lufka, or his body, myself.

"A few minutes later I wished I hadn't been so impatient. A sniper had me trapped in a clump of bushes. I couldn't locate him, but his bullets were rapidly finding me. When a bullet nipped my coat, I screamed in mortal agony, jumped out, kicking and thrashing like a chicken with its head cut off, and bounced my way behind a thick log where I lay without moving for about two hours.

"When I did make a move, the sniper was gone. A sane man would have given up such an impractical mission, grateful to get back in one piece. But not me. On I went. I

didn't have to go far, however, before I found him. He'd been shot from a tall tree. The bullet entered his chest and came out the lower part of his back. He was still alive."

Riggio paused to shake his head with grim accentuation. "Packing that fellow back to camp was certainly a problem. I fell a dozen times. Twice I almost ran into your patrols. And I kept asking myself 'for what?' It didn't make sense. But I never did make sense. When I reached our lines, I was so exhausted the trees were chasing each other up and down the hills. My burden was taken to the hospital. When I'd rested enough to stand again, I released the boy's father and Tryak, telling them Lufka had been brought in. I didn't tell them I did it. For some reason, I was a little ashamed of it, and I didn't know how they'd take it.

"Anyway, Lufka died without regaining consciousness." Riggio paused and looked significantly at Alex, but Alex was unaware of his glance. The shocking irony of it had made Alex so weak he could hardly sit. Truena was free. Now the barrier was gone. The way was open. But not for him. He fought to bring his attention back to what Riggio was now saying.

"I felt that as far as I was concerned, all obligations had been fulfilled. Bozark and Tyrak must have felt so, too. They learned it was me who brought Lufka back, and they were friendlier than ever. According to some quirk of their code, I had become one of them by bringing back the wounded member of their family."

As Alex's faculties struggled to return to normal, he was fascinated and puzzled by the inevitable way in which Lufka removed himself. In light of what Moneigh said about the unfoldment of souls being the result of response, he wondered if Lufka's soul reaction to the result of his violent desire for vengeance would serve his unfoldment

in some way. He hoped that this was true.

He could not help but be glad for Truena's freedom. He knew her life would have lost much of its meaning married to Lufka. He felt a sudden surge of elation for Riggio, followed by a feeling of relief that Truena would now have a fulfilling life with him. For he knew of no one who had such a feeling for the beauty of love and its expression as did Riggio.

Alex was surprised that he could have this generous reaction. Could this be what Moneigh meant by response to experience as a means of unfoldment? It was all too confusing. He felt a sudden violent rebellion against the whole idea of soul unfoldment and resolved henceforth to leave Moneigh out of his mind forever.

Reluctantly, he brought his attention back to Riggio as he continued his story. "Because of this change in their attitude toward me, it wasn't many days later that I saw Truena. Every week or so, the women of the tribe camp for a day and night near us. They'd bring clothes and food to the men. No one but Albanians ever went near the women's camp. Imagine my surprise when Bozark and Tyrak walked up to me and announced that we would all go and meet the women."

Alex waited for Riggio to continue, and when he did not, Alex looked inquiringly at him. Riggio seemed to be savoring the moment. Alex could understand why for he could image the tenderness of their meeting.

Watching Alex in a roguish way, Riggio's pleasure seemed to increase as he finally said, "Yes, I saw Truena. And I'm afraid old Riggio's pride will be a long time recovering. For in no uncertain terms, she informed me it is you she loves."

Alex thought his shocked senses were playing tricks. "What did you say?" he mumbled.

"I said that Truena loves you!"

Alex could not believe it. "But I saw her, and she utterly and completely ignored me."

"Of course she ignored you. Every time a group of women leave their camp to wash, gather fagots, or look for herbs, a scout goes with them. She told me that all the time you were waving at her there was an Albanian rifle within a few yards of you. What if the guard happened to be looking at the time she was smiling and waving at a bunch of bushes?"

"I see," Alex muttered, still confused, his heart thumping with disbelief and singing with joy at the same time. Could it really mean that he and Truena were to be one? Lufka was gone, and she did not love Riggio after all. It had not seemed to hurt Riggio either. Perhaps he just could not be hurt over just one woman, even Truena.

Now Alex understood the purposefulness he sensed in Riggio's story. Bless his splendid heart. It had all been for Alex's benefit. Riggio used the entire story to reveal to him the most wondrous truth he could hear. And Riggio knew it all the time.

His joy was mingled with shame for his rebellious doubts of Moneigh's wisdom. A deep surge of gratitude for Moneigh's guidance came over him. Never again would he doubt him. Of course, some barriers remained. He was still an enemy to Truena's people.

Suddenly, they were jarred from their benches to the floor. An artillery shell had exploded in the clearing a few yards from the shrine.

Scrambling to their feet, they stared soberly at each other.

"Our artillery," Alex said. "They're shelling our flanks to keep you from circling around and getting in behind us.

We'd better get out of here."

He extended his hand. "Thank you, Riggio."

Riggio eagerly took his hand. "Seeing your face was all the thanks I'll ever need. Good go with you, my friend."

The shelling increased as they left the shrine, running in opposite directions. At his end of the clearing, Alex stopped to glance back. The clearing was wider in the direction Riggio was running. Just before Riggio reached the big trees, a shell exploded so near him that he was thrown into the air by the concussion.

Frantically, Alex tried to see through the smoke and dust. When he could, Riggio was an inert heap at the edge of a crater caused by the explosion. Alex turned and raced toward him. The clearing was now an inferno of explosions. After a few steps, he was knocked from his feet. He got up and ran on. Suddenly he stopped, astonished by what he saw. Riggio was no longer on the ground, but in the arms of a man who held him like a baby and, with the ease of a deer, sped over the clearing toward the shrine.

It was Moneigh. Shells bursting all about him.

Alex was transfixed by what he saw. A Biblical passage flashed through his mind. "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee."

Alex was again knocked to the ground by an exploding shell. This time he was too dazed to move. Finally, the bombardment ceased, and his head began to clear. Climbing to his knees, he stared at what was left of the clearing now pulverized into heaps of soil and stones. He looked for the shrine. It too was gone.

Evidently a shell had struck the face of the mountain, for the spot where the neat little shrine had stood was now hidden by rubble of splintered trees and stones. Above it,

stretched a huge crack in the mountain wall, exactly like a gaping wound. Somewhere in that debris below were Moneigh and Riggio.

Alex stumbled over the uneven ground as rapidly as he could. With bare hands, he frantically dug into the smoking rubble covering the shrine. He had to find them before it was too late. Sobbing with grief, he dug until his strength was completely gone.

Hours later, members of his regiment found him unconscious, his fingers matted with mud and blood from their relentless clawing at the debris.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

LOVE

It was several days before Alex was able to resume his duties. The fear that Riggio and Moneigh were dead shocked him deeply. Without the guidance of Moneigh and the companionship of Riggio, with whom to share it, his own life would lose much of its meaning and purpose. Every time his heart lifted at the thought of winning Truena, there was a counter-pull from losing Riggio. He could not think of Truena without remembering the unselfish purpose behind Riggio's story – his effort to be casual in its telling so that Alex would not be uncomfortable because he was the one Truena preferred. As soon as possible, he would search for her and try to persuade her to go to Mike and Marta for protection.

The Greek army now commanded the high country, including Kruja, and rapidly fortified it against the arrival of the Germans. Prisoners were a problem, and Alex's time was completely occupied. The days were exciting for each moment held the possibility of bringing Truena or news of her. The sight of each additional colorful costume stirred him, and new arrivals were frequently coming into view.

The Albanians who had been conscripted by the Italians comprised a colorful, if unmilitary, group. Members of each region, each tribe and clan, wore different costumes. Their dress told as plainly the locations of their home regions as did the plaids of the Scottish clans. However, there was one item, worn by all, a sash from ten to fifteen feet long and containing the inevitable daggers and revolvers. But even these sashes varied in color.

As Alex supervised their feeding and confinement, he could appreciate the magnitude of Riggio's task in attempting to bring them under some form of regimentation. He found one of their flags, a homespun cloth dyed black and red, its design derived from the battle banner of Skanderbeg, their national hero, and Alex prized it deeply. He meant to hand it in at the University with his thesis, if that day ever came. Tyrak, Truena's father, was among the prisoners. He was no longer the austere Son of the Eagle, but a humble old man with a faraway look in his eyes. Alex felt sorry for him. When they spoke, Tyrak was surprisingly friendly. He seemed to have forgotten Alex as a person involved adversely at one time with the traditions of his land. He seemed dazed and uncertain, and Alex feared he suffered shell shock.

He wondered whether he knew where Truena was and whether he would tell him if he did. No harm in trying. So Alex asked him. Tyrak did not seem to resent the question, telling Alex that the last he heard of her, she was in a camp on the other side of Kruja, near a waterfall. From the directions, Alex knew it was the same place he had seen her before. He went directly to his superior and obtained leave that same afternoon and, with tremendous excitement, departed.

As he passed the outskirts of Kruja, he was relieved to find it as yet unharmed by the war. Its long bazaar was still intact. It would be a shame, he thought, to destroy this colorful antique of the pristine pursuits of a quaint and stalwart people. He hoped it would continue to be there when all guns were silenced.

Leaving the village behind, he soon located the stream he had followed the day he released the three young Albanian prisoners. Swiftly he followed it. Sunlight shafting through the overhanging trees made its pools

gleam and its ripples glitter as though murmuring happy encouragement. Birds flitted through the boughs, twittering with joy, while the woods smiled and beckoned in every shining direction.

Suddenly he stopped. From ahead came the faint, soft rumble of the falls. His heart lifted, and he hurried forward. Would she be at the pool? Or would he have to seek her out from the crowded camp. Oh, if she would only be at the pool.

Breathless, he reached the edge of the falls and looked down. Then he doubted his senses for Truena was standing there at the very edge of the pool! She was alone and looking directly up at him as though she knew he would step into view at this very instant.

The entire scene was magical. The mysterious music of the falls, the jewel-like pool gently lapping the grass at Truena's feet, all served to accentuate her dainty figure, buoyant and vibrant with the bright colors of her costume.

There was a new beauty about her – a spiritual serenity – perhaps borne of the nature of her responses to the perils to which she had been subjected.

The crisp prettiness, Alex remembered, was now the soft fullness of womanly beauty. From beneath a bright orange shawl was the sheen of her golden hair. The blue of her wide-sleeved blouse was the color that he remembered her eyes to be. Heavy fringes of spun wool decorated her slender shoulders. Over a bell-shaped skirt of black wool, encircling her slender waist, was a little blue apron, richly embroidered with golden thread. Around her neck was a delicate chain of tiny gold and silver coins.

The eagerness with which Alex absorbed the enchanting details of her dress proved to him how much dearer she had become in the past year. His desire to be nearer to her broke the spell and he motioned that he was

coming down. She, in turn, motioned for him to remain, that she would come up, immediately disappearing into the surrounding woods.

There were a few awkward moments as he waited. Then he felt, rather than heard, her behind him. He turned. And there she stood.

For a long moment they gazed into each other's eyes. "Your father told me I might find you here," Alex murmured mechanically.

"You are safe," she sighed, as though removing a deep anxiety from her heart.

The husky warmth of her voice and the significance of what she said suddenly bubbled so happily within Alex that he threw back his head and laughed with sheer, uncontrollable joy.

"You too are safe," he exclaimed, emotionally affected by the vibrant sweetness of her presence. "How fortunate I was to find you at the pool."

Her answer was free of pretense. "Ever since the day I saw you here, I've watched for your return that I might explain why I ignored your signals."

Alex moved closer to her. "You don't need to. Riggio explained everything to me."

Truena's lips parted and ever so lightly she caught her breath. Her eyes brightened and the color in her delicate, smooth skin deepened. "Then ... you have seen him," she whispered with difficulty.

Alex poured out to Truena what happened at the shrine. How Riggio was struck by a shell. How Moneigh suddenly appeared and, with Riggio in his arms, ran right through the shellfire to his shrine. And how, when Alex arrived at the shrine, a landslide caused by the shelling covered it.

They were silent for a moment. Then Truena said, "I know we will see them both again."

Alex nodded his own deep conviction. Then he moved toward her saying, "Riggio told me everything."

He reached forth and touched her fingertips lightly with his own. He was unprepared for the sense of sweetness that flooded over him. The accumulated longing of all these months seemed to focus itself in this first touch. He wondered, he hoped, that she too felt some measure of the intense sweetness flooding him.

She lowered her eyes to their touching fingertips and, as though in answer to his wondering, moved her entire hand warmly and completely into his. When she looked back up at him, her eyes held the most beautiful light Alex had ever seen. He looked into her lovely, up-turned face and softly said, "I've loved you ever since first I saw you. But until now I couldn't tell you."

"I know," she replied.

Gently he enfolded her in his arms. His lips touched hers and into him flowed the delicious warmth of her being. It seemed to him their souls were touching. Something within him sang with joy. The joyous song was both new and familiar, for he remembered this something within him having sung this way before, sung in answer to which it now sang – the soul essence of this wondrous woman. An essence that had lived time and again, and time and again had been the cause of this same song now singing deep within his soul.

With a tremulous sigh, their lips parted, and she dropped her head to his chest. With his cheek pressed against her hair, he said, "This land of yours will be war torn for a long time. In my land, I have a beautiful goat farm and some friends who are warm and true. I've already told them about you. I have to know you're safe.

Will you go to the farm and let them care for you until I can come to you as your husband?"

Alex felt her arms slip under his and around his shoulders, and he thrilled to know she wanted to be closer to him. "I will go anywhere or do anything you ask, Alex."

Again he kissed her.

"I don't know how long it will be," he said, "but you will be with Mike and Marta. They will take care of you."

"It doesn't matter how long, Alex. Next to being with you, the happiest thing that could happen to me would be waiting for you in the place you want me to be."

For a moment they were silent. Then she said, "Come. I have a special place for us to sit."

Beneath a stately pine was a huge granite boulder, upon which was a ledge forming a natural seat. It enabled them to look out over the falls, the pool below, and the woods and mountains in the distance.

After they were seated, she asked, "Was my father well?"

"Physically, he was well. However, his spirit seems broken, and he's somewhat confused."

"Yes, he must be." A light of loving understanding began glowing in her eyes. "Father's suffering from loss of his pride. The most important thing in his life was his power to inflict his feelings upon others ... to inflict his hates, his revenges.

"Neither Father, nor my people, will ever feel the same since that which Moneigh prophesied has happened. No longer can they attach such importance to the paying of blood between two families now that there's the possibility that an unknown man, from an unknown family, will shoot a gun larger than all the combined guns in his land, from

an ambush miles away or from the air and kill every member of both families ... men, women, children alike.

"Yes, Father has learned that the world is larger than his personal hate and revenge. It's a bitter lesson for him, but Moneigh told us it was a necessary one."

The wisdom of her words thrilled Alex.

Behind them rose a mighty mountain whose thickly forested slopes now became shrouded in mystery. Dusk changed them to black silhouettes, and the queenly trees began drawing about themselves their formal wraps of eventide. In front of them stretched rolling foothills, rising gradually to distant crags and peaks.

There was a crazy-crag that resembled giant stair steps leading to the sky. From behind it peeped a curious moon. Pleased with what it saw, it moved out, lighting up the glorious world below. The treetops, reflecting its brilliance, were like luminous coiffures befitting the majesty of their evening wraps. The plaintive cry of a night bird accentuated the peaceful murmur of the falls.

Truena's head was a delicious weight upon Alex's shoulders as they sat upon the brink overlooking the falls. With her lips against his cheek, she whispered, "This feeling I have for you, I have always held deep in my heart. I knew I couldn't feel it the way I did unless it was meant to be. I sang a song, many, many times to you, many, many years before I ever met you."

Alex was enthralled. "Could you sing it now?" he asked.

She nodded. And while he watched her face, so beautiful in the moonlight, she sang these words:

When we're apart I hear a voice
Soothing my fearful heart,
Telling me that all dreams must start
From the place where the dream is true.

For, how could I dream this dream of you
 Unless somehow I always knew ...
 Knew that in you my dream comes true,
 And knew that you knew it, too.

As she finished her song and her sweet voice faded away, Alex thought of Moneigh. He said, "Moneigh told me what is in your song: that dreams do come from the place where they are already true, that our deep desires come from our Creator and would not be given to us unless they were attainable. Otherwise, our Creator would deliberately make us unhappy, which is impossible from a Creator whose nature is Love and whose Will is for the ever-increasing good of all creatures."

They were both silent for a moment, each responding in their own way to the joy of the moment. Then Truena said, "When I was a very little girl, before I knew what being betrothed meant, I'd slip out on nights like this and lie in the grass and dream. I felt that the moon, the stars, and the heavens were trying to tell me something and I had to be outside to hear it. I never exactly heard anything, but I dreamed of a wonderful man who would come from some distant place, maybe a star, and carry me away to a glorious love and a beautiful life. As I dreamed, something inside told me how I would feel when it happened, and the way that something told me I would feel is the way I feel now.

Alex's heart swelled until he thought it would burst with joy.

"Often I'd come all the way to these falls," she continued. "I felt more at home here than anywhere else because I have a friend who lives here. I call her my 'Fairy of the Falls.' On moonlit nights such as this, I have seen her. She's very beautiful. And she loves the falls very much. She absorbs their vitality and pours it forth to

nourish the ferns. This makes her so happy that she sings, and 'tis a glorious sound to hear."

Truena nestled closer to Alex and murmured, "Some day she'll let you see her, too."

Nearby, a bird made the mysterious forest come alive with its ardent song. For a moment, Alex and Truena were still with wonder. Then Alex said, "To all who can hear, birds are a symbol that life is meant to be joyous."

Truena stirred happily. "Glory be to your heart for giving me such a gift. Never again will I see their quick movements or hear their happy songs without remembering that the purpose of life is to express joy ... and you have taught me what joy can be."

Alex raised Truena to her feet. Still holding her hands, he said, "We're flying the wounded to Athens. I'll arrange a place for you on one of the planes. The pilot will have someone drive you to the farm when you reach Athens, and I'll give you a letter to Mike and Marta.

"It will be strange and perhaps frightening to you, but you'll be safer there than remaining at your home."

Truena pressed his fingers. "There's room for but one fear in my heart now – your safety. Be not concerned for me."

She smiled up into his anxious face, her voice deep with confidence. "I do not feel that I am leaving home ... I am going home."

Gently and sweetly, Alex drew her to him, overcome by her words. When he released her, she stepped back and held forth her hand. Opening it, Alex saw within her palm the lodestone ring he had given her that day at the ruins.

Offering him her left hand, she asked, "Would you put it on my finger?"

In answer, Alex took the ring, then lifted her hand and

kissed her third finger. He thrilled at the significance of its perfect fit when he slipped it on her finger.

Deep within her eyes a light shone as she murmured, "Now it will tell me what lives in your heart."

Hand in hand, they moved through the enchanted woods to Alex's camp. When they arrived, Truena spent the night ministering to her father and Alex retired to dream that Truena was the Fairy of the Falls and he, her lover. They soared up through the shimmering moonlit falls, gathering into their hearts its wonderfully sweet vitality. The more they gathered, the more exquisite the sensation. When they could no longer endure its increasing delight, their hearts burst with delicious joy and the gathered vitality poured forth into the outstretched arms of the kneeling ferns.



CHAPTER TWELVE

HATE

The weeks that followed Truena's departure were fraught with action for Alex; soul searing, backbreaking, horrible action. Each day it grew worse. The new Italian troops were under German supervision. They were better trained, better equipped, and more determined.

Supplies and reinforcements from Greece were constantly being intercepted and destroyed until the Greek army was reduced to a ragged group of bewildered men. Finally, instead of the long-awaited supplies, word came that the Italians had invaded Athens. Alex was proud of the response of his beaten and hungry countrymen when they learned that the enemy had landed on their home shores for, instead of despair, there flamed a fire and strength he feared had been exhausted.

His commanding officer must have seen it also for Alex was called into a conference where it was decided that remaining in Albania longer would be suicide, while if they returned to Greece, they could use their strength against the invaders.

So the weakest were loaded into the planes they had left, and the remainder began the long, perilous march overland to Greece. After interminable days of hiding and nights of uncertain footing, in dubious directions, they finally reached Athens. As yet, the Italians had made little progress in taking the city proper, but they had laid waste the surrounding countryside, confiscating all available food and animals.

The situation gripped Alex's heart with fear for the

safety of Truena and Mike's family; fear that intensified as he learned from his father the extent of Italian activity in that area. He immediately asked for permission to go to the farm.

His mother had been removed from Greece for safety. Alex was much relieved, but he missed her more than he could ever remember. He wanted to tell her of Truena. In his previous love affairs, he had not confided with his mother, but he wanted to tell her about Truena. In his feeling for her, Alex knew his mother would sense only that which would make her proud and happy.

Permission was granted, and he was given leave and a pass to go beyond the city limits. The pride and affection in his father's face was clouded with concern as he said, "Be careful. We need you." Then with tenderness strange to him, he added, "Don't be surprised at what you find ... or don't find."

Alex's fears were not lessened by the expression on the sentry's face when, at the edge of the city, he presented his pass. With a puzzled shrug of his shoulders, as if to say, "I suppose you know what you're doing," he permitted Alex's car to pass.

As he turned off the highway onto the narrow road that led within a short distance of the farm, Alex's heart beat so intensely that he could hardly breathe. The vibrant sweetness of Truena's face kept flashing before him. But as he drew nearer a desolate feeling closed in tightly from the countryside. He kept telling himself that it had not changed at this point. The alkali fields had always been barren. He would have to climb the hills where he could look down across the green meadows rolling to the sea before there was supposed to be other than wasteland. This fear was just a reaction to all the stories he had heard in the city. Nothing could happen to stalwart old Mike, his

green fields, his hundreds of goats, his substantial house — all so warm and alive with love and devotion. Therefore, nothing had happened to Truena.

The road ended. Alex leaped from his car and sped up the brush-covered slope toward the summit, the other side of which was always green, for upon it settled the vapors and mists from the sea. He did not feel the switching brambles on his straining muscles. His entire awareness was focused and poised for that moment when he could see over the top of the slope.

His last step slipped, and he fell on his elbows across the summit. He fixed his gaze upon the panorama stretching below the sea. An incredible "No!" began deep within him. His hammering heart and laboring lungs almost stifled him. Then the "No!" bubbled feebly to his lips and grew louder as though denial could remove the scene before his eyes.

The green meadows with their familiar contours, as usual, spread quietly down to the sea, and there, as usual, gentle white-crested waves broke frolicking against the beige strip of beach. But everything else was changed. Gone were the goats and their peacefulness. Where Mike's sturdy house had stood was now a blackened splotch on the green carpet.

The "No!" still coming from Alex's lips was now a groan of pleading despair. Truena gone. Mike and his family gone, his valiant, beautiful Truena, gone. Killed or captured by the Italians. And he sent her here for safe-keeping, to protect her! If he had left her alone in the land where she belonged, she would still be safe. Safe in her homeland, his selfish love had done this to her!

Suddenly he leaped to his feet. Shaking a clenched fist toward the scene before him, he screamed. "No! My love did not do it. It was the Italians! By what right did they

invade the sanctity of this home, isolated and away from all participation or even knowledge of brutality and selfishness. Why didn't the murderers remain where they belonged!"

His wild gaze fixed itself on the rhythm of the white surf flowing and ebbing in impersonal listlessness.

"Stop it!" Alex shouted hoarsely. "Don't you know what's happened? Truena is gone. Mike and Marta and Little Mike and his sister ... they're gone. Gone, I tell you! It happened right before your eyes. And you go on as if nothing happened. Don't you know the world's come to an end? Why do you keep on with that silly flowing and ebbing? Stop it! Stop it, do you hear!"

Alex stared dazedly in every direction of the farm. He began trembling and sobbing. Pure, unadulterated hate gripped every cell of his body. Its fumes made his blood race and his muscles swell. He felt powerful enough to break a man's back with his hands, nothing could give him more pleasure.

He ran across the green slope with arms outstretched and fingers spread like hooks, hungry to feel beneath their strength the flesh of those responsible for what had been done to him through the ones he loved.

As he ran across the pastures that had felt the sweet pressure of Truena's footsteps, the blasting heat of his hate slowly tempered into a steel-like coldness.

He wanted to see if the cottage remained that Mike had always kept in such delightful repair for the time when Alex would bring a bride to live with them. He wanted to lash himself with the sight of its simple charm, to see if there was within him unsounded depths of despair, the stirring of which could fire anew his smoldering hate.

Arriving at the summit of a ridge in the rolling green,

his wide, staring eyes found it. It was untouched. So achingly familiar it was so unchanged and normal that Alex turned again to stare at the blackened spot between him and the peaceful blue water as if to convince his numbed senses that Mike's house was really gone.

He approached the cottage. It was white, trimmed in green, a green of the grass at this time of the year. Shrubs and flowers snuggled affectionately up against its meandering walls.

He climbed the few steps to a wide porch overlooking the coastline in both directions. Mike was a great advocate of rocking chairs, and he had two on the porch. Mike said you could sit in a rocking chair and go places without the trouble of coming back.

Alex sat in one and began to rock. The rockers of his chair creaked companionably. Either from the floor vibration or from the slight ocean breeze, the other rocking chair swayed gently. For a long time, he stared at its swaying, seeing in place of emptiness, the sweet colorfulness of Truena's presence.

He spoke to her. "This is what I meant for you, darling. Peace, beauty, and love. A world of your own, made of sun, sky, sea, and the green pastures peopled only with those sincere enough to want nothing more from life except to love and be loved."

For awhile, Alex opened his consciousness to the wonder of what it would have been like to sit there rocking on their cottage porch together; watching the changing moods in seascapes and skyscapes; the frolicsome goats and possibly children at play ... their own children. As he did this, the empty chair rocked in unison with the motion of his chair, only it moved in a shorter, slower arc.

Then the stark, awful truth swept again through Alex

and he leaped to his feet shouting, "That's what I meant for you. Yes. But what did I do to you? Where are you? What have they done to you? Have they killed you? Did they humiliate you? Did they torture you? Did they do it quick and clean? Was there pain? Did you suffer?"

The thought of Truena in mortal agony blinded Alex. Every atom of his being cried out for him to do something. There was nothing he could do here. Those responsible for this were encamped at the other end of the city. The Italians. They were moving down in ever-increasing numbers from the mountains to continue such atrocities as this.

He bounded from the porch and ran across the stilled, empty, rolling green pastures back to his car. His blood was so filled with adrenaline that he did not even feel the exertion. He was consumed with one thought to punish those responsible for this terrible thing.

He felt as though the car was flying. He was unconscious of any contact with the road. Fortunately, the same sentry was on duty at the edge of the city for Alex was too wild to heed his signal to stop. The sentry had already raised his rifle to fire before he recognized the car and its foolhardy occupant sweeping recklessly along the narrow road.

Alex drove directly to official headquarters. Impatiently, he endured the formality of being announced and escorted into his father's private office. His father stared with concern and amazement at his usually poised son. Alex paced up and down. His eyes were black lightning, his face cold polished marble.

"What are we going to do about these Italians within our gates?" he demanded of his father.

His father spread his hands. "All we can," he replied

with curious perplexity.

"What do you mean, all we can?" Alex demanded with impatience. "They're in Athens, aren't they?"

"Yes," his father replied gently, still trying to understand what had come over his nonbelligerent son.

"Then we're not doing the best we can," Alex snapped. "Otherwise, they'd be driven all the way back to Albania."

Alex's father tried to conceal his pleasure and pride as he soberly asked, "Any ideas or suggestions that might help?"

"Certainly," Alex replied. "They have to come through the mountain passes before they get here, don't they?"

His father nodded.

"Greeks are the best mountain fighters in the world, aren't they?" he demanded. Again his father nodded, a light beginning to shine in his eyes.

"All right," Alex continued. "Why don't we stop them in the mountains? Why let them get to Athens where they...." He could not finish.

"Any ideas about how to do it?" his father encouraged.

Alex was suddenly calm, the deadly calm of a stalking animal preparing to spring on its prey. His voice was as hard as his face.

"I've chipped every stone in those mountains. I know them like the back of my hand. Give me the men and equipment I want and we'll not only stop them, we'll attack the rear of those already through at the same time that you advance upon them from here."

No longer did his father conceal his pride. His face beamed, and his stature seemed to increase. "Choose your men and name your equipment," he stated grandly.

Calmly Alex said, "I want the youngest men, the

newest guns, and the oldest mules. The young men can climb. The new guns won't jam, and the old mules have learned the futility of braying and kicking."

With respect in his voice, his father announced, "You shall have them."



CHAPTER THIRTEEN REVENGE

Not until he was astride a sure-footed mule, leading his column into the mountains, did Alex begin to relax. For the first time since his return from the farm, he was conscious of thinking instead of just feeling. However, his thoughts were half-formed and shadowy, all dominated by pain of mind and heart from which there seemed no escape.

At times, he was overwhelmed by reluctant awareness that his thoughts were not consistent with the values he had tried to build his life upon. But the self-condemnation was vague and quickly extinguished by counter-surges of anger and hate. Just as a man, under the influence of alcohol, will slug himself with more drink the instant his mind begins to clear and the reality of the life he has been attempting to escape threatens to return.

Alex tried shutting out all consciousness of himself and his surroundings except in terms of the job he was to do. Standing in his saddle, he looked back at the column winding through the narrow passes up into the mountain country. The column consisted of mules, men, machine guns, ammunition, dynamite, and supplies of all sorts. To Alex, they all had but one reason, one purpose: to enable him to carry out the tremendous task he so brazenly assigned to himself – to drive the Italians out of Greece.

The hot sun drew from the resinous brush along the trail pungent odors that made his nostrils quiver with nostalgic pleasure. Automatically, he savored deeply of the change in bouquet as the trail wound from cool, shaded

canyons to dry, hot open spaces. He had spent his boyhood in these mountains and was as familiar with their odors as with their many trails.

Standing straight in his stirrups, he filled his lungs with the spicy, stimulating air and looked back at the winding column. He saw eagerness flash from the eyes of handsome, young heads held proudly erect and moving adventurously with the sway of their saddles. The familiar trail and smells, the youthful eager faces, the quiet, peaceful canyon. All these, for a moment, brought back clearly his earlier school days. His young soldiers could easily have been a geological study group going for an outing to prove, in practice, the theories of the classroom.

Abruptly, he resumed his seat in the saddle and turned his mind to the business at hand. These were not school-boys. They were soldiers on a mission of revenge, destruction, and death. They belonged to the reality of the now, the reality of brutality, suffering, and hate.

For an instant, the faces of Riggio, Karl, Richard, and Pierre struggled on the edge of his consciousness, striving for admittance. Quickly then, there came to his mind a picture of Truena's beauty and exquisite charm, distorted and twisted in mortal agony inflicted by jeering brutes who called themselves men.

Unconsciously, he brought his heels against the ribs of his mule to hurry the time when he could lash the enemy with their just punishment. The mule pretended to go faster and pointed a huge, hairy ear inquiringly back at Alex.

Through clenched teeth, Alex announced to the ear, "Brotherhood of man. Brothers indeed, love, compassion, charity, consideration, understanding. There's no such thing. Just a bunch of high-sounding words dug from the wastebasket of wishful thinking. How would Moneigh

explain this? Probably say we'd meet again on another plane or something. Well, I'm not interested in another plane. I want my Truena now."

As though satisfied for the reason given for the kick in the ribs, the ear pointed again up the trail.

Near an area where all trails from Albania converged into one, Alex made his camp. Rather, he made several small camps, sufficiently small, sufficiently scattered and hidden to be difficult to discover. If one were discovered, it would appear to be the only one, thereby preserving the purpose of the whole.

With Max, his second in command, a veteran of the defeat in Albania and as hard as steel, Alex scouted a pass through which all troops and supplies must travel from Albania to Athens. They found the spot ideal for Alex's plan. The pass narrowed to about a hundred feet where the walls were perpendicular and overhanging. For a mile or so, it twisted through the mountain peaks.

There were four points where overhanging walls bulged sufficiently to close the pass if the rock and earth composing the bulge were shaken to the floor of the pass. At each of these points, Alex assigned crews to drill and fill holes with enough dynamite to drop the walls and close the pass at those four points. Then he dispatched scouts to cover the roads and trails leading to the pass.

The holes had to be drilled by hand and would have been a heartbreaking ordeal for any but willing, eager youth. Their enthusiasm and good fellowship at their work continually caused Alex to reflect bitterly that it was this perversion of youth that made the most enthusiastic sinew of war.

Usually, the driller had to be suspended by a rope from above. Alex cut the fuses himself. It was imperative that they be the same lengths because the charges must all go

off at the same time. He personally crimped the caps upon the fuse and buried them in a stick of powder because the caps were not only exceedingly sensitive but also capable of blowing off a hand. When the holes were drilled and tamped with sufficient dynamite, Alex turned over one fuse at a time and carefully watched its injection and the sealing of the hole, leaving exposed only the split end of the fuse awaiting a lighted match.

When this was all done, Alex assembled his men and told them his plan. His voice was confident, his tone energetic, and he spoke in a manner stirring to the listening youth. Ever since Alex's return from Mike's farm, he had more strength than he could use. Its surplus force electrified his words and movements, which were eagerly absorbed by the enthusiasm of his admiring followers. Alex was a god to them. He excelled them in strength and vigor, and they felt that to Alex the game of war was an open book. They would willingly follow him into a wall of fire.

"Men," he explained, "the Italians have to go through this pass to reach Athens. Many of them are already through. Those that are must be fed and their ammunition replenished. All supply trains will go through this pass. Reinforcements will go through. Eventually, the entire Italian garrison in Albania will try to go through this pass.

"Our job is to destroy every supply train and every reinforcement. If no supplies or reinforcements get through, their army in Athens will get weaker and weaker until our forces can drive them back up into these mountains, into our hands.

"When the Italian garrison in Albania learns that supplies and reinforcements are not getting through, they will move out in force to save the army already in Athens. That is why we have prepared to close the pass into three sections.

"We may not be strong enough to stop the entire garrison at once. But we can stop it if we divide it into three parts and attack each part separately, keeping the other two bottled up tight until it is their turn to be destroyed."

The listening youth went wild with delight at the cleverness of Alex's plan. Holding his hands aloft, he finally quieted them down.

"Just one thing can defeat us. I selected you men because you are the bravest and most vigorous, but brave, vigorous men are also restless men. They have to have action."

Alex paused. The men were so attentively still that he could hear the sound of the waterfalls deep in the pass below. Its faraway murmur reminded him of another waterfall. It blended peacefully with the humming whisper of the wind in the treetops. It was one of those moments when the wheel of time slips somewhere and everything stands forth suspended in space with photographic clearness and stillness.

Reluctantly, Alex threw his voice into the suspended picture. "The enemy that can defeat us is impatience. But now that you men have been shown this unseen enemy, I'm certain you will attack it with that same vigor and bravery for which I first selected you as my companions in arms."

After a short silence, to allow the meaning of his words to sink in, Alex dismissed the men to their immediate duties.

Uneventful day followed uneventful day, and Alex found that the enemy of which he had warned his men closing in upon himself. His nights passed more quickly for he spent many hours in thinking or dreaming of the life he had found and then lost at the hands of the Italians.

In the stillness of the night, the sound of the distant waterfall was more distinct. With its murmur as a background, Alex lived over and again those hours in the woods of Albania near another waterfall, those hours with Truena. In agonizing clearness he could, in startling detail, recall the fragrance of her hair; the intimate huskiness of her voice, tight and stumbling with emotion; the round, firm warmth of her slender body. Then his breath would catch as in his mind he saw her move through the sunshiny woods – the flash of her blue eyes, the gleam of her golden hair, the music of her laugh, the consummate grace of her every stride accentuated by the colorful swish of her skirts and shawl.

In this wonderful woman, he had found the answer to a lonely yearning he had known as long as he could remember. Then, when at last his life was full, the lonely yearning replaced by a happy song ... it was all taken from him by vandals from a foreign land!

At this point in his reverie, his blood would rush so fast and hot with anger that it would force him to leave his cot and stalk rapidly through the trees in the night-cooled air until some of the surging emotion had been expended.

At last the day arrived for action. His scouts reported that a column of Italians with supplies and ammunition was approaching the pass. It was the day after a particularly difficult night for Alex. He assembled his command.

"Men," he announced, "at last we go into action. A column of Italians is headed for the pass. They number about the same as we do."

He paused significantly. "If their numbers are about equal to ours, should we use our dynamite to divide them? Or save the dynamite, prepare an ambush along the pass, and just wait for them to get close enough to fight it out?"

Quickly, fervently, unanimously came the answer. "Save the powder."

He waved them into quiet again.

"I knew that would be your decision. Max will take half of you and I, the others. Max and his men will conceal themselves along this side of the pass. My men and I will move farther on and nearer the bottom and will see that those who get by you will not get through the pass. In that way, we'll not get caught in our own cross-fire. To your places, go now. And remember we are depending on two things to give us the advantage. One, they will not be expecting us. Two, we have been expecting them a long, long time ... too long."

The men began to cheer, but Alex motioned them toward their stations.

Within an hour, the pass was an inferno of machine guns and grenades. Within ten minutes, it was all over. Out of approximately two hundred, only a dozen Italians remained standing, their faces pale and bewildered, their hands stretching in surrender as high as they could reach. The floor of the pass was littered with dead, dying and wounded.

Alex felt a strange exaltation as he inspected the results of the battle. His own losses were negligible. There was something unreal about seeing the results of his own planning and handiwork, seeing the grotesque sprawl of the dead, the resignation of the dying, the frightened groans of the wounded, and the automatic reactions of the captured.

But real or not, he was certain of one thing. He felt better. A dam had been released within him, and the flooding waters left him calm and relaxed.

Alex ordered able-bodied prisoners brought to him. Shaken and apprehensive they stood before him. "You will

bury your dead," he said in a flat voice, "and take your wounded back to Albania. We are not interested in caring for your wounded or feeding you."

The highest in command, a young lieutenant, protested feebly. "But the wounded will die."

Alex shrugged his shoulders. "If they had reached Athens, they would have caused Greeks to die. Not only soldiers, but others ... old men, children, women, and young girls.

"It's up to you whether they die or not. Take them back to your commanders and show them what happened. Tell them no more Italians go through this pass and those already in Athens are doomed."

Alex turned to Max. "See that the dead are buried. Gather up the wounded. Catch their animals. Tie the wounded that can't walk onto the animals. Provide them with food and water and send them back."

Calmly he looked again into the face of the Italian officer, saying casually, "Those that die would die anyway. Besides, it might do you good to see them die. It might lend conviction to the message I am sending by you."

When the prisoners and Max left to do his bidding, Alex began climbing the trail back to the cliff and his camp. Regardless of how hard he tried to forget it, the memory persisted of the three Albanian youth he sent back to their families in northern Albania. Theirs was a message of peace. Today he sent a message of war. He paused to get his breath. Holding to a sapling, he looked down into the pass through the haze of lingering gunpowder.

"Message of peace," he grunted sardonically. "Maybe it got home. Maybe it didn't. Little difference whether it did or not ... but not so with my war message. When it gets home, it will serve my purpose. Every Italian in Albania

will start for this pass to wipe out a handful of Greeks who dared defy them in such brazen and brutal fashion. They will have to. Otherwise their Greek campaign will fail.

"That's a message with sense to it," Alex said aloud and emphatically. "A message that places the enemy where I can get my hands on him. Where results won't be guess-work."

In the weeks that followed, Alex saw to it that nothing was left to guess work. In accordance with his plan, when the defeated Italians returned to Albania bearing their wounded and dying, the Italian army mobilized for Athens.

They reached the pass where the Greeks had attacked. Scouts were sent ahead, returning with the report that there were no Greeks to be found. This was true. They were all hidden on the crests of the pass walls, walls too steep and precipitous for the Italians.

Concluding that the Greeks had gone or were waiting for them at a farther point, the Italians entered the pass. When the column was completely in the pass and in between the outside dynamite charges, all four charges exploded and divided the column of soldiers into three traps.

Systematically and thoroughly, Alex's soldiers from above destroyed the trapped Italians. Leaving both ends of the pass covered with machine guns, in case some might scale the barriers that the dynamite made of boulders, brush, and dirt, Alex took the remainder of his men and moved from the rim of one trap to the next. As long as a target could be found, the destruction process continued.

Suddenly, Alex realized he no longer relished the roar of machine guns in the hands of his men. Instead, each shot hurt some new and sensitive spot deep within him.

A thought he tried to keep from his mind burst into blazing reality. What if Riggio had not been killed that day in Albania and was now slain by his own guns. Having once permitted this thought to form in his mind, it ran wild, threatening to consume him. He scrambled down a ravine to the floor of the trap. The first crumpled body he saw was facing him, a dark, handsome face. It was Riggio's. Alex froze with horror. Stiffly, he moved toward the body. Another came into view. Automatically, Alex glanced at it. Again, he froze. This too seemed to be Riggio. Frantically, Alex ran from one casualty to another. Each one, dead or wounded, was to Alex's overwrought emotions, Riggio.

Panting and wild-eyed, he scrambled up a cliff to get away. "Of course they are all Riggio," he kept mumbling to himself. "All Italians are Riggio. All Germans are Karl, all Englishmen are Richard, all Frenchmen, either Jean or Pierre."

With a mighty effort, Alex held fast to his reason as he made his way to the privacy of his quarters. There on the cot his tortured soul wracked his exhausted body until the peace of unconsciousness came to his rescue.

The formal report of the extermination of the Italians went ahead of him to headquarters by messenger, with the result that the entire city of Athens was out to greet the return of Alex and the youth who had achieved such marvelous feats in the mountains.

Alex had not thought of this contingency and was at a loss to cope with it. He had been so consumed with his own feelings in this war that he had overlooked how other people's feelings could become involved and has to be dealt with. Whether he had thought of it or not, he was now a national hero and would be expected to conduct himself as such.

His father was so proud he could scarcely contain himself. Before Alex realized it, he was on a platform with his father and a dozen men of high political and military rank. People were thronged around the platform as far as he could see. One of the officials, in flowery words, extolled the extent of Alex's deeds, ending his speech by introducing Alex to the people as one whose name would be as fearful to the Italians as the name of Basil was to the Bulgarians.

When Alex heard himself placed in the same category with Basil, the Bulgarian Killer, something in him snapped. He always had contempt for Basil and his barbarous cruelty. It was Basil who put out the Bulgarian invaders' eyes and then sent them stumbling back to Bulgaria, led by one prisoner who had been spared one eye so he could see well enough to lead the others back to their home and families.

Alex was so stunned he could not move, even though he knew that the increasing stillness meant that everyone was waiting for him to speak. At the moment, he so thoroughly despised himself, he felt that the sound of his own voice would be unbearable to his own ears. But the people were waiting.

He raised his voice and spoke. As he did so, he knew he was answering the accusations of his own self-condemnation rather than the hungry imagination of the hero-worshipping crowd. His words were an excuse to himself.

"The Italians have to be driven from Greece," he cried. "Now they can be."

Even though, in his words, he was not thinking of the people, he could not have said anything to please them more. Their cheers could be heard all over Athens. Exhausted, Alex resumed his seat.

When the excited crowds had spent their fervor, the

speaker addressed them again. With proud assurance, he referred to Alex's speech as typical of his nature and leadership. "Swift and sure," he shouted. "Direct and to the point, his words unhampered by hesitation, just as his deeds are unhampered by sentimentality. In our new leader's heart, there is room for but one thing. Hate. Hate for the enemy. Under his leadership, we shall add our hate to his and drive the Italians back into the hills whence they came."



CHAPTER FOURTEEN REMORSE

In the following days, Alex was as a soul in limbo. He moved in a world of which he was scarcely conscious. He knew things were going on about him, but he felt them not. They were shadowy figures and sounds mingled with the acrid odor of gunpowder and the sickening sweet smell of spilled blood.

But the full light of Alex's awareness was turned within. He was completely conscious only of what had happened to his inner self now gazing accusingly back at him. The gaze was direct, unflinching, unwavering in its accusation. He, who set himself up among his fellowmen as an enemy of hate, had become a sponsor of hate. He who had so purposefully sought for a means to free his people of hate, was now a leader in hate. The challenger of hate had become the champion of hate. Once he had been torn with the inadequacy of one lifetime in a fight against hate. How many lifetimes would it now take to undo the hate he set in motion in a few short months?

Gradually, it penetrated into his consciousness that every remaining Italian had been driven back into the hills, that it had been a wonderful victory and that he had led the attack. He was on leave at home when the news came that he was to receive a promotion. This meant his capacity to hate had been officially rewarded. He was now a recognized leader of hate and would be expected to continue earning his reputation. And that he could not do. He could not undo what was done, but he could keep from doing more. But how could he avoid it? He would rather

live in a cave. That is it. The cave. The cave near Apollo's Temple, where he found Moneigh when he went to the Oracle of Delphi, in search of an answer to his frustrated desires.

There he could hide from the world he had betrayed and make an effort to rebuild his life. He knew it would have to be done from the inside out, that he would have to dig deeply into the very foundation of his being and remove that which was old and build in something new and different and true and real and enduring and fulfilling. He did not know how to do it, but he did know he had to try. He needed guidance and help, but there was none. If only Moneigh were still available.

But Alex thought, even if Moneigh were still alive, would he be willing to help him after Alex's betrayal of the rediscovered purpose of *Brothers of the Grape*?

Inwardly, he wrenched with shame as he remembered the scene at Skanderbeg's Fort when Moneigh thanked him for rediscovering the true purpose of the fraternity and he had told Moneigh that, henceforth, his greatest desire would be to become worthy of being a member of *Brothers of the Grape* by devoting his life to serving its purpose of Divine Love. A groan of torment shook his very soul. Yes. He would go to the cave. It was quiet there, and he would be alone. Maybe the very atmosphere of the ancient Oracle would awaken some form of guidance in rebuilding himself.

Hurriedly, Alex changed his clothes to shepherd garb. Then, donning his official coat to hide his shepherd clothes, he drove his car to the road that turned off to Mike's farm. There he left it with his coat and any other identification of the military hero he had become and strode across the countryside dressed as a shepherd.

As he felt the grass beneath his feet, the wind on his

cheeks, the bright blue sky above, he wished with all his heart that he had never been anything but a shepherd and had known nothing of the world except what he could now see, feel, smell, and hear.

When Alex approached the cave entrance, he wondered if it would be as dark as when he first found it or would it be filled with the wonderful yellow light from Moneigh's candle?

Breathlessly, he entered the narrow passageway leading down to the dome-shaped cave. With his hand on the cool, smooth wall, he felt his way, step by step. His eyes saw only darkness. Then the passageway turned, and he saw the soft yellow light.

The light meant Moneigh was there. He reached the end of the passageway and stepped into the large cave. In the center was the pool of swirling water. He glanced at the hewn stairs leading up to the chamber whence came the yellow light and where before he had found Moneigh writing in the book of ancient wisdom. Hot and tired from his long walk, he knelt and drank from the cool, mysterious waters of the underground stream. Then he climbed the steps to the chamber of the candle. Each step was a mighty effort. His eagerness to confess to Moneigh and begin the penance that would perhaps some day bring a measure of peace was in conflict with his acute reluctance to have Moneigh learn the extent he had traveled in the wrong direction.

Finally, he entered the chamber and stared at the table. A man sat there. But he was not Moneigh. However, about the man was Moneigh's same quality of calmness. From large, dark eyes, Alex's gaze was returned with alert interest and understanding. The man had an abundance of crisp salt-and-pepper hair and a long black beard. He was dressed as a Greek farmer, and the empty left sleeve of his

coat was tucked into the coat pocket.

"Hello, Alex. Don't you know me?"

Alex thrilled with incredulous gladness. The musical lilt of that voice could belong to but one person, Riggio. But could this calm, gray-haired man, with an empty sleeve, be Riggio? Riggio, the gay, volatile youth of a few months ago?

Rising, Riggio stepped close to Alex and, with his remaining hand, gripped Alex's shoulder. The sincere affection he saw in Riggio's eyes made Alex cringe with self-condemnation. What would come into those splendid clear eyes when Riggio heard what he had done to his people and how he had betrayed the *Brothers of the Grape*?

Alex stepped back and started to speak. Riggio stopped him. "Wait," he said through his luxurious beard. "We'll talk after you've eaten. Come on, you're pale as a ghost. And I'm the ghost around here, not you."

Riggio led the way down the steps and then behind them. There, to Alex's surprise, was another passageway leading upward toward the daylight. When they reached the light, they walked out into an area about a hundred yards wide, completely surrounded by walls. Alex threw his head back and stared straight up at a rectangular patch of blue sky. It was cool and shady since the sun could shine in on it only the short time it was directly above.

In one corner, beneath a natural flue that would draw off the smoke, was a cooking pit with grills, pots, pans, and dishes. A few feet away, beneath an overhanging wall, was a table with benches, and on the other side of the entrance, a spring bubbled in a little pool, then disappeared through a fissure to join some underground stream.

From a cupboard dug deep in the cool wall, Riggio

brought forth barbecued kid, cheese, and bread that he placed on the table. Motioning Alex to a seat, he walked over to the spring and returned with a cup of cold, clear water.

For a moment, Alex sat as one in a daze – astonished at finding Riggio instead of Moneigh, surprised at the existence of this hidden, comfortable, and convenient arena. However, to accept Riggio's hospitality when Riggio did not know how he had betrayed him, made it impossible for Alex to eat. He just stared vacantly at the food, his hands limp on the table.

Riggio reached for a piece of crisply browned meat and began munching it. "Come on, eat up," he said with comfortable companionship. "I'm anxious to hear how you got to be your country's number one hero."

Alex jerked as though from an electric shock. Unbelievably he stared at Riggio. "You knew?" he muttered.

Riggio nodded his head, his eyes growing soft and deep as he saw the sweat of agony glisten suddenly on Alex's forehead. "I think I know how you feel," he said, sincerely. "But first, let's eat. Then we'll talk."

Riggio cut a big slice of meat and placed it on Alex's plate. Then he began chatting in that impersonal manner of his. Alex's appreciation and affection almost choked him. Knowing what was in Alex's heart and mind, Riggio deliberately put him at ease about his fears concerning Riggio's attitude toward him. Mechanically, Alex began to chew the meat wondering how long his mouth would stay dry.

Cheerfully Riggio chatted away. Alex realized that Riggio was, as usual, dealing with subjects of the most serious nature in an impersonal manner.

"Maybe Moneigh can help the way you feel about it.

He'll be back any day now. He certainly helped me in many ways. He nursed me back to health after the explosion that day I saw you in Albania. Even amputated my shattered arm. After I was discharged, I just stayed with him."

Riggio swung around on the bench and crossed his legs comfortably. "Remember how I used to take what I wanted from life without even looking back except to condemn those who didn't express love in the manner I thought they should?"

Riggio smiled at Alex, waiting for an indication that he remembered.

Alex nodded his head, mostly in gratitude to Riggio's efforts to put him at ease. He was finally able to taste the food.

"Well," Riggio continued, "Moneigh straightened me out in that department in no uncertain terms. I'd spent my life trying to force people to feel the way I did about things. Moneigh caused me to see that the reason I wanted people to feel as I did was because I wanted the pleasures of life without their responsibilities. And the only way I could get with it was to have everyone else feel as I did about it.

"After I exposed me to myself," Riggio went on, "Moneigh explained that there was no need for me to be particularly alarmed at the discovery of my true nature because everyone has different wrappings, strings, and knots and that the main purpose of our being here is to get unwrapped.

"He told me that I was blessed because at least I had discovered that I was all wrapped up and until I knew that, I certainly couldn't do anything about unwrapping myself. Many people go through life thinking that they are their wrappings.

"He said the best way to unwrap ourselves is to recognize everybody else is also wrapped up and that we must accept them in their particular package and not as the package we would like them to be. For, in practically every case, when we want people changed, it's for our advantage.

"He told me that the only way the wrappings were ever removed or changed was in accordance with the Plan. And that Plan is for the individual good of the person concerned, not for the benefit, real or imaginary, of another."

Riggio paused and took a drink of water. With a deep sigh of appreciation for the cool, refreshing contents of the cup, he clanked it down on the table. Looking steadily at Alex, he now explained how he felt toward Alex – an explanation so important and dear to them both that he concealed it behind a pretense of inconsequential chatter.

"So you see, I'm only interested in the Alex inside the wrappings. The condition your wrappings get themselves into is your business, not mine. But I do know that the more snarled and twisted they get, the nearer they are to the peeling-off stage."

Riggio got to his feet with an expression on his face of suddenly remembering something. "Almost forgot. I have an engagement to get some eggs. And that's an important engagement."

He pointed directly across the arena. "Over there you'll find a room dug out in the wall. There are cots and blankets, and it's dark and cool. Sleep for a week if you can. You need it."

Riggio paused before entering the passageway leading from the arena, turning understanding eyes upon Alex. "Let me give you a bedfellow to take with you," he said. "I believe that neither you nor I nor anyone else can go so far in the wrong direction that Moneigh can't show us the

way back." Then he was gone.

Alex stared at the empty passageway. His eyes teared with appreciation and wonder. He thought he had lost Riggio forever. Instead, he found a deeper, stronger, wiser Riggio, and they were closer than ever. Slowly, he crossed the arena to the sleeping room. Deep within him stirred humility and gratitude so complete that he felt he would never again be the same person.

Though the cot he lay in was comfortable and the dugout cool and dark, Alex could not sleep. He was deeply grateful for Riggio's attitude and for the logic behind it. But Alex was not satisfied. It was too easy. The extent of his transgression was too great. What would be Moneigh's attitude?

Eventually he dozed but was awakened by subdued sounds and voices. When he pulled back the curtain that hung at the entrance to the dugout room, he saw it in the dark. A fire crackled in the cooking pit and two figures sat within its flickering light.

As Alex approached, the two arose. They were Moneigh and Riggio. Even in the vague firelight, Moneigh's welcoming smile was distinct. As always, Alex felt it as clearly as he saw it and, as usual, something within him responded with strangely comforting warmth.

Regardless of Alex's hunger to give way to his joy at seeing Moneigh, he felt that would be disrespectful to the sincerity of his remorse.

Soberly, he returned the cheerful greeting. Moneigh gripped Alex's arms enthusiastically, then moved his bench to make room for him by the fire.

"We were just going to call you," he said, his rich voice denoting pleasure in seeing Alex. "Riggio brought us some eggs and mushrooms. The omelet will be ready in a

moment." Rubbing his hands together, he added, "A fitting meal for welcoming you home."

Alex started to sit on the bench prepared for him, then suddenly stood up again facing them and the fire. He was straight and rigid. "Stop it," he cried. "Stop treating me as if I were someone to be proud of. Don't you know who I am?"

Moneigh and Riggio resumed their seats, looking calmly and understandingly at Alex's flashing eyes and rigid body. "I'm the one to whom the privilege of discovering the lost purpose of *Brothers of the Grape* was given."

Trembling all over, Alex paused, panting for breath. Neither Moneigh nor Riggio moved in their poised attentiveness.

"What did I do as a result of this privilege? Be an example of the expression of love? No. Just the opposite. I became the most notorious hate-monger the world has known for a long time. The *Brothers of the Grape* will bear the stigma of my membership as long as it lives. The shame of my hypocrisy will never be erased."

All the rigidity left Alex's body. The pent-up emotion was spent. His eyes were wide, dull, and glazed. He stared from Riggio to Moneigh, then at the fire, now a steady glow of coals.

His voice was thin with fatigue.

"You treat me as though I did nothing, as if everything were the same. Why? That can't be right. If I hadn't represented myself as I did, if I hadn't known better, there might be a reason for your attitude. But no one could have known better than I. I came here seeking Moneigh's guidance in atonement. Not to be rewarded ... with omelets ... and mushrooms.

Alex's splendid shoulders sagged, his head bowed. Dazedly, he turned and retraced his steps to the dugout. No one stopped him. No one said a word. The curtain of the dugout dropped silently behind him.



CHAPTER FIFTEEN
A NEW BEGINNING

Muffled daylight seeping around the edges of the curtain told Alex he had slept all night. He was deeply refreshed and felt lighter in spirit than he had in months. He squirmed on his cot when he remembered the emotional manner in which he had told his story last night. He planned to be calm and resolute, but when they brought forth the fatted calf, as though he was the returning prodigal son, something in him violently revolted.

As he dressed, he was surprised to realize how similar his case was to that in the famous parable. Glancing at the other cots, he wondered whether Riggio and Moneigh had slept there, too. If they had, he certainly had not heard them come or go.

Stepping through the curtain into the daylight, he saw them sitting before the fire, just as they were the night before. Alex moved toward them. Riggio raised his hand high in a salute and then pointed toward the spring where towels, soap, and wash pan lay on one of the benches.

"Go wash your face and hands," he called cheerfully. "Then come over here ... you're still going to eat that omelet. When I walk five miles to get it and five miles back, I'm not taking any arguments about eating it. Lucky for you I didn't cook it all last night."

Alex was glad to hide his face with splashes of cold water. Blessed Riggio. It was just like him to take the bone of contention right out in the open and fashion from it a pipe of peace.

The invigorating chill of the water, the fresh morning air, fragrant with spicy smoke, the sound of cheerful voices, and the sight of loved ones sang pleasantly through Alex in spite of himself.

As he approached them, he felt Moneigh's appraising eyes.

"Look, Riggio," he exclaimed in a pleased voice. "Our guest is a new man."

"He should be," Riggio replied, carefully turning a golden omelet. "He slept the clock around."

Smiling sheepishly, Alex took his seat at the table. He had never tasted anything so delicious as the flavor of the mushrooms and eggs.

Moneigh and Riggio chatted as Alex ate. When he finished, they had another cup of coffee with him. Then Moneigh said, "Alex, you spoke your piece last night. Now it's my turn, but only because you expressed a desire to hear it from me."

Alex nodded his head appreciatively and expectantly.

"There was no need to talk to you last night. We humans are like this cup. When it's full, we can't pour any more in until it has been emptied a bit. You emptied yourself last night, and now you can be refilled again.

"Those who elect to show others the way often stumble over their own feet. But to the sincere person, this is help rather than a hindrance. It keeps his or her understanding sensitive and the other person's problem near and dear. Remember the first time you came here seeking an answer to your desires?"

Alex nodded.

"I told you things then that perhaps you didn't understand. Now, probably you will. Everyone comes into life

each time with a divine mission particular to her or him and that mission is to awaken a particular quality of consciousness within. The ultimate destiny of us all is to unfold all the facets of the 'philosopher's stone,' which means all the attributes of our inherent wholeness and perfection.

"Your mission in this life was to polish a particular facet of love, to awaken this particular facet of consciousness. This unfolding capacity for love, striving for recognition, was the cause of your relentless desire in that direction."

Moneigh passed his cup to Riggio to be refilled, tasted its contents appreciatively, and continued. "Sometimes it's unavoidable that we drink deeply of the bitter cup of hate before we are ready and willing to taste the grape of love as the angel bids us do in the *Brothers of the Grape* ritual. It's necessary that we free ourselves of the capacity to hate, but before we can, we have to know we have the capacity. And the only way we can truly know it is to experience it. Then, and only then, are we able to transmute it to love.

"If you are to transmute this leaden metal into gold, you must begin by doing it within yourself. Your present self-hate must be transmuted into self-love. You must love yourself, else you'll have nothing with which to love others. So, let's begin by taking a broad and clear look at your sense of guilt. The value of anything is always determined by its relationship to something else. Everything, except ultimate truth, is relative, including that which humanity calls 'right' and 'wrong.' That which is considered 'right' in one part of the world may be considered 'wrong' in another. In one country, stealing is a crime; in another country, it is a virtue. However, that does not change the fact that from your own point of view, from

your own sense of values, you have earned yourself a despicable reputation.

"On the other hand, it would be difficult to find one soldier in Greece who would not give his all to trade places with you. Thus, the value of anything is relative to one's desire for it. Your great desire with your fraternity was to lessen the hate in the world. So, in accordance with your great desire, you acted to the best of your ability. And, in your determination, you did a natural thing, you attempted to influence those around you to feel the same way."

Moneigh paused to finish his cup, then continued. "Then life gave you the opportunity of personally carrying out your proposal. Somewhere in the midst of war's activity, you suffered a deep personal tragedy. You haven't told us about it. And it isn't necessary that we know. That which is important is that the experience was sufficiently bitter to bring to the surface your capacity to hate. You thought you couldn't hate. Now you know you can. Now that you know you can, what are you going to do about it?"

Moneigh's eyes fastened deep into Alex's. He raised the spoon in his hand and brought it down silently to the table, emphasizing each word. His voice was low and vibrant with purposefulness. "The only thing you can truly be guilty of is not to do anything about it. For the first time, you know something needs to be done. Your own capacity to hate needs to be removed. Your only true guilt will lie in your failure to make the necessary effort."

Moneigh stopped. A sense of panic gripped Alex.

"How does one make that effort? What can I do?" Alex's words were a heartfelt plea. "I feel so incapable ... and alone."

In a tone more gentle than Alex had ever heard, Moneigh spoke. "You are never alone, Alex. You have within you a Presence that is always active. This Presence is constantly seeking to influence your thinking, feeling, and acting. Contained within Its potential is all the wisdom and strength you ever need to overcome any problem or accomplish any goal. All you have to do is open yourself to It."

"But how?" Alex asked desperately.

"The answer to 'how' is the original purpose of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. The way you do it is to deliberately drink the wine. In the *Rubaiyat*, the drinking of wine symbolizes the way in which we can deliberately change our attitude, our mood, our manner of thinking at any given moment to a state of joy. This is why wine is used in so many religious ceremonies. It symbolizes humanity's ability to deliberately lift its spirit as a result of 'drinking' or mentally embodying the Divine Presence within us as our life and around us as our environment. To be able to deliberately change the quality of our consciousness is the faculty that brings forth the Divine from within each of us, for this is what enables us to have dominion over our personal worlds. This Truth is the basis of all religions worthy of the name, for it has always been known by the enlightened and is the story told by the original *Rubaiyat*.

"Thus the 'how' of lifting your consciousness from devastating guilt to creative joy is to deliberately 'drink the wine.' The process is also called meditation."

Hope struggled with confusion within Alex. "But I still don't understand how to do it. Is there an illustration you could give me?"

Moneigh said, "What you actually do is drink in the Divine Order of the Universe all about you. Purposeful

Divine Order is the nature of the Creator. That's why it is called Nature. Now, Alex, you can't think of two things at once. You can't be caught up in chaotic emotion and Divine Order at the same time. To do one automatically eliminates the other. This is why the 'drinking' from the cup of the Presence must be deliberate. The reason it isn't easy is only because we have formed the habit of not doing it.

"Now then, for an illustration. You have had glimpses of this new feeling when you sit on a mountain or by the sea, watched a sunset, or studied the stars. For a door was then opened by this majesty of Divine Order into stillness beyond your ordinary stillness. To deliberately enter this opened door is drinking of the cup, the inverted cup of the dome of heaven, the contents of which, when properly tasted, automatically produce joy.

"You are always surrounded by this nature. At any time, you can deliberately drink of it. Thus at any time, you can deliberately have a feeling of holy awe. It's this feeling that is the joy for which humanity hungers. To feel this joyous awe is to feel the Presence, for this is what the Presence feels like. And when you feel It, you are One with It and It expresses Itself as you, thereby transmuting all your former chaos into harmony and joy."

Moneigh paused to give Alex a chance to assimilate what he had said. After a moment, Alex gently shook his head. "It seems too easy. Do you mean that all I have to do to transform my life is to keep my attention on the beauty of nature?"

"Yes," Moneigh said. "If, when you behold nature, you include in your attention an awareness that you are observing the action of the Presence, of the Creator, then you are opening yourself to this action, enabling It to fulfill Its purpose in you.

"When a plant lifts its face to the sun, it is the action of the sun that causes the plant to blossom and bear its fruit. In the same way, when you lift your attention to the Creator, it is the Creator that causes you to unfold, blossom, and bear your fruit. It is the responsive action of the Creator that makes the difference. It is the Creator that doeth the work, but only if you open yourself to this Presence."

Now Alex knew why he had always lived with a sense of unreality, why he had a feeling there was a feeling that he should be feeling but was not. He did not exactly know what the feeling was, for he had not yet felt it, but now he knew what it should be. It should be a feeling of awesome Unity with the glorious order, beauty, and purpose of life. He also knew how to awaken that feeling. He must make the necessary effort to lift his awareness, to sustain an attunement to this Infinite Activity. This would enable him to become more and more an expression of It. Its expression through him would cause him to feel the feeling for which he hungered – the feeling of being a new person, with new perceptions, new values, new aspirations, new abilities, new achievements in new dimensions. Only in this way could he transmute the leaden metals of guilt, loneliness, and futility of his present life.

Again Moneigh spoke into his thoughts. "When you are willing to make a stand and say, 'This is what I will think.' only then are you reborn."

Moneigh gazed fondly at Alex, a light of delight at what he saw glowing deep within his eyes. He stood up. "I have some other things to do. I'm sure you two have much to talk about."

To Riggio, he said, "I'll be away for several weeks, Riggio."

To Alex, he said, "You will find your peace, for you

know where to look for it now." With a nod of farewell, he departed.

Alex knew he had found the answer for which he came. It was to make a stand. To deliberately drink from the cup. To meditate, to attune. With the resolution came the thought upon which he would make his stand. It was:

"Creator in me, express Thy nature through me, so that my nature shall become more and more like Thee."

Riggio led Alex to the room within the cave. As Alex followed him inside, he again looked at the symbols of that which humanity had learned of itself. Riggio sat down and motioned to a place for Alex to sit. He said, "I call this the room of my rebirth. I used to think I was quite a lively fellow, but it was here that I really learned to live, not in the past or the future or even the present – but to live in the Eternal, the Eternal NOW.

With warm affection, Riggio asked, "Is there any particular question?"

Alex was thoughtful for a moment. With a gesture toward the wall symbols, all of which he had never completely examined, he said, "I've often wondered about Moneigh. He's never indicated that he belonged to any particular philosophy or religion. Most people do. I've wondered what was his."

Riggio smiled understandingly. "Moneigh and I have talked about this. He doesn't 'belong' to any, yet at the same time you might say he belongs to all."

Riggio paused, as though momentarily caught in his own reflection. Alex studied the inscriptions on the wall. One caught his attention more than the rest. He pointed toward it and asked, "What does 'Nuk pu Nuk' mean?"

"That inscription appeared on the walls of every temple

of ancient Egypt," Riggio replied. "Its translation is 'I am that I AM.' It means that there is not only just One Supreme Being but also just One Life, One Mind, One Consciousness, One Power. If there's but One Life, each person must be an individualization of that Life, actually partaking of Its entire nature. When a person understands this, he or she defines his or her own nature by affirming 'There is but One I AM and I am that I AM.' "

With a broad gesture, Riggio pointed to all the symbols on the wall. "The other basic teachings all have the same concept that there is but One Divine Source. Today, most people in the world do believe this. However, this Presence is believed to be separate from human beings. This belief in one Omnipotent Force was once a new idea and had to overcome old beliefs in many gods. The concept of the Divine Presence and humanity being One must today overcome the belief that we are separate from our Creator."

Riggio turned and stared silently for a moment at the place on the wall containing the inscription "Nuk pu Nuk" before he continued. "We aren't dealing with anything new. The only thing new about it is that the time has now come for it to be taught to the masses, instead of just to those few who were initiated into the deeper mysteries.

"Moneigh explained to me that the reason the time has come for it to be taught to the masses is because the masses are being quickened in intelligence. And when people in general become more intelligent, they begin to question and reject the concept of religion that no longer makes sense to them. Therefore, if all interest in Truth is not to disappear from the face of the earth as a result of mass rejection of half-truths, then the higher Truth must be revealed in a way acceptable to this increased intelligence. Thus, 'Nuk pu Nuk,' the one 'I-Amness' of Life, must no

longer remain a mysterious legend of ancient temples but progressively become a household word of every family throughout the world."

It still wasn't quite clear to Alex. "Why is the phrase 'I AM' used to define the nature of the Divine that is shared with humanity?"

"Because 'I AM' is the simplest yet the most complete statement of being. It is the first person, singular, present tense of the verb 'to be.' To affirm it and to know what you mean when you say it is a definition of self-conscious life in the here and now. The human species is the only earthly form of life we know that can say 'I AM.' "

Alex interrupted, "I believe I follow you, but how does it fit with meditation? What does humanity's 'I AM' being created in the image of the Divine's I AM have to do with it?"

Riggio replied, "How could anyone affirm 'I and my Creator are One' unless he or she could first say, 'I am this' or 'I am that.' The ability to say 'I AM' must precede what you say you are. This ability and freedom to choose what you believe you are is part of the nature of the Creator that has been shared with us. Not only have we already received, in potential, all that the Creator has, we have also already received the freedom to choose what part of this Allness we will experience at any given time.

"This means that we do not have to go outside ourselves for anything that we will ever need. Pleading with an outside Power is the old way of half-truth. Affirming our oneness with an inside Power is the whole truth. Take the acorn the oak tree creates. Within its acorn is contained everything the acorn needs to become an oak tree. Once the acorn is formed and falls from the tree into the earth, it begins its own life. The tree has created the acorn in its own image and likeness. All the acorn has to do is let the

inherent image come forth into manifestation as a tree.

"In an acorn, the tree unfolds or comes forth as a result of the principle of growth. In humanity, our inherent divinity unfolds through the process of deliberate knowing. To meditate simply means to consciously direct your 'I am-ness,' or your self-consciousness, to be aware of, to accept and know that your own nature is a replica of Divine nature. This is the way the door is opened. This is to invite, ask, or be willing to let the inherent Divine nature come through and express as your nature – as your personal wisdom, perfection, strength, power, love, peace, and joy."

Alex was fascinated, both with what Riggio was saying and the fact that Riggio was able to explain it so simply and so beautifully. "Sounds wonderful," he exclaimed. "If I can just do it."

"You can," Riggio assured him. "It's just a matter of wanting to, having the desire, and believing in what you are doing. The desire is strengthened when we realize that it is natural, something we were born to do, just as natural as an acorn becoming a mighty oak. However, in humanity, each individual must do it personally. We must deliberately take a hand in our own growth. Why? Because both our growth and our freedom to choose what our growth will be is limitless.

"When we understand this, it strengthens our desire to meditate because we realize, as a result, we can expect to progressively become a NEW person. Also, we cannot help but recognize that this Divine Presence must also be in all people, places, and things. Consequently, we have a new feeling of love, a new awareness of beauty and a new expression of wisdom."

Alex was moved with deep gratitude that he could so readily understand what Riggio was saying. How won-

drous it all was. What a glorious way for the Creator to share Itself with Its creation.

Riggio's tone grew serious. "Two things can defeat you: lack of sincerity and impatience. Therefore, you must be sincere and you must be patient, patient mostly with yourself. For this is a new way of thinking, a new belief, a new expectation, a new attitude. And since it is new, it must overcome your old thinking habits. The only thing strong enough to overcome an old habit is a new habit. New habits have to be built gradually. So you must not only be patient with the new but also patient with your old habits of thinking when they try to hold on – which they will.

"But," Riggio added cheerfully, "if you just want it enough, the rest will come automatically. Just remember, from expectation of this new good will come the desire to make the effort and from desire will come fulfillment."

Alex was stirred with admiration for this new Riggio. He felt certain the transformation was the result of Riggio's persistence in meditation. Unexpectedly, Truena came into his mind. He wished with all his heart that she was here to share this with him. Once before he started to tell Riggio of Truena's tragic fate, but his throat had closed so tightly he could not. He felt that he was not yet strong enough to talk about it. He was grateful Riggio had not asked about her.

Suddenly, he realized his love for Truena had expanded into a new dimension of meaningfulness as a result of what he had just learned. He was certain that the more he unfolded his divine potential, the closer they would be – wherever she was. It was clear to him that the most complete way he could express his love for Truena was to unfold himself.

Riggio continued, "After Moneigh taught me, there

were still times when I was filled with confusion and doubt. So I formed the habit of asking myself these questions: 'Who am I, and why am I here?' Then as I forced myself to answer these two questions, in the light of what I had been taught, I came up with what seemed, for me, a summary of the whole teaching.

"I call this summary 'The Truth of My Being.' Whenever I need to get back on center with my sense of Oneness, I simply reaffirm 'The Truth of My Being.' It works every time for me. I'd like to share it with you:

Since there is but one life, the Life of the Creator, the only Presence, the only Mind, the only Power, who am I? I must be the Creator expressing Itself as me.

Because this is true, only that which is natural to the Creator – the good, the beautiful, the whole and complete – can be my experience. Anything else is the result of my own limiting concepts.

When I know this is true, my mind is then aligned with the Mind of the Creator that causes the Power of the Creator to move through my word, for my word is then Its Word.

To demonstrate this way in which I am created in the image of the Creator's Creativity, my purpose is to express my own creativity.' "



CHAPTER SIXTEEN THE GREATER LOVE

When Alex returned to Athens, he found his father in a different mood. His former prideful enthusiasm had given way to deep dejection. Making certain that all doors to his office were fastened, he spoke to Alex in guarded tones.

"My son," he said heavily. "I'm afraid that in spite of your magnificent victory over the Italians, our country is doomed. The Germans have arrived in Bulgaria. They intend to use Greece as a base for their advance to the Suez Canal and, perhaps, invade Russia from here."

Alex felt affectionate pity for this stalwart old warrior. "Are you sure we can't stop them?" he asked.

His father shook his head hopelessly. "They outnumber us a hundred to one. Their weapons are far superior." Suddenly, his eyes burned with anger. "But that isn't the worst of it. My secret agents inform me there are many in the military and government willing to collaborate with the Germans." He kicked back his chair and strode about the room.

Alex wished there was something he could say that would help his father, but after the spiritual awakening he had experienced with Moneigh and Riggio, it was difficult for him to feel very deeply about the war.

"Greece has been invaded many times before," he heard himself say. "She always comes out of it. Germany is extending herself. Her supply line will have to travel too far."

Then surprisingly, he thought of something that would appeal to his father. He said, "You're right that we can't stop them from coming. But we can certainly make ourselves felt once they're here. This isn't a war just between Germany and Greece. It involves all Europe and Asia. If Germany plans to use Greece as a base from which to attack our allies, we can do much to interfere."

As Alex explained his proposition, his father's eyes began to brighten. He was his old self again. "Splendid," he exclaimed. "You carry on guerrilla activity from the mountains. I'll organize an undercover movement here. We'll work together."

As he strode about the room, the military snap had returned to his stride.

In the days that followed, his father became active in the underground and Alex returned to the mountains for his guerrilla activities.

He had no enthusiasm for what lay ahead. When here before, he had been driven by the force of revenge. Now the force of revenge was spent. No longer could he be lured by its false promises. The only thing that really interested him was the prospect of a new life as a result of the stand he had taken to sustain his attunement through the meditation he had chosen.

Many times each day, especially on awakening and before going to sleep, he repeated the words "Creator in me, express Thyself through me so that my nature shall become more and more Thy nature."

He contemplated the significance of the words, going over each word and phrase, time and again, until their meaning became clearer and clearer. He would try to imagine what would happen within him as the Creator expressed Its nature through him as his nature. Obviously, it would mean that the attributes of Infinite love, wisdom,

truth, beauty, peace, and joy would progressively be expressed as his attributes. This would be his unfoldment, for he would gradually become a new person – deliberately reborn from within.

When he returned to his camp in the mountains, the first thing he did was to look for a quiet spot in which to practice his meditation. He found one overlooking the mountains with murmurs of a stream deep in the pass as an overtone. The first time he tried in this inspiring spot, Alex felt a strange elation for he saw how it was possible for him to become a truly transformed person.

With startling clarity, he understood that he had both an outside life and an inside life and that they were interdependent. He realized that he would be unable to admire the majestic mountains or thrill to the melodic stream if there were not a subject entity within him to receive what his eyes saw and his ears heard and interpret them as majestic mountains and a melodic stream.

He let this idea have its own way as it moved through his consciousness and began seeing that this receiving and interpreting entity must be the “Creator in me” to which he addressed his meditation. This must be the place where the Divine Presence did the work – where the responding activity fulfilled the purpose of the Infinite through him.

Alex lifted his gaze to the Balkan Alps in the distance. He had enjoyed their jutting grandeur many times, but this morning he felt something new trying to get through. Not from what he saw, but from what he felt about what he saw. The rugged profile of the peaks had hitherto seemed without order or purposefulness, but now he sensed a definite pattern. The pattern was neither discernable nor definable. He just knew it was there because it had to be there. He felt that the cliffs, canyons, and foothills rippling downward from the peaks were a reflection of this invisible

pattern. Awesome gratitude filled his heart followed by the sense of a mighty Presence, a Presence that seemed not only to be everywhere but also to be everything – including him. It was everywhere, and everything that was, was IT.

The bright color and delicate form of a nearby mountain flower absorbed his consciousness. He realized that this, too, was a pattern of this Presence. With this realization came a feeling of joy. For the first time, he knew what joy was. It was a feeling he had never felt before. It was as though this Presence was deliberately drawing aside a curtain to reveal unexpected truths to him.

Suddenly, Alex knew that the purpose of all creation was joy. Everything was expressing it, though differently. The sky, the peaks, the stream, the trees, the flowers, the earth beneath his feet, the planet itself – each was singing its own particular song of joy. All creation was expressing joy according to its particularized channelship. Thus to humanity, the message of its environment is that the purpose of life is to express joy. And when individuals deliberately recognized the patterns of their environment as channels through which the Creator expresses joy, they automatically become channels of joy themselves.

A thrilling peace embraced Alex as he saw how simple it was. The purpose of creation summed up in one word – joy.

Joy was the reason, result, and reward of all humankind’s ventures, values, and virtues. For only if there is joy is ambition selfless, love genuine, prayer spiritual. How simple, too, the act of higher meditation: the beholding of beauty from a grateful, jubilant heart.

He knew he would never again take his environment for granted. Henceforth, he would be attuned to its message, the message of orderly, purposeful fulfillment and joy. The blossoming flower would henceforth be a

symbol of the Creator's covenant with humanity. Just as the flower cannot refuse to bloom, neither can humankind nor its planet escape their fulfillment.

For the first time, he began to understand the reality that had been missing in his life, the reality of the invisible purpose behind the visible. His goal, therefore, was to learn to dwell in the invisible while living in the visible.

Alex was strangely excited as he realized the power of meditation for he had just discovered that once he was completely in it, his thoughts seemed to have a wisdom and direction of their own that were beyond his present ability to provide. Truly he was becoming a new man, for in meditation new ideas, new concepts did of themselves come into his mind and take a permanent place as his new self and his new evaluation of what life was and could become.

He contemplated this discovery as long as he could control his attention, and then he returned to camp. On his way to his own quarters, he took a shortcut behind a row of tents. Abruptly, his attention was attracted by what he heard from one of the tents. Two soldiers were arguing about him in heated tones.

He stopped to listen. The argument was over what made Alex such a good leader. A deep sadness overcame him as he heard one man's words. "Before you can be a great soldier, you have to be a good hater. The more you can hate, the angrier you can get, and the angrier you get, the stronger and the braver you are. That's the reason our leader is the strongest and bravest."

So this was how his men felt about their leader. And what could one expect after that public oration comparing him to Basil, the Bulgarian Killer?

Alex waited for no more. He went to his headquarters

and ordered an assembly. When the soldiers assembled, he mounted a little platform and addressed them.

"I want to talk to you not only as soldiers but as men. First we are men, and then we are soldiers. And to the degree that we express the higher principles of manhood will we be efficient soldiers.

"The greatest enemy to manhood is hate. Hate expresses itself as anger, and anger robs us of both understanding and efficiency." He knew he should illustrate his point. His desire to do so reached deep, and the deep responded with an idea.

He instructed Max to place two tin cans on a log at the edge of camp. Then he called forth the man he had heard extolling the virtues of hate. "I'm going to give you a demonstration," he said to the assembly, "of what anger can do to you."

Pointing toward the cans on the log, he gave instructions to the man from the tent. "Lift your rifle and hit the can on the right."

The puzzled man did what he was told. Raising the rifle, he aimed quickly and fired. The can spun from the log.

"Easy, wasn't it?" Alex said.

The man nodded.

Then to the astonishment of all, Alex violently slapped the soldier across the face with his open hand. Indignation and anger flooded the man's eyes.

"Now hit the other can." Alex ordered.

The soldier hesitated.

"At once."

Raising his gun, the man aimed and fired, but the can remained on the log. Alex placed his hand upon the

soldier's arm, smiled, and said, "Thank you very much."

Alex turned back to his men to explain. "Eyes and nerves distorted by anger cannot shoot straight, just as a mind twisted with hate cannot think straight."

"When you get right down to it, this war we're fighting is a war against hate, not against people. All people are the same. Hate just causes us to appear different. The more we are free of hate, the quicker our victory, for in freeing ourselves of hate, we are conquering both the cause and result of war. Long ago, a wise man said that one who hates another is in darkness and walks in darkness, knowing not where to go because that darkness blinds the eyes."

Without another word, Alex turned and went into his tent. When Max dismissed the men, they moved in thoughtful silence to their respective destinations.

Alex was filled with a strange exhilaration. He felt that the something new within him had conducted the entire incident to which he had been but a witness. He tried to fill out some reports, but he could not. He was too excited.

For a long time, he had believed that without the personal love of Truena, his life could hold no real meaning. But a new feeling was being born in him, a feeling almost as wonderful as that which he felt for Truena. And the strange thing about it was that he felt it toward everyone. He felt that each of those young men outside were a part of him – as though there was some kind of unity through which everyone was related. And that unity was just waiting to be discovered and touched, like the strings of a harp, which, when touched, would send forth tones of exquisite harmony, transforming all who heard from discordant individuals to harmonious parts of a wondrous whole.

"It's like a 'Harp of Humanity,'" Alex said aloud,

"whose magical tones cause all to vibrate as one."

This new height, width, and depth of his thinking made him feel as though he was being born again. He thought of the wise man's words he had just spoken to his men. The words seemed to come from his lips of their own volition, for he did not even remember that he knew them. Had his efforts at meditation opened inner doors to forgotten wisdoms as well as to new wisdoms? It certainly seemed so.

Suddenly the picture of when he made his proposal to the *Brothers of the Grape* came into his mind. But this time the inward cringe of guilt did not come with it. Instead, he felt strangely confident that it would be fulfilled and that he, as a new person, would contribute to it in some way. Until today he had not really known how it could be done. But this new concept of the inherent unity of humankind could contain the answer. In the "Harp of Humanity" he had sensed its possibility. There must be a way to encourage others to touch the strings and thrill to the harmony.

For the first time since he looked upon the blackened ashes of Mike's house, he felt at peace.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN A NEW OPPORTUNITY

The following weeks were filled with intense activity for Alex and his men. Most of their time was devoted to establishing communication and signal lines along the mountain trails. The countryside was searched for food and nonperishables hidden in strategic locations. The German advance from Bulgaria met little opposition. The greatest concern was to keep existence of his force unknown to the invaders as long as possible.

Due to prearrangement with treasonable officials, the German occupation moved quickly and smoothly. Leaving Max in charge, Alex spent most of his time in Athens. Disguised as a bewildered goat herder who had lost his herd to feed the Germans, he wandered about the streets in search of information. When caught in a prohibited zone, he would plead so pitifully for the return of his goats, especially Agnes with the white head and brown body, that the guard, fearing the wrath of his superior should he trouble him with an offender so obviously demented, would admonish Alex and send him scurrying back to wherever he belonged.

One day as he strolled the city, he saw his father sitting at a sidewalk café table. If Alex had not been accustomed to seeing familiar faces in unfamiliar disguises and places, he would not have recognized him.

In appearance his father was an enfeebled old man, slouched in a chair smoking his pipe and watching the passersby from eyes too dim to permit any real interest in what was going on in a world from which he would soon depart.

Alex felt a sense of pride in the effectiveness of his father's disguise. He sauntered over to the table. Certain no one noticed, he whispered, "Do you suppose that such a decrepit old man would have the strength to follow his son up the Acropolis to the Parthenon?"

"This weak old man," he growled from his beard, "could outrun his son to the Parthenon. Lead on!"

Climbing slowly enough for his father to see where he went, Alex led the way to the isolated spot he had always felt was his own. The spot from which, in his youth, he spent many hours absorbing the personality of his beloved Athens spread out below like an upturned palm of a hand, stretching forth-sensitive fingers to feel and be felt by the touch of time.

His father joined him with a warm greeting. From their vantage point among the Parthenon columns, no one could approach them without being detected.

"Have you heard how Greece has been carved up and fed to the enemy?" his father asked.

"I've heard rumors," Alex replied.

With painful disdain, his father related the way in which Germany had divided Greece. "The Ionian Islands were given to Italy," he decried, tabulating each catastrophe by indicating one finger after another. "The Albanian frontier was extended to include three provinces in the Epirus area. Bulgaria was given western Thrace, eastern Macedonia to the Struma River, and the Thasos and Samothrace Islands. Central Macedonia is retained by the Germans, along with the Solonika port and most of the Aegean Islands – Lemnos, Mytilene, Chios, and Crete. They left only Peloponnesus, Attica, and Thessaly to us, over which now presides a 'Quisling' government."

For a moment, there was silence between father and

son. From the viewpoint of two generations, they stared over a land that was no longer Greece.

Alex placed his palm against the cool column behind his back. His hand vibrated strangely from its touch of timelessness. "It has happened before," he said comfortingly. "We shall work out of it again, but this time I hope we can contribute to making it the last time."

Again they were both silent with their thoughts.

Then Alex asked, "What's your special assignment? Does it include work for me?"

"It does!" his father replied, excitement kindling his eyes. "The Germans have begun the purge of our Jews. Through my assistant, I am informed of their movements and methods. We are in communication with the Jews through their rabbis and our priests. They are organized into small, self-sufficient groups capable of traveling. We plan to get them out of Greece in small boats."

Alex smiled with approval. "Do you have any orders for us?"

"Yes," his father replied with his old authority. "We already have the largest group ready for the crossing. It'll be your work to draw attention elsewhere with a diversive action. Also, you are to form a guard around the embarkation point to see that only the proper persons are admitted. The boats come from secret sources and their destination has to be kept secret. If the wrong person got through, it would be disastrous."

His father chuckled "You'd be surprised at the unexpected places we get help. I understand that once out of Greece, they are unofficially aided by the British."

"Where do you get your boats?" Alex inquired.

"All kinds of places. Mostly fishing boats. I don't understand it myself, but it seems that the same boats that

catch fish for the Germans in the daytime will transport the Jews at night."

Alex was puzzled, too.

His father continued. "I was to give you the password. Listen closely, for it is very odd. When your guards stop the approaching refugees, they are to ask, 'What was in the Angel's Vessel?' The answer is, 'The Grape!'"

Alex felt a glowing tingle in the top of his head. His heart thrilled with strange excitement. The password was from a verse of the *Brothers of the Grape* ritual. The complete verse stood forth in his mind:

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape.
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder: and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas – the Grape!

What did it mean? Could one of the *Brothers of the Grape* have selected that password? Alex thrilled from head to foot. His father, noticing his subdued excitement, asked if he was all right. Alex assured him that he was.

After a moment, Alex said, "So I'm to do something to draw attention elsewhere? Do you suppose blowing up the Gorgopotamos Bridge would attract sufficient attention?"

His father caught his breath at Alex's words, then responded approvingly. "Everything they send to Solonika, and then to Africa, must go over that bridge."

Alex asked, "Do you know when the refugees are to be ready for transportation?"

"Soon," his father replied. "Could you be ready in a week?"

"Yes," Alex answered.

"Good. Then we'll make it a week from today at midnight."

"But where?" Alex asked.

Again his father chuckled. "That'll be a surprise to you. You remember that little cove at the goat farm your grandfather left you?"

For the second time in the past few minutes, Alex's mind was aglow and his heart thrilled. "Certainly," he answered. "I've fished it a hundred times."

"Good," his father continued. "Then you know the narrow beach strip that protrudes out past tidewater. This makes a natural loading pier, small, but adequate for what we need. The goats are gone and the house is burned so the Germans don't consider it worth watching."

Alex nodded, not trusting himself to speak for the old pain was again in his heart. When he could speak, he said simply, "We'll be there."

Suddenly his father pointed a warning finger at a squad of German soldiers ascending the Acropolis. Without further word, they gripped each other's hands, then went their separate ways.



CHAPTER EIGHTEEN ATTUNEMENT

When Alex arrived back at the camp he summoned Max and told him what was in store for them. Max's interest quickened.

"We'll need several German uniforms," Alex told him.

"You'll have them tomorrow," Max promised and turned to go.

"Max," Alex stopped him. "Let's not have any unnecessary brutality."

Max's only response was a respectful salute.

Next morning, in accordance with his promise, Max produced the German uniforms. Pointing at one exceedingly bloody coat, Alex glanced accusingly at Max.

Max shrugged his shoulders. In an indulgent tone, he explained. "Two of the volunteers were the Theos brothers, Chun and Koz. They'd just received word of their father's execution."

Assuming no further explanation was necessary, Max gathered up the uniforms. "I'll have them cleaned. When will they be needed?"

"A week from yesterday. In the meantime, select four or five of our best detonation men and have them equipped and ready. Also, I want a man who can drive a truck and speak German without an accent."

At dusk on the appointed day, Alex and his men, all wearing German uniforms, were hidden beside the road leading from the German supply depot to the bridge.

Rocks frequently slid down a steep cut at this particular point, and Alex had placed sufficient rocks in the road to halt any traffic. In a nearby-secluded canyon, the remainder of Alex's men waited for him to return and lead them to the cove from where the Jews were to be transported.

While waiting for a German truck to come along, Alex studied his men. The two devoted brothers, Chun and Koz, were among them. Alex would prefer they were not on this mission, for he could see they were still feeling the loss of their father. However, he made a practice of never interfering with the way Max carried out his orders. He could understand how Max felt. These brothers were good detonation men and, according to Max's standards, deserved this opportunity to strike back at their father's murderers.

Koz was more restless than Chun was. There was a quarter moon, and even in its pale light, Alex could see tenseness in his movements and an abnormal brightness in his eyes. Alex grew uneasy. This was a very ticklish job, demanding steady nerves and exact timing.

His attention was drawn to the road. A canvas-covered truck was coming. Its lights picked up the rocks, and then the sudden squeal of truck brakes was heard. The driver and his companion climbed down to clear the rocks from the road. They were instantly seized, bound, gagged, and carried into the brush a short distance from the road.

There Alex made a decision that relieved him. He detailed Koz to guard the prisoners until their return from the bridge – an order that obviously displeased Koz very much.

Inside the trucks were large cases of stenciled canned goods. Quickly and carefully the cases were opened and the cans removed to the brush. Then, within the cases, were hidden the detonation men and their equipment.

When all was ready, Alex drew Max aside.

"It's very important," he said, "that the prisoners do not know the truck leaves this spot. It must appear – in the event something goes wrong – that the truck was held up just for food. No other reason. I want you and Koz to remain with the prisoners. Take them farther away from the road so they cannot hear our departure."

Max was disappointed. "But I should go with you. This is a dangerous mission. What if you're caught?"

Alex smiled at him. "That's why one of us must stay behind. Who else but you could carry on the work at the cove?"

Max reluctantly accepted his less exciting job.

Alex took his place beside the driver and they moved toward their destination. At the bridge entrance, they were stopped by indifferent guards who glanced at the well-stenciled cases and waved them on.

When the truck was well on the bridge, the detonation men climbed from their hiding places and, at regular intervals, dropped to the bridge from the slowly moving truck. Alex watched these shadowy figures as, one by one, they disappeared over the side of the bridge to place their explosives among the supports below.

At the other end of the bridge, guards who gave them little more than a glance waved the truck on. A short way from the bridge, they met another truck on its way back from the loading dock. Alex had a bad moment as the driver of the other truck held forth a bottle and shouted for them to stop and have a drink.

His driver, in appropriate German, answered the invitation with a warning that some high command members were right behind them. Alex complimented him on his quick thinking, glanced at his watch, and told him it was

time to return and pick up the detonation crew.

Switching off his lights while he turned around, the driver headed back toward the bridge. Again they received an indifferent wave from the guards. When they were out of sight and earshot of the guards, the slowly moving truck came to a momentary stop, just long enough for Alex to quickly tie a piece of rope around the right front tire. When they were moving again, there was a slight thump-thump as the rope struck the bridge floor. The slight thump was sufficient to signal the waiting men. One by one, the shadowy figures materialized from the bridge walls and climbed into the back of the truck. Alex's heart beat faster as each appeared and the successful accomplishment of the mission became a better possibility.

The last one finally appeared above the bridge railing and disappeared into the rear of the truck. A few seconds later, the end of the bridge was in sight. Anxiously, Alex watched for another indifferent signal that they could go through.

At last the guard raised his hand and waved them on. Just when Alex thought all was well, the guard suddenly shouted, "Better have that tire fixed. She's got a blister."

In a voice husky with relief, Alex's driver called back, "I will."

Alex held his watch in his hand as they sped back, its phosphorescent hands telling him that only a few seconds remained of the allotted time set for the explosives. Suddenly, the truck swerved, as from a jutting wind, and a deep, prolonged rumble struck their ears.

The driver groaned with relief, and Alex remarked with satisfaction, "That should prove distracting."

The explosion was followed by shouts and bustling confusion. A moment later, a speeding motorcycle roared

past them, then another. The third one signaled for them to stop.

"Go back," he shouted. "You're needed back at the bridge."

Without waiting for an answer, he remounted his motorcycle and sped away.

"We'll have to return by another road," Alex told his driver. "Turn around, then switch off your lights, and we'll take the first road to the right."

The driver followed instructions. The night was sufficiently clear so that when the lights were off, they could still see the road for quite a distance. Arriving at a side road, they turned off.

"I know this road well," Alex explained. "It isn't used much, and it will bring us back into the highway a short distance on the other side of where we left Max and Koz."

As they wound their way along the side road, they could see the lights and hear the engines of vehicles racing back and forth on the main road to the bridge. Finally, they rounded the hill that caused the slide area where they had placed the rocks on the highway to stop the truck. Soon they were again on the main road, but returning to Max and Koz from the opposite direction.

At the exact spot the truck had stopped the first time, it stopped again. Alex had planned to make it appear that the truck had never left the spot and returning from the opposite direction made it simpler. Alex could see the brush clearly where Max and Koz were to be waiting, but no one showed himself. The men stirred in the back of the truck. Alex heard one of them leap to the ground. Then another. He was turning the doorknob to get out himself when, suddenly, a rifle cracked through the brush, its stab of flame pointing toward the truck.

For an instant, Alex's hand froze on the door handle. What could have happened? Had the captives overcome their guards? Then, to his surprise and relief, he saw Koz running through the brush toward the truck, his rifle in his hand.

Alex leaped to the ground. Then he heard Koz's voice, frantically crying his brother's name over and over. At the rear of the truck, Alex found the reason. Chun lay in the road. He was dead! Killed by a bullet from his brother's gun.

Koz fell to his knees beside his brother. He kept sobbing over and over, "I didn't know it was you, Chun. I didn't know it was you, Chun. You returned from the wrong direction! I saw the German uniform and didn't wait. Oh, Chun. I didn't know it was you!"

Alex placed a comforting hand on Koz's shoulder, but Koz was unable to feel it.

"Come," Alex said to Max. "We must be on our way." He motioned to him to see that Koz was led away, then said to the others, "Carry as much of the canned goods with you as you can and hide the rest. We'll get it later. Hurry now. This road is likely to be a very busy place in a few minutes."

Max lifted Chun's body off the road and, after a brief struggle, led Koz toward the canyon where the remainder of the men had been waiting to proceed to the cove.

Alex's thoughts were racing with the pitiful significance of Chun's death – a significance that must not be lost. The first thing he did upon reaching the remainder of his men waiting at the canyon was to climb to where he could be seen. "Men," he said soberly. Their upturned, expectant faces reflected the soft moonlight. "A very tragic thing just happened. As you see, some of us are wearing German uniforms. A few days ago, Koz and Chun

received word their father was executed."

Alex's voice was suddenly very slow and deliberate. "So clouded was Koz's mind, so determined was he to avenge his father, that he shot the first German uniform that crossed his sight. When he shot this German uniform, his own brother was wearing it."

Alex could feel a hush come over his men.

"If Koz had not been so blinded by hate, he would have recognized his brother, for even though we did return from an unexpected direction, there was plenty of light, as much as there is now, and I can easily recognize the man farthest from my voice, a distance greater than Koz was when he shot his brother."

Alex's tone became a plea for understanding. "I do not say these things to punish Koz. He has his punishment, one that will live with him all his life. I tell you this to show you again the truth of what I told you the other day. The only thing that makes one man appear different from another is hate. A man is not our enemy because he wears the uniform of an enemy. A man is our enemy only because we hate him.

"Tonight a man killed his blood brother because he was wearing the same uniform that I now wear as I speak to you. The uniform didn't make him an enemy. Hate did it. Hate so distorted his vision he couldn't recognize his own brother."

As Alex finished, the starlit canyon was filled with vibrant stillness. Again, for a fleeting moment, he felt that those held within this stillness were one – just different facets of the one gem of universal consciousness. For a fleeting instant, he heard again that mystical melody of the Harp of Humanity.

Alex descended from the canyon wall and removed the

German uniform. When the others had done likewise, he led them across the backcountry toward the farm and the cove. Who would he find there? One of the *Brothers of the Grape*? And if so, which one? The moon, shepherding its flock of brilliant stars across the pasture of purple, gave the softly rolling hills below a quality of phosphorescent unreality.

The feeling generated by his sense of oneness with his men remained with Alex. It was a feeling of deep peace, born of faith in the new self progressively birthing itself within him. Back at the University, he felt he was free of hate. He thought that whatever was to be done must be done by others. Now he knew he had misinterpreted his desire, for its deeper meaning had been the need to remove his own latent capacity to hate.

Now he knew that within him was the only world where he, as an individual, could remove hate. For only as it happened in his inner world could he contribute to its removal from the outer. Suddenly, his eyes filled with tears of gratitude for that which had happened to him. Never again could he hate. He had loved Truena with all his heart. He had glimpsed happiness beyond his fondest dreams and his enemy had taken it from him. He had hated that enemy with all his heart, but now he knew he had no outside human enemy. His only enemy was his own thoughts, his own capacity to hate. But now this capacity was gone.

No longer could he look at Italians or Germans as enemies. They were his brothers. They were all Citizens of the World, fighting a common enemy, the only real enemy – the enemy of ignorance, ignorance of the true stature of humanity.

He was deeply grateful for the realization that all peoples were his brothers and sisters, grateful for the new

wisdom that all beings shared the same Self. He felt that flower of a new wisdom unfolding within him, for it was clear that because of his love for Truena and his loss of her, he found love for all humankind.

Alex marveled at the way the Power of unfoldment worked. It seemed that all it needed was the opportunity. He now knew that he had to provide the opportunity, which was done by using his will and his mind to create a conscious state of receptivity, receptivity to the Divine Force surrounding him and permeating him.

As a result of contemplating the meaning of "Creator in me, express Thyself as me," he realized there actually was an inner, higher, superior world. The more he turned to it, the keener was his awareness of it, and the keener his awareness, the more it expressed its superior influences in thoughts, feelings, actions, and circumstances.

He gave himself over to a new sense of Power and security generated by his awareness of this constant, instantly available power. Suddenly, the first phrase, "Creator in me" spoke to him in shining words. "You are simply becoming aware of what you already are. For, I am that which thou art, and thou art that which I am."



CHAPTER NINETEEN FULFILLMENT

At the sight of the cove, Alex automatically stopped. He once had such wonderful plans for that cove, built around the joy of sharing it with Truena. Max's whisper that he was holding up the column brought him back to the present. As Alex moved on, he looked at his watch. They were almost an hour ahead of time. As yet, he could see no boats or passengers. He stationed the men in a wide semi-circle around the cove. To be certain that they properly memorized the challenge they were to give each refugee, he placed them at their stations, and as he did, he had each one ask him, "What was in the Angel's Vessel?"

To which, with increasing excitement, Alex replied, "The Grape!"

Refugees began to arrive. Alex moved back and forth along the sentry line. A deep satisfaction stirred within him as he heard his sentries challenge these distraught people with the symbol of an ideal. An ideal born long, long ago but designed for just such a purpose as this present moment.

He was curious to hear the tone and manner in which individuals gave the password. He felt that, in their answer, he could detect what "the grape," one of the mystical symbols of antiquity, meant to each person, whether the person realized it or not.

Over the peaceful lapping of the gentle surf came the muffled sounds of fearful exclamations, followed by jerky whispers, as mothers and fathers struggled frantically to hold their little families together.

Alex looked at his watch. The hour was almost midnight. Even as he looked, he heard the chug of approaching engines. Peering through the velvety night, he saw the hazy outlines of the little fleet moving into the cover.

In the center of the cove, a narrow strip of land protruded seaward to a point beyond tidewater. At the end of this strip was an improvised pier from which the boats could be loaded.

The foremost, a large fishing boat, tied up to the dock. Four figures materialized on the little pier and walked along the strip toward the crowded beach. When they reached the beach, three silhouettes waited while the fourth approached the tensely huddled figures. "You will form a single line along the strip to the loading pier," spoke the voice. A thrill went through Alex. It was Karl.

Alex would know his calm, matter-of-fact tones anywhere. That which thrilled Alex most was the German accent. Deeply he savored the scene taking place before him – a German soldier instructing a group of Jews to ready for boarding the boats the Germans had provided for Jews to escape the purge.

Alex waited until the refugees were moving in orderly obedience to Karl's instructions, then he walked over and stood at Karl's side. In heartfelt silence, they clasped each other's hands. For a long moment, they both drank in the significance of what was taking place. Karl broke the silence.

"Alex," he said, "the joy I feel tonight, I owe to you on two counts. First, because you revealed to me the true meaning of our fraternity. Second, for what happened in a cabin deep in the Albanian mountains.

"I was wounded in the Albanian campaign. A family of the Shala country saved my life and nursed me back to

health. There was a young man who kept the family from starving. That young man had been fighting the Greeks and was captured.

"Every day he told me, and everyone who would listen, how a Greek officer released him and two others, to return to their homeland and care for their families. He told me that Greeks did not put out the eyes of their captives but were kind people who believed all peoples are kin and that the time had come for us to stop thinking of ourselves as Albanians and Germans but as 'Citizens of the World.' I knew that this Greek officer had to be you.

"Yes, Alex," Karl repeated with more feeling than Alex had ever seen him display, "I owe you more than I can tell you."

Alex's heart sang. "It's a wonderful night, Karl," he said simply.

The refugee line moved slowly toward the pier as the loading of the boats began. Karl and Alex watched in silence for a moment as the first boat was filled, then chugged out into the cove to make room for the next one.

Then Karl moved toward the three figures who had come ashore with him. "Come on over here," he said to Alex. "There are others who want to see you."

Alex followed him. Who could they be? Excitedly, he tried to peer through the intervening darkness. Now he could see their silhouettes plainly. One was exceedingly tall. One had an empty sleeve. That would be Riggio.

Suddenly, Alex knew that the third was Moneigh.

But who was the tall one? Then the tall one raised his hand in a lackadaisical salute that only one person could do so listlessly – Richard. Richard, the English member of the Brothers of the Grape.

For the first few moments their greeting was a jumble

of half-formed phrases and exclamations.

Alex said to Richard, "I had a feeling I might run into Karl, but I never dreamed of seeing you. Imagine all of you being together in one spot. Why?"

"We're helping Karl," Richard replied. "He has charge of the fishing fleet. He lends it to us to transport the refugees to a nearby island. When Riggio brings it back to him, Karl simply reports to his superiors that the fleet didn't catch any fish on this particular trip, which it won't."

"That's right," Karl said. "Except Richard didn't mention that he takes charge of the refugees at the island and sees to it they reach Cyprus. From Cyprus, he arranges for their delivery to friends and relatives in Israel."

"Wonderful." Alex exclaimed, his voice tight with feeling. Then he said, "If Pierre were just here, everything would be complete. Anyone heard from him?"

Moneigh answered. "Pierre preceded us to his next experience. He was killed resisting the invasion of France."

There was a significant silence. Then Alex said, "Thus the meeting is complete."

"Complete it is," Moneigh announced. "Tonight, on the shore of this little cove, is completed that which was set in motion at the last meeting of the Brothers of the Grape. This is so because one of the most effective weapons against war is people who have the courage to become 'Citizens of the World' in deed as well as in thought."

From his cloak, Moneigh brought forth a package that he quietly unwrapped. To each he handed a goblet, an ancient silver goblet with a well-worn coat of arms. Into each goblet, he poured wine from a bottle.

Moneigh held his goblet at arm's length and gazed into the space of heaven, as though in memory he was reliving an incident very dear to him. Then he spoke. "These are the original goblets used by the founders of Brothers of the Grape. When the true purpose of the fraternity was lost, these goblets were replaced by others. These originals were not to be used again until the fraternity rediscovered and demonstrated the true meaning of 'the Grape:'

The Grape that with the Logic absolute
The Two and Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The Sovereign Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute!

Moneigh brought the goblet to his lips as a signal. In profound silence each goblet was raised and drained. As Alex felt the wine quicken his blood, he had the conviction that every cell of his body and every quality of his consciousness was being permanently refined and expanded.

For, with new clarity, Alex understood the *Rubaiyat's* meaning of drinking from the cup. That which was happening on this beach was an illustration of the purpose of the planet fulfilling itself. For this was a demonstration of humanity's inherent capacity to express Divine Love. This was humanity in bloom! Alex saw the relationship between this human flowering and the flowering of a plant. To him, the flower of a plant was a symbol of the Creator's covenant with humanity, the covenant that humanity could not escape its Divine fulfillment any more than a flower could refuse to blossom. That which was happening here was the covenant in completion. Alex drank deeply from this overflowing cup of thrilling Truth.

The conviction came to him that because he was able to recognize this cosmic fulfillment, a new fulfillment in his own personal life would automatically manifest. For, if he, as the part, recognized this fulfillment of the Whole, then

the Whole would have to respond to his recognition of Its action by bringing a new fulfillment to the part. Alex did not know how it would happen, but he had the conviction that something new and thrilling would have to occur in his life as a result of his attunement with the Divine Purpose behind what these people of different nationalities, religions, and prejudices were working together at this moment to accomplish.

Suddenly, the entire activity became a wondrous flower in full bloom with every person as one of its petals – a wondrous flower that, because of the Creator's covenant with humanity, could not refuse to blossom forth into its inherent beauty.

There was commotion at the pier. Mumbblings were heard. Karl rushed toward the disturbance, followed by the others.

When Alex arrived at the pier with the others, he saw that the soldier directing the passenger loading was holding the arms of a violently struggling refugee. A boat packed tight with passengers was pulling away from the pier. The farther the boat moved away, the more violently the man struggled.

The soldier was trying to quiet him. "That boat has all it can carry," he admonished.

"But my wife and child are on it." screamed the struggling husband. "They'll be lost from me. I'll never see them again."

From the blur of jammed humanity on the moving boat came a woman's voice, clear and calm, across the widening space of dark water. "Do not fear, my husband. We will find you again."

At the sound of his wife's voice, his struggles increased. From the depths of his despair, he cried, "Oh,

God. Give me the strength to hate these Germans as long as I live."

Instantly, across the widening water, again came the woman's clear voice. "No. Aaron, no." it called, pleading desperately. "We promised each other that if ever this day came we'd remember the law given unto Moses: Thou shalt not hate another in thine heart."

The man ceased his struggling. In a shaken voice, he called back assuringly. "I'll remember, Sarah. I'll remember."

Then again came the woman's voice, penetrating the night. "That's not the answer we agreed upon. Give me the answer, Aaron. Give it while I can hear your voice."

This time Aaron's voice was strong and firm as he called back across the water. "I forgive them. I forgive them."

"I heard it, Aaron," came the now faint sound of his wife's voice. "Now there is naught to fear."

The gripping stillness that followed was broken only by the slow chug-chug of the next boat as it came along side the pier. The loading director motioned Aaron to go aboard. The distraught husband, now calm and poised, climbed aboard the waiting boat.

When the last refugee boat had departed, it was decided that Alex and his men would go to Moneigh's retreat to await the next refugee embarkation rather than make the long march to Alex's camp and back. Moneigh and Alex led the column of men across the rolling hills toward the ancient Delphi Oracle cave.

There was an unusual silence among the men, as though each was absorbed with thoughts of special significance. Alex became aware that the same sweet excitement of expectation was again singing within him. What could

it mean? Could there really be a principle that caused new personal fulfillment to those who recognized a completion of the covenant? And, if so, what could his new fulfillment be? What could possibly happen that would relate to this subtle excitement singing so sweetly within him?

Suddenly, Alex stopped motionless in his tracks. For there, through the zodiacal light that preceded the dawn, was a large goat, gazing calmly at the procession that had appeared. It was Mike's goat, Old Agnes, Agnes with the brown body and white head. The goat Alex saw the night he returned from the Oracle where he had sought an answer to his love for Truena.

Agnes had become a symbol to him. When Alex was caught wandering the streets of Athens, disguised as a goat herder, he told the police it was Agnes he was seeking. Even in the city streets he had sought her. And now before him stood the goat, her white face gazing back at him through eerie light.

Moneigh and the column had stopped behind Alex.

"Something wrong?" Moneigh asked.

Alex raised his hand and pointed fixedly, hoarsely exclaiming, "That goat. It's Agnes. One of Mike's goats."

"Yes, I see it's a goat," Moneigh observed quietly. "But you're acting as though it were a ghost."

"You don't understand," Alex protested excitedly. "It is a ghost. When I came back from Albania, all the goats were gone and Mike's house was burned. I didn't think anyone escaped, not even a single goat."

"Escaped from what?" Moneigh asked very deliberately.

"From the Italians, of course."

"Did you see the Italians take Mike's family and burn the house?"

"No. But the goats were all gone and the house burned."

"When you found the goats gone and the house burned, what did you do?"

Alex sensed a definite purposefulness in Moneigh's questionings. After a moment, he answered quietly "I became consumed with hate. I rushed back to Athens to avenge them as soon as I could."

"I see," Moneigh said understandingly. "You were so anxious to begin your revenge that you couldn't wait long enough to make certain there was anything to be avenged."

"What do you mean?" Alex's asked in a whisper. "What do you mean?"

"I mean you were guilty of that which causes most of the misery in the world. You were guilty of judgment by appearances."

Moneigh continued "Then you unleashed the fury of your emotions so they could run hand-in-hand with your false judgment. They make effective running mates, a team violent enough to pull you away from the happiness waiting for you and drive you deep into the lonely wilderness of revenge."

Alex was staring at Moneigh, his heart in his eyes. "You're telling me that Truena is alive? That Mike and ... that the Italians didn't..."

"Yes." Moneigh said. "They are alive and waiting and have been for a long time. The Italians didn't burn Mike's house and drive off his goats. Mike did it himself. He moved his family and his herds back into the hills to his birthplace. From there, with the help of his family and Truena, he's providing cheese, milk, and meat to many hungry families."

Alex was stunned. It was too wonderful and unexpected to be grasped. Mike had told him of this place where his shepherd parents had raised him. In bewilderment, Alex stated as much to himself as to Moneigh. "You knew all this ... and didn't tell me."

Now Moneigh's voice was lovingly gentle. "If you'll remember, you chose not to discuss it with me. It was your own will that turned you from your good to follow your hate."

"Once you loved humanity, then because you thought it injured you, you hated it. Then, through meditation, your capacity to understand and forgive unfolded and now you've learned to love it again, in spite of what you thought it had done to you. Thus, you've cleared your vision to find your good, to discover that instead of the good turning away from you, it was you who turned away. And that, all the time, everything has remained just as you left it in the first place. Agnes, as a symbol of your new capacity to forgive, has found you, and if you'll follow her, she'll lead you to your loved ones who wait and have waited much too long."

Alex stared at the goat, then at Moneigh, then at Max. Max nodded his head, grinning happily, and said, "I'll take over until you return."

Without waiting for a reply, he gave command to march, and the column moved on.

Moneigh stepped close to Alex, gripped his shoulders, smiled his wonderful smile and said, "A smooth trail, my son."

As though waiting for this signal, Agnes suddenly turned and moved off in a purposeful manner. With disbelief and glorious wonder alternating in his heart, Alex followed.



CHAPTER TWENTY DEMONSTRATION

Alex was thankful for Agnes' age, for she led him slowly up the path around the mountainside. And now, as he reached the summit of a pass and looked down, he caught his breath. The rising sun clearing the distant foothills revealed a hidden valley. The mountains were silhouetted against a pastel sky.

At the near end of the valley, he saw the roofs of several small buildings nestled among the trees. Scattered through the valley, he saw a herd of goats browsing in the brush. Agnes had stopped and was looking first at him, then at the valley, then back at him, as if to say, "We're home." And then she began to trot. The bell around her neck started jingling. At intervals she bleated as if to announce special significance to her arrival.

Effortlessly, Alex ran after her, exalted with a wild and joyous excitement. As he neared the valley floor and the path straightened out, he saw a figure running toward him. He stopped and stared. Could it be Truena? It was. The increased light reflected the colors of her costume and the sheen of her golden hair.

The picture of her lovely sweetness rushing toward him in colorful, rhythmic motion was the most thrilling sight he had ever seen. He was transfixed with joy. Then his arms automatically stretched forth, aching for her touch. When she was near enough to see his face, she stopped.

For a moment, the outside world disappeared and there remained but their eyes, reaching deeply into each other, so deeply that their souls touched. Then, slowly, they

moved into each other's arms. Their lips met and their souls flowed together. In a heavenly sweetness, they were one.

The world sparkled as they walked arm in arm toward the house.

"Is everyone all right?" he asked.

"Yes," she nodded.

"How did you know when to meet me?"

"I greet each dawn by watching for you." She stopped, glanced up at him with shining eyes, and said, "Would you like to see where I've done this?"

He nodded, and she led him to a wooden bench in a cluster of trees that opened to the east. She sat down and motioned him to sit beside her.

"When Moneigh taught me to meditate, he also told me that a good time to do it was at dawn." Alex was stirred deeply to learn she practiced meditation.

"He also taught me what the dawn can and should mean to one. By spending beautiful hours opening myself to these meanings, I've made them my own. Perhaps you know *The Salutation of the Dawn*. It was written by the wise of ancient times."

Alex's happiness was a tangible vibrating substance of his being as he thrilled to this unexpected aspect of his beloved's nature. "No, I don't know it," he said. "Tell it to me."

Pressing her head lightly against his shoulder, she spoke in low meaningful tones:

Listen to the Exhortation of the Dawn!

Look to this Day!

For it is Life, the very Life of Life.

In its brief course lie all the Verities
 And Realities of your Existence:
 The Bliss of Growth,
 The Glory of Action,
 The Splendor of Beauty.

For yesterday is but a Dream,
 And tomorrow is only a Vision;
 But today well-lived makes every
 Yesterday a Dream of Happiness,
 And every Tomorrow a Vision of Hope.
 Look well therefore to this Day!
 Such is the Salutation of the Dawn.

– The Sanskrit

The happiness Alex felt before she spoke was accentuated by such wisdom coming from his beloved's lips. The phrase "The Bliss of Growth" kept pulsating in his mind. Suddenly he knew why. He said, "Your 'Salutation of the Dawn' gives new meaning to the prayer I use in meditation. I'd like to share it with you."

Truena's eyes glowed with expectancy.

"This is it," Alex continued "Creator in me express Thyself as me, so that I will unfold and become more like Thee."

His heart was warmed by Truena's receptivity to these words. He smiled and added. "I now see that the 'Bliss of Growth' is what I am seeking. 'Growth' and 'Unfoldment' are the same. They are the result of letting the Creator express Itself through us as our consciousness and out into our achievements as the fulfillment of our everyday needs and aspirations. When the Creator's love, wisdom, order, and beauty is expressed and extended into humanity's affairs, it results in human happiness. Therefore, to express the Creator's nature, as our nature, is the way we grow.

Joy is the automatic result of this growth. Thus, bliss is the by-product or reward for growth."

"Glory be to your understanding," Truena murmured. "The Salutation of the Dawn has a new meaning to me. Each time I say 'The Bliss of Growth,' I'll feel you saying it with me."

They were silent for a moment. Truena added. "Would not the 'Glory of Action' also be the result of humanity responding to the Creator's effort to express Its nature through us?"

Alex nodded in thoughtful agreement. He was delighted with the attunement of their ideas, how they inspired the other. "If action is to be glorious," he mused, "it must be an expression of the source of all Glory. For instance, a writer expresses the Glory of Creator's harmony as his or her own compositions. The inventor expresses the infinite order of the Universe through particular inventions. When we actively express this Glory of Creator's wisdom, harmony, and order in our daily work, we feel bliss or a joy that cannot be experienced in any other way. Thus, the 'Bliss of Growth' is the reward of both 'The Glory of Action' and 'The Splendor of Beauty.'"

Truena nodded her head appreciatively as she assimilated his words. Then she said, "I know this is true because I feel the 'Glory of Action' when I dance in the woods. It seems that a quality of rhythm that could not come from me flows through me into outer expression. And with its expression comes a kind of bliss I feel at no other time."

The picture of Truena dancing in the beautiful Albanian clearing came into Alex's mind. As it did, he remembered that there was a quality of joy he had felt as a result of observing the joy she felt.

He said, "Not only does the person expressing the

'Glory of Action' feel the 'Bliss of Growth,' but the person who can see it also feels it. Thus, our growth and bliss can be shared."

Alex was lifted by a new quality in his gratitude for Truena. He had not thought about the possibility of her being his teacher, his guide, as well as his beloved. To him, this possibility brought a new significance, a deeper value, to their love.

"Come," she said. "We're being selfish. Mike and Marta and the rest will be overjoyed that you are finally home."

As they rose from the bench, Alex felt he must try to explain why he had not found them before. "I must confess why I took so long."

"No," she smiled. "You needn't. Moneigh explained it to us."

They walked in silence for a moment, and then she squeezed his hand warmly and said, "Also, I had my ring and my heart to tell me that you love me and that this moment would someday come."

As they approached the house, Mike rushed out and ran in their direction. His arms reached out with surprise and delight. Alex hurried forward to embrace his old friend. Holding onto Alex's shoulders, Mike stepped back to look into his face. The affectionate esteem Alex saw in Mike's eyes exceeded any words he might have said.

Then, as though suddenly remembering, Mike excitedly turned to Truena. "Little Mike didn't sleep in his bed last night. Can't find him anywhere. Must've gotten up in the middle of the night and gone into the woods."

He turned to Alex in explanation. "Little Mike's dog disappeared last week. He's been looking for him ever since. Yesterday I forbade him to go alone into the hills

again. I told him his dog must've been killed or he would have returned by now. That whatever happened to his dog could happen to him if he didn't stay out of those hills."

With a confidence Alex did not expect to feel, he said, "Don't worry. We'll find him."

They hurried on to the house. Marta's sincere greeting and Sarah's shy smile warmed Alex deeply. He had forgotten how much this family really meant to him. From the porch, Mike quickly told them how they would search. He gave each a direction to take. They were to follow that direction for an hour, turn right for an hour, then return. In this way, their search pattern would resemble a wagon wheel with the house as the hub. The one who found Little Mike was to ring the large emergency bell suspended from a backyard pole.

Alex was reluctant to be separated from Truena so soon. With a reassuring squeeze of her hand, he moved off in his allotted direction. Little Mike had always been very dear to him, and the possibility of his being hurt gave Alex new energy.

However, the rough ascending foothills soon tired him. He was very annoyed at his fatigue until he remembered he had been up all night and had walked many miles before his arrival.

There was nothing to do but rest. He lay down beneath the shade of a tree and closed his eyes. In his mind, he again experienced the sweet wonder of Truena going out each morning to salute the dawn and wait for his return. Once more he thrilled picturing her running to meet him. Then he thought of what happened the night before at the cove. Again he compared it to a cosmic flower blooming with fulfillment, a flower whose petals were people.

He remembered that when he recognized this as fulfillment of Universal purpose, a song of sweet expectancy

sang within him – an expectancy of new fulfillment in his individual life. He had no doubt that Agnes was waiting for him as a result of his recognition of this human happening as a divine fulfillment.

He opened his eyes. Suddenly, he realized his gaze was fixed upon a tiny wildflower only a few inches from his face. Because of its nearness, it filled his vision. He felt that its bright blue color and delicate satiny petals were returning his gaze in an effort to tell him something. He began to understand what it was.

This tiny wildflower, fulfilling itself on this remote hillside, was saying to him that Infinite Intelligence is everywhere, an invisible Power, constantly sustaining, progressing, and fulfilling all forms of being and becoming. There is nothing that could be known that is not included in the infinitude of its intelligence. Again that feeling of sweet expectancy began singing in Alex – the expectancy of some new fulfillment in his individual life as a result of his recognition of the universal fulfilling itself as this wildflower in bloom.

Again he closed his eyes. What new fulfillment could it be? The only thing he wanted now was to find Little Mike. Alex meditated upon the nature of this Intelligence that knew how to fulfill this tiny wildflower in a place where it would probably never be seen by another human being. Such an Intelligence would have to know where Little Mike was, and since It knew where Little Mike was, It also must know how to make that information known to Alex. There could be but one intelligence, which meant that Alex's intelligence had to be unified with It as a channel of Its expression. Alex felt himself ask of this One, all-knowing, everywhere-present, all-powerful Intelligence to tell him where he could find Little Mike.

Then he waited. The only thing that happened was that

on the screen of his closed eyes, he saw a huge odd-shaped boulder that he had climbed around with much difficulty just before he decided to rest. He tried to remove the picture of the boulder. It had already caused him enough trouble. But it would not go. Then the boulder shifted over, and Alex could see the other side of it, the side he had not climbed around. It shifted, further revealing a projecting ledge. The edge of the projecting ledge was centered before his closed eyes. Alex waited for it to move again. It did not. Was this the way the Infinite Intelligence was answering him? There was but one way to find out. Go and see.

Alex jumped to his feet and retraced his steps to the boulder. Making his way around the other side, he found the ledge just as he had seen it. Moving out to its edge, he looked down. Little Mike was directly beneath him. His young body was sprawled motionless on the ground ten feet below. He had probably fallen from the ledge.

His heart pounding with awe at the way he had been directed, Alex climbed down the ledge. Carefully he examined Little Mike's unconscious body. With the exception of a large bloody lump at the back of his head, he found only minor scratches and bruises. Alex was so elated at finding Little Mike and the way in which he found him that carrying him down the slope to the house seemed effortless. He placed him on a bed and bathed his wound, face, and hands with cool water. After a few moments, Little Mike opened his eyes.

Dazed and confused, he stared up at Alex. As his eyes cleared, he looked inquiringly about him. Obviously relieved in realizing he was home, he smiled weakly at Alex, closed his eyes, and fell into a deep natural sleep.

Alex covered him with a warm blanket then went into the yard and rang the bell. It was the most beautiful sound

Alex had ever heard, more beautiful than the chimes of the temple near his home. As he joyously pulled the rope, he felt he was calling the whole world to worship, worship of the cosmic message sent to humanity by every form and color of its environment – the message of the Divine fulfilling Itself.

All an individual had to do to have new fulfillment in life was to receive the message, to accept it as also being true of her or him. This was drinking of the cup. This was tasting the wine.

In rhythm to the sound of the bell and with strides of splendor, inspiring words moved thrillingly across his mind. “Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am the Creator and there is none else.”

That evening at sunset, everyone sat on the broad veranda of the farmhouse to enjoy the changing clouds and colors of the sky. Little Mike lay in Big Mike’s lap, cradled comfortably in his strong arms. Alex felt a deeper sense of gratitude for his life than he had ever felt. He knew it was the result of his meditations upon his oneness with the omnipresence of divine fulfillment. He now had a clearer vision of life’s greater values, one of which was the value of love and the various manners of its expression.

He deliberately turned his attention upon his feelings toward everyone on the porch. He thought of Mike and felt the manner of love for this wonderful man. Then he thought of Marta and thought of his love for her. Then Sarah and Little Mike. He realized that he loved them all, but each in a slightly different way due to the difference in his relationship with each. However, the difference in the love took nothing from its value.

Then he thought about their love for him and realized they, too, all loved him, but each in a different way,

depending upon each one’s concept of their relationship. But still, it was love, simply expressed in different ways.

He began to understand that there was really just One Love, the Love of the Creator expressing Itself in many ways. Every way was a different way, and yet each way made the other ways more beautiful, more gratifying, and more complete.

Truena sat beside him, her precious hand tucked warmly within his own. The sweetness of her nearness sang quietly in his heart. For a moment, he turned himself completely over to his love for her. The fullness of it soared through his being. It reached such fullness that suddenly he felt that he was love. His whole being was love. These words appeared in his mind, I am love.

He let the statement I am love move through his consciousness wherever it would and, as it did, the meaning of I am that I AM took on new significance. He understood why “I am love” had come into his mind. It was his “made in the image” of the Creator nature that he was feeling as his own. The nature of the Creator is Love; therefore Love was also his own true nature.

Words of expanded awareness passed through his consciousness. “The love I feel that I am is the love of the Creator expressing Itself as me. Because the Creator is love, I too am love. The love that the Creator is, I am. The love of the Creator’s I AM is the same love as my I AM. Thus, I am that I AM!”

As Alex’s awareness returned to the porch scene, he knew he would now always remember that everyone was the embodiment of love and the purpose of all human relationship was to help each other discover it.

The rays of the sinking sun painted upon the clouds a cosmic cathedral of breathless grandeur in its majesty of form and brilliance of color. Alex was still feeling his

oneness with the Creator's love as he drank it in. He felt himself giving himself to the wonder of this beauty. He began feeling that this beauty was an extension of him. This feeling dissolved into a feeling of unity. No longer was this grandeur an extension of him. He was the sunset and the sunset was he.

The colors slightly changed their beauty, and because he was one with them, something deep within him slightly changed, too. With that which changed within him came a subtle sensation of pleasure more delicately exquisite than he had ever experienced.

This complete oneness that he now felt with beauty caused him to return to his former feeling of oneness with love. Suddenly, there came a revelation that thrilled him to his very soul. It was that the Creator used humanity to express Its love for humankind. That the Creator loved Truena through his love for Truena and loved him through Truena's love for him.

What a glorious revelation. When he caressed his beloved Truena, it was the Creator caressing her through him, and when she caressed him, the Creator caressed him through her. The Divine was the participant in their every thought, their every feeling, their every act, bringing to everything they did together, the sweetest of all sweetness, the sweetness of Sanctity.

Alex turned to look at Truena. Their eyes met instantaneously, as though prearranged. Alex gave himself over to the beauty of her spirit reaching toward him through the love in her eyes.

As with the beauty of sunset, he became one with her. He was Truena, and Truena was he. No longer were they two, but one. However, the one was more than the sum of the two. Their unity made a new one, just as two notes struck together form a sound more full and whole and

beautiful than the sound each had struck separately.

Alex now knew that whatever had been necessary for their souls to reunite had been accomplished. And he knew that she knew it, too. He also knew that he would never again be the same. And neither would she. Not only had they found their unfound self, but also the two unfound halves were now One.



CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE ENLIGHTENMENT

In the room of symbols where Alex first found Moneigh writing in the ancient book, a regular meeting of the Brothers of the Grape was beginning. Moneigh brought forth the same goblets he used at the cove, the goblets of the fraternity founders, and placed one before Alex, Karl, Richard, Riggio, and himself.

“Alex,” he said, “may I conduct this meeting?” His eyes twinkled as he added, “Don’t worry. I know how. I’ve done this many times.”

Knowing this was true, Alex nodded respectfully. When Moneigh produced the original goblets at the cove he felt that Moneigh must have been one of the founders. But in the light of normal logic, it was impossible because the fraternity originated longer ago than anyone could remember. However, Alex had learned not to associate the impossible with Moneigh. In fact, the reason Alex was here at this moment, looking at the radiant faces of his friends, was because yesterday, while sitting with Truena on her meditation bench, he suddenly felt an urge to come here, an urge so strong he could do naught but obey it. Had the rest of the members been summoned in the same way?

As Moneigh poured the wine into the goblets, he began talking. “At your last meeting, as a result of Alex’s motivation, you reevaluated the purpose of the Brothers of the Grape. At this meeting we shall carry that reevaluation further.

“The highest purpose of Brothers of the Grape is to

perpetuate the Truth that because of the Creator’s love for humanity, humankind’s potential self is a miniature of the Creator’s perfection. In most people, this perfection remains but a potential, just as the blossom remains but a potential within the seed until it is put into the soil and nurtured.

“All further human evolution must be self-generated. Thus, the message of deliberate self-perfection must be carried into every level of humanity, regardless of its social or religious commitment. Not only is perfection the potential of every person, but Truth is the potential of every religion. As an illustration, look at the inherent truth of the Golden Rule, Love thy neighbor as thyself, as it evolved in the major religions.

Hinduism: Do not unto others, that if done to thee, would cause thee pain.

Mohammedanism: No one of you is a believer until you love for others what you love for yourself.

Christianity: All things you would that others shall do to you, do so unto them.

Confucianism: Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you.

Buddhism: In five ways should a clansperson minister to friends and families: by generosity, courtesy, benevolence, by treating them as one treats self, and by being as good as one’s word.

Sikhism: As thou deemest thyself, so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven.

Hebraism: What is hurtful to you, do not to others.

Zoroastarianism: That nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self.

Taoism: Regard your neighbor's gain as your own gain and regard your neighbor's loss as your own loss.

Jainism: In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self."

"If all religions have the same potential truth, why are there so many?" Alex asked.

"Thank you, Alex," Moneigh replied. "This is a question that causes many people to avoid all religions and refrain from any spiritual inquiry. One reason there are so many religions is because people originate and congregate at so many different locations upon our planet. They gather together as tribes or nations, some of which are completely isolated from others.

"Remember that the capacity to realize humanity's potential perfection is already planted within the mind of every person, just as the full-grown oak tree is planted within every acorn. Furthermore, just as there's an urge within the acorn to experience being an oak tree, there's an urge within the individual to experience perfection. This urge goes on, regardless of where the man or woman is or with whom. Naturally, we all respond to this urge according to our particular hopes, fears, prides, and guilts. Some people respond to this urge more dynamically and dramatically than others and become leaders attracting a following, the result of which could be a religious sect.

"It is similar to a person opening a restaurant. Two things are involved. First, everyone experiences hunger; everyone needs to eat. Second, there are many varieties of

foods, prepared in different degrees of excellence. Our preferences depend upon how refined our tastes have become as a result of the experiences we have had with food and our reaction to them. Thus there are many restaurants.

"We all have built-in hunger for our perfection, but the food we choose depends upon the level of our unfoldment. We will follow the leader who feeds us the spiritual food we can digest, that makes us comfortable, that has savor for us, that provides that particular degree of understanding that will enable us to take the next step forward in our individual evolution. Thus, there are many religions. Not because there are many leaders, but because there are different levels of awakening, just as there are oak trees at different stages of maturity. It is the particular food that enables a restaurant to endure.

"However, as the acorns and different-size saplings progressively become oak trees, they lose their interest in that which served them as acorns and saplings. As our perfection unfolds, through our hunger for it, we no longer prefer that which is not perfect. When we know the Truth, we are freed from being bound to that which is not true."

Richard said, "Then we are to understand that there's an inherent preference, a basic urge toward mystical experience that is shared by all humanity?"

"Yes," Moneigh answered. "It's explained in this story of a Turk, an Arab, a Greek, and a Persian who were traveling together toward a distant destination. On a village street en route they were arguing over how they would spend their last piece of money.

" 'I want to buy uzum,' said the Turk.

" 'I want to buy inab,' said the Arab.

" 'I want to buy stafil,' said the Greek.

“ ‘I want to buy angur,’ insisted the Persian.

“Hearing their argument, another traveler said to them, ‘If you will give me the coin, I will get what each of you desires.’

“They did not trust the other traveler at first, but being unable to settle it themselves, they finally gave him their coin. He took it to a fruit seller and purchased four bunches of grapes and gave one bunch to each.

“ ‘This is my uzum,’ said the Turk.

“ ‘This is what I call inab,’ said the Arab.

“ ‘This is stafil,’ said the Greek.

“ ‘No,’ said the Persian. ‘In my language this is angur.’

“As they ate the grapes, each realized that their argument was due to their lack of understanding of the language of the others. The other traveler, being a linguist, revealed that they all wanted the same thing although they were calling it by different names.

“People know that they want something because there’s a persistent inner need. They may give it different names, but it is the same desire within everyone. It’s only when a linguist appears, someone who knows what they really hunger for, that people are able to stop the arguments and satisfy this hunger by eating the grapes.”

Alex remembered and now understood the nature of that feeling he always had that there was a feeling he should be feeling that he was not feeling. It was the desire, the hunger, and the loneliness to feel and express more of his potential perfection. He wondered if the acorn experienced a similar feeling at ITS level of consciousness.

An ancient message came into his mind: Be ye perfect, even as your Creator in Heaven is perfect. Could his “Creator in Heaven” be the image of his perfection con-

stantly held in Divine Mind and consistently whispering to him that it wanted to express itself through him as him? How could he more fully respond to this whispering? He thought of the linguist in Moneigh’s story. He said, “This linguist who knew what each traveler wanted ... are there many of those?”

Moneigh was gratified by Alex’s question. “Yes, very many. In fact, there are millions throughout the world. They have no organization, no religious dogma, and no regular place of worship. They do not require becoming a monk, nun, or hermit, but they are at home in all religions because theirs is the ‘secret’ teaching in all religions. Their origin has never been determined or dated. That which they serve is Divine Love, which they deliberately evolve within themselves. In fact, the first efforts at self-evolution began with them. However, they are a practical people who believe this unfoldment process must take place, not only within them, but must be expressed through their participation in normal society. Consequently, many are prominent in leadership, literature, art, and science.”

Richard asked, “Does the teaching have a name?”

“Yes,” replied Moneigh. “They are known as the ‘Sufi.’ The word ‘Sufi’ implies purity. ‘Pure’ means unmixed with any other element, unalloyed and unstained. They refer to each other as ‘people like us’ or ‘we friends.’ That which they study is life. A desire for wisdom through the search for Truth is their motive. Their method is the assimilation of experience.

“Inayat Khan, a great Sufi mystic who lectured and taught in the Western world for many years, defined them thus: ‘The Sufi’s Deity is the one Deity in all, through all, as all. A Sufi’s teacher is the spirit of inner guidance. Their holy book is the manuscript of nature. Their community is the whole humanity. Their religion is love. There is no

Deity of any people that is not their Deity, no spiritual teacher of any creed who is not their teacher. There is no sacred scripture that they do not accept, since they are worshippers of light and the followers of love – yet they are free from all the world's distinctions and differences.' ”

Again Richard asked, “Do you mean they have no affiliation with any formal religion?”

“No, they do not. Sufis keep the vision of Deity constantly before them. They do not allow any earthly differences of distinctions or particular faiths or beliefs to interfere with this purity.

“However, they show their Universality in their adaptability. Among Christians they are Christians, among Jews they are Jews, among Muslims they are Muslims, among Hindus they are Hindu. They never question, ‘What is your creed, your nation, or religion?’

“With regard to principles, the Sufi has none. Good and bad, kind and cruel may be beneficial to one and harmful to another. In one society stealing is a crime, in another, a virtue. Virtue is determined by urgency. Everyone has his or her own principles for each action and every situation. What one person may call good, another may call bad.

“Thus, Sufis, instead of becoming centered in their own likes and dislikes and limiting themselves to a certain faith or belief, focus on the beliefs of another, thereby understanding the reasons others believe as they do. In this way, they keep their own viewpoint pure and arrive at a true height of wisdom.

“Islam has long protected them, so they are generally identified with Mohammedanism and the Orient. However, they are found in the West and the East. No strata of human expression is without them: political leaders, military officials, all different professions, high and low, male

and female – any position can produce a Sufi.

“Do not misunderstand. Their lack of affiliation does not mean a lack of interest in religions. They respect religions insofar as they contribute to social harmony, and they endeavor to broaden their doctrines and interpret their myths from a higher sense. For example, in the story I told, Alex interpreted the linguist to be a teacher of higher Truths. To be able to interpret and decipher the use of symbolism, parables, metaphors, allegories, and codes in conveying the message of hidden Truths is a necessary part of your development. Sufis can read the Universal Truths running through all religions, even though they may be expressed by different symbols.”

Moneigh smiled. “And this brings us to further reevaluation of our fraternity. Brothers of the Grape was established by the followers of this teaching. Omar Khayyam was a Sufi Master. His original *Rubaiyat* preserved this teaching for the enlightened by concealing it in metaphor, symbolism, code, mimicry, and satire.

“As an illustration, in this teaching, wine is the symbol of Truth. Many grapes pressed together make one juice, symbolizing the Unity of life. This ‘juice’ has the potential of becoming wine. Thus, wine is the symbol of higher Truths inherent within the Unity of life. This symbolism is carried further to include the drinking of wine and the resultant drunkenness. For instance, when enough of this ‘wine’ of Truth is imbibed, the drinker experiences a state of ecstatic intoxication.

“Truth, in its Wholeness, has always been, but its expression is relative to the individual's perception. Therefore, Sufism is a continuum. That is, it has gradually unfolded itself in the human mind. It has been said, ‘The seed of Sufism was sown in the time of Adam, germed in the time of Noah, budded in the time of Abraham, began

to develop in the time of Moses, reached maturity in the time of Jesus, produced wine in the time of Mohammed.' "

There was silence. The fact that their fraternity was supposed to be one of the facets through which the spiritual evolution of the race was preserved and progressed impressed them deeply.

Alex, swept by a thought, spoke. "Because of their symbolism of the 'wine,' couldn't we say that the Sufi are Brothers of the Grape?"

Moneigh smiled and nodded. "Yes, we could say that. Furthermore, because all people are of the 'one juice' and are capable of unfolding the potential 'wine,' we could say that all people are Brothers of the Grape."

Again there was a silence. Then Karl spoke. "How do the Sufi recognize one another?"

"By certain achievements, developed talents, habits of behavior, and qualities of thought," replied Moneigh. "Their mutual recognition cannot be explained in ordinary religious or psychological terms. Anyone who can understand them is one, for, to be able to do so, requires special dimensions of perception. Their only creed is the assimilation of experience. Thus the dictum: Those who taste, know.

"For instance, in a famous passage by Rumi, one of their greatest masters, they are defined this way:

Drunk without wine; sated without food;
transcended; foodless and sleepless; royalty
beneath a humble cloak; a treasure within a
ruin; not of air and earth; not of fire and water;
a sea without bonds. Such a one has a hundred
moons and skies and suns and is wise through
Universal Truth, not a scholar from a book.

Moneigh smiled whimsically. "You can see why only one who tastes knows. Why only those who have assimilated experience from a similar level can recognize one another. However, Sufism is defined also as the love that corrects and transcends."

Karl spoke again, asking, "What is this transcending and this love? What does it mean? How is it done? What happens when it is done?"

"Good for you." chuckled Moneigh. "Now we can discuss our fraternity's purpose more specifically. Remember it was founded by the Sufi. Omar Khayyam was a Sufi master. This is why the *Rubaiyat* is used as our guide. Take this verse from Khayyam's original poem:

I cannot live without wine,
Without the cup's draught, I cannot carry my body.
I am the slave of that breath in which the Saki says
Take one more cup – and I cannot do so.

"The state that Khayyam cannot live without is a level of consciousness that transcends ordinary human perception. Moving up in awareness to a new dimension of comprehension attains this condition. You have probably heard of Transcendentalism, a way of thinking that developed in the United States during the middle 1800s. The outstanding spokesperson for the movement was Ralph Waldo Emerson. They believed that each human being is equally a part of that spirit or 'over-soul' that speaks in, to, and through him or her in a unique and creative way. This 'unique and creative way' causes a person to transcend his or her former state of being and move up in consciousness and circumstance to a new dimension.

"The part that the individual must play is to become sufficiently receptive to this voice of the spirit speaking from within so that It can express itself in this new and

transcendent state. This necessary receptivity is symbolized in Sufism by the 'drinking of wine.' Once a person has become 'drunk,' has experienced this transcendent new state, he or she can never be content to return to the former state but must get higher and higher. Just 'one more cup' is no longer sufficient.

"There will be other English translations of the *Rubaiyat* that will much more accurately convey its message, the message of the infinitude of the individual's potential that is progressively experienced by persistently drinking of the cup.

"For instance, here's a verse from an original Khayyam manuscript:

Now that our world finds riches within reach,
Live hearts awake and hanker for wide plains
Where every bough is blanched by Moses-hand
And every breeze perfumed by Jesus-breath.

"In Sufism 'wide plains' means the infinite. Hearts, alive to Truth, awaken to the possibility of personally expressing this infinite, awaken to what the Creator has already done in our world. As our understanding increases, we are able to receive the messages of Truth symbolized by all of nature. Every bough reminds us that all life is supported and fulfilled by Divine Law and Order. The burning bush that wasn't burned revealed that the bush had an invisible and indestructible archetypal self supporting the visible bush. The hand of Moses is the authority of Divine Law.

"All is Love, yet all is Law. Jesus epitomized Divine Love. In every breeze, there is the perfume of sanctity if we can see how the invisible wind serves the good of all nature: refreshing, strengthening, removing old leaves, planting new seeds, and delivering love potions of pollen

from plant to plant. And when we love this Love, we enable the Creative Law of our Being to fulfill Itself by moving us onward and upward to ever higher dimensions."

Recognizing everyone's need to assimilate all that had been spoken, Moneigh said, "Let's meditate briefly on these thoughts and images." The men nodded appreciatively and turned their attention within.



CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

CALL OF COLOR

When they returned their attention to Moneigh, Karl asked, "Can you give us a precise technique that we can use to lift ourselves to higher dimensions of thinking and being?"

"The Creator has already given it to us, Karl. Everywhere we look, we see color in some form of plant life. Color proves that the plant is always growing. Impossible for it not to grow. And to where is it growing? Into a new dimension. The flower is a higher, more refined dimension than the green plant that produces it. The Easter lily is an excellent example. It brings its cyclic life as a course bulb in the dark earth. First, it pushes a green shoot through the earth's crust into the light. The green shoot is a more refined dimension than the bulb. The air is a more refined environment than under the earth.

"Then the lily grows into another dimension of being and of consciousness. Its life-thrust becomes a delicate blossom with extra-sensory pistils. However, there's still a higher dimension, for its life-thrust projects itself into an aura of heavenly fragrance. Thus, plant life is shouting to us that all life must grow, and where it grows is into a higher dimension.

"Soon this truth, sleeping within us, will awaken, and we will be unable to see a blossom, smell a fragrance, or eat a fruit without being reminded that the natural destiny of our life is also to grow into new dimensions.

"Every blossom sends this message to us and soon all humanity will consciously receive it. The first response

will be distorted and incomplete, but it will be a beginning. And the sincere beginners will be known as 'The Flower People.'

"Thus, Karl, a precise technique with which to lift yourself is to respond to the 'call of color,' wherever you see it and in whatever form it takes. Let the hue and tone of each blossom lift you with joy in their message, for as you attune to their dimension, you open the way for your own new dimension to blossom.

"By answering the call of color, you recognize that wherever the green earth produces other colors is symbolic proof that whatever you can conceive, you can achieve, that nothing is too good to come true. This recognition moves you into a new dimension.

"All that is necessary is to lift your perception to a higher plateau. And what is that higher plateau, refining itself to a new dimension? It is simply realizing that the different colors are the result of nature lifting itself to higher plateaus, refining itself to new dimensions. And, in so doing, nature proclaims that you, too, have the same potential.

"When you believe this, when your actions are motivated by this knowing, you function from a higher dimension. Then the solution to old problems becomes obvious, the achievement of aspirations becomes automatic."

Alex was thrilled. What Moneigh was saying had already been revealed to him through meditation, proving that this knowledge, this higher perception was already inherent and available within him. What Moneigh meant by the "call of color" was the same thing that had been revealed to Alex as the Creator's Covenant with humanity. What a wondrous relationship with our Creator. The covenant of color. If humanity would recognize color as the Divine's message of humankind's own potentials, then

through the opened door of this recognition the laws of the Creator would lift humanity to a higher dimension of knowing and doing. How divinely simple. If we have a problem, an unfulfilled aspiration, the beauty of a flower is holy proof that we have the power to solve the problem, to fulfill the aspiration.

Alex relived his experience with the wildflower; how he “drank” of the Creator’s Presence, Love, and Purpose manifested in its blossoming fulfillment. And then, through this higher dimension of his awareness, the “Spirit” had spoken to him in a creatively unique way, showing him where he could find Little Mike. Alex thrilled again as he remembered the transcendent joy he felt when ringing the bell, calling the others home from the search.

Moneigh continued, “To respond to the call of color wherever you see it is a dynamic, exciting, and achieving form of mediation. Meditation is the means by which the finite mind becomes saturated with the Infinite Mind. There’s much confusion about meditation. People spend years trying to make their mind ‘blank.’ All this ever produces is frustration or a period of vague peacefulness, none of which brings unfoldment of their own inherent perfection.

“The definition of meditation is ‘to ponder upon; to muse about.’ The mind already does this. It can’t stop thinking. Thus, in meditation, we simply give a new direction to its thinking. To try stopping it is a futile attempt to go against its nature. This is why teachers such as Khayyam compare the mind to a horse and the soul to its rider. If the horse has no controlling and directing rider, it will spend all of its time frolicking, eating grass, and drowsing. On the other hand, with a wise rider, the horse becomes part of the rider in a relationship that accom-

plishes things that otherwise would not even be attempted.

“True meditation, then, is to center thought on a chosen subject and, when the attention tries to frolic or wander or drowse, firmly return it to the subject. If we choose the flower as our subject – and choose it because the flower is delightful proof that Life’s inherent perfection cannot be denied fulfillment – and identify our own self with this undeniable fulfillment, our ever-thinking mind will function as a river on which new fulfillment flows.”

Karl was still not satisfied. “What form does this expression of Perfection take? How do we know when it happens?”

“To begin with,” Moneigh said, “there are three things we must keep in mind. One, everyone is imperfect. Two, everyone is responsible for his or her own imperfection. Three, the imperfections can only be changed by the individual.

“The next thing to remember is that our imperfections are not things within themselves. They are not some power with which to struggle. Actually, they are a ‘nothing.’ That is, they are simply the absence of expression of some facet of perfection, just as darkness is the absence of light. Meditation transmutes this ‘absence’ into a ‘presence.’

“When light enters, darkness disappears because its only reality was the absence of light. When you direct the river of your thinking upon the omnipresence of Perfection’s fulfillment, you are bringing in the Light. You are changing the absence into a Presence, and your awareness of this Presence gives direction to a Creative Law that fulfills your highest good.”

Moneigh paused a moment, then continued. “Now to Karl’s last question: How do we know when it happens? Do we not know when our instinct for revenge changes to forgiveness? When our instinct for retaliation is transferred

into quiet nonresistance? When the turbulent thought and hasty tongue is replaced by poise and peace? Or when lack, limitation, and despair are replaced by abundance, freedom, and joy?

“Remember that lack is simply the absence of abundance, limitation, the absence of freedom, and despair, the absence of joy. All that ever happens is that an aspect of Perfection expresses Itself where before It was held at bay by our misunderstanding. ‘Life’s leaden metal of ignorance is transmuted into the gold of wisdom.’ ”

The simplicity of it all was so striking that a long silence ensued. Richard broke it with more excitement than Alex had ever seen him display. “Could there be a key to this understanding that all of us could use, regardless of our particular areas of imperfection?”

Moneigh nodded. “Yes. The master key is our evaluation of our own self-image. Who we think we really are and what we are willing to do about it. For instance, Sufi devotees are offered a ‘secret garden’ for the ‘growth’ of their understanding. This ‘secret garden’ is where they work with their self-image. Every thought and feeling has a creative action within your spiritual atmosphere or aura. Every thought creates its own kind of flower, the sum total of which is your secret garden. This is why it is said that humanity’s mind is the Creator’s Garden.

“It’s easier to keep thoughts and feelings love-laden if we remember that our personal ‘secret garden’ is a single flower in the Creator’s Garden and that each flower has its appointed place and purpose. Thus, Richard, our willingness to cultivate the secret garden of our self-image is the key to understanding.”

“Could you give us an illustration of how we do it?” Richard persisted.

Moneigh said, “It’s obvious if you remember you are actually working with flowers and colors. There are colors in your outer environment and also in your spiritual aura. The outer and inner colors have similar meanings. The secret is to use an outer color to cultivate the same inner color. For instance the color green. We see it almost everywhere. Why? Because it symbolizes the soul quality of perseverance. From the foundation of green develops the color of blossoms.

“Thus, when it’s difficult for you to accomplish an inner ideal or an outer achievement, look at nature’s green and attune yourself to its ‘proof’ that perseverance is a built-in natural quality of all Life. To the degree you accept this ‘proof,’ you will express new steadfastness in the fulfillment of your ideals and achievements.

“When you need to cultivate courage, open yourself to a bright orange blossom for its color is proof that courage is your natural potential. As you practice courage, flame-like orange will appear in your aura. If an orange flower is not available, simply see it in your imagination. It’s this proof of your own built-in courage with which you cultivate your own ‘secret garden.’

“If you need to cultivate an attitude of love with someone, turn your attention to pink and rose. These colors are proof that loving-kindness is natural, that every person’s true nature is Love, and the purpose of all human relationships is to help one another discover this.

“One flower we need to cultivate in our ‘secret garden’ is the misunderstood quality of detachment. This quality is symbolized by different shades of white for it leads to purity and peace.

“Real detachment does not mean living apart from the world. Instead, it entails living with people and dealing with everyday problems without being emotionally

involved in them. This does not mean you're devoid of sympathy or lacking in love. It means you've reached a level of understanding from which you can recognize the changing nature of life and circumstances and realize that everyone, including yourself, is growing – growing toward their highest good and that change is the law of growth.

"From this viewpoint, you'll be able to give time, advice, friendship, substance, and labor to all kinds of people and projects without becoming emotionally involved. This is being in the world but not of it. This is being able to love in a way the world knows not. Detachment is really attachment to the eternality of that which is good, beautiful, and true.

"Each of these deliberately cultivated new qualities creates a corresponding color in your 'secret garden.' These corresponding colors in your aura then influence you to think, feel, speak, and act with perseverance, courage, love, and detachment.

"By attuning to the beauty without, your within becomes beautiful. Then your inner beauty reflects back outward as your new power, peace, prosperity, and joy. Thus, as you are willing to make the beauty of the without become the beauty of your within, the beauty of your within becomes the beauty of your without. This is one of the meanings of 'as above, so below.' "

Richard was radiant with new enlightenment. Moneigh turned to him and said, "This is not only the 'how,' but also the wondrous 'why'."

Moneigh rose and walked to the wall. For a long moment, he looked at the different symbols. When he returned to his seat, he said, "Peace will eventually come again, for the war will spread itself to involve the United States of America, and the United States' participation will bring it to a close. However, that will be but the end of

another war.

"The complete work of the Brothers of the Grape includes setting into motion activities that will contribute to removing the 'cause of war.' Ignorance. The absence of wisdom.

"Where is this absent wisdom found? Where it already is – within humanity. It is inherent within every individual, for every individual is an individualized potential of the complete nature of the Creator. No one has to become something he or she is not. Everyone already is, in potential, all that he or she will ever be. The only thing needed is to awaken to it. Therefore, the true purpose of Brothers of the Grape is to contribute to humanity's awakening. To be part of the vanguard of a movement that will influence humankind to expect its planet to fulfill itself, instead of expecting it to destroy itself."

Alex could feel the solemn but exciting impact of Moneigh's words upon himself and the other members. What a glorious opportunity and responsibility to be instrumental in assisting humanity to change from a destructive attitude to a constructive one. But how would they know how and where to begin? What was the starting point? "How will we know what to do?" he asked.

"Through meditation," Moneigh replied. "All of you now know how. It's just a matter of practice. Since the problem is ignorance, the obvious answer is knowledge. Much that is now believed that isn't so will have to go but not without violence and revolt among many, even students and teachers. How it is to be done and who is to be involved will progressively unfold as a result of inspiration and intuitive guidance, awakened through meditation.

"It will move slowly at first, through small isolated groups. Meditation is already known in the Eastern world. Within a quarter of a century, it will be a household word in the West, along with other terms such as 'metaphysics'

and 'positive thinking.'"

Moneigh smiled warmly at their excitement.

"What will be the nature of its fulfillment?" Karl asked. Moneigh nodded in approval of Karl's question. "It will be to produce Citizens of the World. So, the eventual institutions will be universities designed to produce graduates who are international in their approach to the values and purposes of life; to formulate a basic philosophy of human kinship to which all men and women of goodwill can subscribe; to encourage students to think and act internationally.

"Through cooperation of the graduates in the different nations, the world will be knit more closely together and the foundation will be laid for a true international community in which the citizens of every country can dwell together in freedom and security."

Moneigh paused, and there was silence laden with portent. Richard broke it with a question. "But the age-old prejudices. What can be done about these?"

Moneigh's tone became more serious. "It won't be easy, Richard, and it will take time. Most prejudice comes from conflicting cultures. Each culture will be studied with respect and understanding for the purpose of integrating them in the minds of students so they will be at home, wherever they are. The long-range purpose is to establish a new cultural climate in the world, formed of a synthesis of values acceptable to all."

Again, there was a suspended silence as his words found particular nesting places in the consciousness of each, according to his individual response.

"Remember we will be working with the fulfillment of our planet's purpose," Moneigh continues, "which is the ever-expanding expression of humanity's divine potentials

of Love, Wisdom, Beauty, Power, and Plenty. And because we are working with planetary purpose, we will not be alone. There are principles, invisible laws, and powers that will cause all things to work together for good. We could call the way they work 'Spiritual Cybernetics,' for they follow a purposeful pattern.

"Every individual is submerged in a creative medium that responds to his or her believing. Thought creates. That's why every individual can make a contribution. The contribution each of us can make is to believe in our planet. When we think of our planet, we bring change by seeing it, not ablaze with destruction, but abloom with fulfillment."

A dynamic silence filled the room. Each presence thrilled with the transcendent portent of Moneigh's words – even Riggio who had been learning from Moneigh for some time. Alex was especially enthralled. Here was the answer to his lifelong quest. How simple, how obvious, how basic, how cosmically scientific. If enough individuals let every flower be proof of the planet's purpose, if enough held the image of its fulfillment, then the response of the Creative Medium, the action of spiritual cybernetics, would do the rest.

"You Brothers of the Grape are a nucleus. From your service to humanity more and more people will awaken their true self-image from the cultivation of their 'secret garden.' This, in turn, will provide more and more constructive images for our planet. To sum it up, it's simply a matter of the individual knowing and sustaining his or her true self-image along with a constructively expectant image of this planet."

Alex's mind was again flooded with that lifelong question: What can the individual do about world peace? But now, frustration and despair no longer accompanied it. The

answer was now so obvious and attainable that it sang with quiet joy in his breast. Not only did he now know what the individual could do for the world, he knew what each individual could do for her or himself – and that this had to come first. World peace had to begin with the individual. A feeling of sweet gratitude filled him as he remembered the way he was purged of his capacity to hate through the awakening of Divine Love.

Moneigh was speaking again. “At the moment, you may not see how all this is possible, but remember, you will not be alone. Your successors will join forces with other groups devoted to serving humanity’s self-unfoldment.

“This century will produce mental and spiritual tools so precise and simple that the individual in the street will not only understand them but will be able to personally use them to solve problems, achieve goals, and unfold his or her soul. A Dr. Freud has recently discovered a psychological door that opens to wider self-knowing. His successors will open this door wider and, in so doing, will find still other doors.

“Your successors and Dr. Freud’s will join other groups devoted to directing human thought and behavior. Before the century is over, the scientific laws, philosophical opinions, and religious revelations will unite and work together to awaken and establish a proper self-image within the individual – generating awareness that self is made in the image and likeness of the Creator.

“This true self-image is the only way through which the new age can enter. The new age way is the way of reason and sanity born of the unfoldment of our inherent wisdom. Thus, we could say that our work is to sow the seeds of sanity in the garden of human consciousness – to become Pied Pipers of Truth.

“The season of reason has already begun. This is why

you, its present members, have discovered the inner purpose of the Brothers of the Grape. And I, speaking on behalf of those who founded this fraternity, congratulate and bless each of you for the parts you’re playing in the fulfillment of the founding purpose. Furthermore, I’ll always be around to help.”

Alex never felt so capable or so at one with his companions.

Richard speaking to Moneigh again broke a long vibrant silence. “I want so much to believe in the fulfillment of the individual and of our planet. But there’s so much hate and prejudice going on now and throughout our history. I wish I could overcome my doubt that it can be changed for I really want to be helpful.”

Moneigh’s eyes warmed with understanding. “If you’ll look to the heavens on a clear night, you’ll see many planets further advanced in fulfilling their destiny than we are. Learning to live in peace is certainly the first necessary step. Is there really any valid reason to doubt that we can do what other planets have already done?”

Richard’s eyes shone with appreciation at the possibilities inherent in this reasoning. Moneigh looked from one to the other, inviting further discussion. However, each was deeply absorbed in the meaningfulness of what he had said.

For a long moment, Moneigh savored what he saw and felt stirring in each soul. Finally, he chuckled and said, “Speaking of planets, during your lifetimes, men from earth shall walk on other planets, beginning with the moon. As this happens, we’ll become space-oriented and stop thinking of ourselves as Greeks, Italians, Germans, Englishmen, etc., and start thinking of ourselves – all ourselves – as Earthlings, as one people, each with the same needs and each with the same destiny of fulfillment.”

He stood up, signaling that the meeting was over. Lifting his goblet, he said, "We will adjourn by drinking to the purpose of Brothers of the Grape."

The others stood, extending their goblets. Moneigh's voice rang out with deep gladness as he proclaimed, "To the fulfillment of our planet's highest destiny."

Alex and Riggio left the meeting together.

"What do you plan to do first?" Riggio asked.

"I'm going to find a way to wed Truena, though German occupation of Athens makes it difficult." Alex's love for Truena suddenly swept through him with such sweet elation that, before he realized it, he was rapidly and joyously extolling the wonder of her wisdom and the beauty of her nature.

Riggio's eyes glowed with understanding as he said, "Yes, I know. She's the perfect partner for you in our work." Suddenly a happy grin illumined Riggio's face. He announced, "I know a priest. He works with a rabbi organizing Jewish refugees for our shipping-out program. I'll see him tomorrow night and make arrangements for him to be at the cove the following night."

"Splendid. We'll be there." Alex exclaimed excitedly. Suddenly he looked directly and affectionately into Riggio's eyes. "Will you stand by me – with us?"

Riggio replied with deep sincerity "Always."



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE SERVICE

Alex thought that in the awakening of his new self and being reunited with Truena, his happiness had peaked. But as he and his bride, along with Mike and Marta, made their way in the predawn light back home from the cove wedding, he felt a new quality to his happiness. The new quality was of expansion – an expansion that included a love for the whole world. As he thought about it, he remembered first feeling this new expansion at the wedding when, not only did Riggio appear to stand at his side but, to his joy, so did Moneigh, Richard and Karl. His "Harp of Humanity" came into mind, and he knew that its octaves were so far-reaching that he felt he would someday hear the music of the spheres.

Alex and Truena stopped at her meditation bench to greet the rising sun. Mike and Marta continued on. As the rim of the sun first appeared above the misty hills, it was accompanied by the song of birds, exhorting the world to join them in response to the glory of what was happening.

Alex gently drew Truena nearer to him and said, "When Moneigh told me that by unfolding our individual growth, we would enable our souls to reunite, I never dreamed the process would be such a wondrous one. I love you so. My life is so full. That lonely part of me that grieved for so long is now a constant hum of happiness."

Truena said, "Now that we have refound each other, there must be a way to keep each other forever, never again to be separated. Whatever we have to do to make this come true, we must do. I know we can, and I know we will."

"Moneigh told me," Alex said, "that it is our constructive responses to our experiences that cause us to grow in our unfoldment, and it is this unfoldment that brought us together and will keep us together. I feel that the work we are to do for our planet will provide ample opportunities for our continued unfoldment."

Truena nodded her head pensively. "Since we are free to choose our responses," she said, "any experience provides us with the opportunity to choose to constructively respond or destructively react. Therefore, all experiences, no matter what they are, must have the potential of unfoldment." She lifted her hand, moving her fingers so that the rays of new sun reflected from the lodestone – now her wedding ring. She raised the ring to her lips and kissed it reverently. Nestling her head against his shoulder, she asked, "Will we have to wait until the war is over to begin our new work?"

"No," Alex answered. "The British are coming here to help us. This will enable me to work closely with Richard. We've already discussed taking advantage of the war, instead of waiting until it's over."

Truena lifted her head with interest. "Can you really use war for the purpose of peace?"

"In war," Alex said, "life and death become very real. The purpose and value of life is accentuated. Richard has already talked to his men with definite results. Selecting what he felt was a proper time, he spoke to them as a group, pointing out that everyone's life has a special purpose and special value for the world. He then invited those interested in their individual purpose and in learning how to make a contribution to the planet to talk with him personally. Many have expressed interest. I plan to do the same with my men."

"And what then?" Truena asked.

Alex's voice grew enthusiastically warm. "That's where you and Riggio come in. Once we've explained what their life could be and how meditation practice can bring it about, they need to be taught to meditate. You and Riggio can do this so well." His eyes shone with a sudden thought, and he added "For Riggio, you, and me to do this work together is such fitting fruitage for our friendship."

They were silent for a moment. Then Alex continued, "Richard and I will manage to get interested men to you and Riggio at Moneigh's cave."

"Glory be to good," Truena whispered gratefully. "Our work will soon begin."

"Yes," Alex continued. "Karl will also send interested ones to you. From among these young soldiers of different countries – England, Germany, and Greece – will be developed contributors to the overall attitude that, eventually, will provide lasting peace. For from these will come students, workers, teachers, and leaders who will join the 'Citizens of the World' movement, whose birth is now in season."

Alex thought a moment, then said, "Moneigh taught us that improvement of the individual's self-image is the starting point. Everyone must have a proper self-image because the meaningfulness of life to one's self, as well as to others, depends upon it. Everyone must first know who he or she is to properly relate to self and to the world."

"It is really very simple," Truena said. "We must begin by teaching that the 'who' of us is the life of the Creator within us, as us. To thus love ourselves must come first before we can love our neighbor or our enemy. For, if we do not love ourselves and then try to love our neighbors, we will not have anything to love them with. We would be attempting to love our neighbor with the same lack of love we have for ourselves."

"That's right," Alex said. "Not until we recognize our own life as the Life of Creator can we recognize another's life as also sacred. When we understand that the Divine is in all, through all, as all, we will then be able to have and sustain the true image of our planet. For then, we will understand that it is a spaceship, especially designed to enable us, through experience and response, to discover, and then express our divine nature. Therefore, humanity's greatest need is a guide to the discovery of its divine nature.

"According to the Brothers of the Grape founders, this guide was included in Creation Itself. These fraternity founders had the manuscript of nature as their holy book. No humanly written book could make a more simple and direct guide to humanity's self-evolution than the way nature provides. For all we need as our guide is to recognize in every colorful bloom of a flower, proof that the life within this plant was capable of lifting itself to a new and higher dimension.

"For example, if the expression of life we call a rose can lift itself from seed to shoot to bush to blossom to fragrance, this is proof that the life we call humanity can lift itself from fear to faith, from greed to generosity, from hate to love, from war to peace. Thus, every flower is the voice of our planet proclaiming that humankind, too, has the ability to flower.

"So, to teach the art of meditation becomes as delightful as it is simple. For all that is necessary for one to embark on a path of self-unfoldment is to recognize and respond to our planet's 'Call of Color!'"

Truena's eyes glistened with loving pride as she said, "How wondrously you've found the answer to your quest."

"Yes," Alex replied. "And I'm very grateful. I've found

that the answer to what the individual can do for world peace is to change his or her mind about what he or she expects to happen. Each of us can make certain that every time we think of our planet, we deliberately see it accomplishing its Divinely intended destiny, regardless of what may be happening at any given moment. We all have an image of our planet, whether we realize it or not. And whatever image is held by the majority of thinking minds will be the image that is the most powerfully creative and will automatically manifest itself.

"Moneigh put it so simply when he said that that which every individual can do is to contribute to the constructive majority by holding a mental image of the planet abloom with fulfillment instead of ablaze with destruction."

"How blessed we are for your persistence," Truena said. "How great is the love of our Creator. All we need do is have a dream and believe in it – our own individual dream and a dream for the planet."

Alex took Truena's face between his hands and gazed deeply into her eyes. He said, "How beautifully you sum it all up. Our dream is to awaken in others the need to have this dream of fulfillment."

After a moment of silence, Truena said, "I've always believed there's a 'place' where our dreams are already true. Remember the song I sang at the falls? It was the song I used to sing before we were brought together. Now I sing the same song in a different way."

"Sing it for me," Alex whispered.

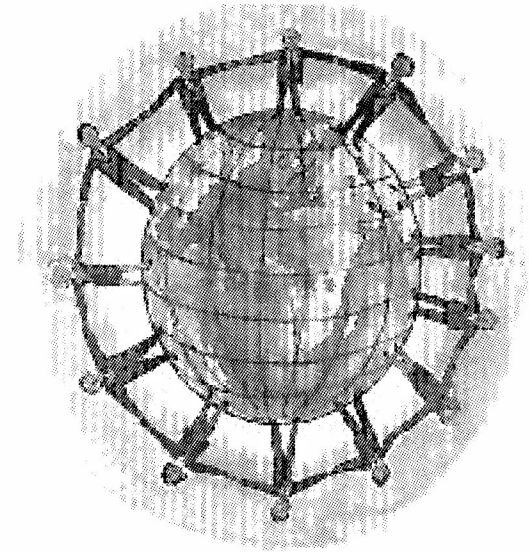
And so, side-by-side, soul touching soul, hearts filled with love for each other, Truena softly sang:

When we're apart I hear a voice
Soothing my fearful heart,
Telling me that all dreams must start

From the place where the dream is true.
 For, how could I dream this dream of you
 Unless somehow I always knew ...
 Knew that in you my dream comes true,
 And knew that you knew it, too.

The sun was now completely free of the hills on its way to the mid-heaven, emanating a radiant flow of yellow-orange with a wake of lingering and diffusing hues of rose, lavender, and blue. The birds had settled down to intermittent brief songs of serenity, as though now content that the new day was well on its way to the fulfillment of its promise.

THE BEGINNING...



HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO

Join with others who are using the companion study guide to *Brothers of the Grape* Called: *Peace In Our Times*.

Learn to be more peaceful. Create your own study group.

Inter act with others who are forming a critical mass consciousness, enabling us to co-create the context for which the content of Peace can emerge through us.

For information, turn to the next page entitled **Global Citizen University**

**IF WE ARE GOING TO HAVE PEACE IN OUR
 TIME IT HAS TO HAPPEN THROUGH US,
 NOT FOR US**



The formation of Global Citizen University was inspired by Dr. Michaelís work as the Madonna Ministry Founder and as author of *Brothers of the Grape*, a metaphysical tale of an ancient society committed to peace. By tapping into the Living Wisdom of these teachings, we as Brothers and Sisters of the Grape can contribute to humanityís awakening by influencing women and men everywhere to expect this planet to fulfill, rather than destroy, itself. This awakening takes place within the individual, as there is never more than the individual, never other than the One expressing as the Many. It is within the awakened self that all true education evolves. Herein, the capacity to create the new mythology that becomes the new reality resides.

GCU curriculum is innovatively designed to strengthen individual self-realization in a global context. New millennium technologies, such as printed and electronic modalities of communication, are utilized with the intent to inspire the individual to turn to Nature as the ultimate text. The Nature of Spirit, of the Sacred, dwells everywhere and in everything. In *Brothers of the Grape*, we read that all the individual needs as a guide is to recognize in every colorful bloom of a flower, proof that the life within this plant was capable of lifting itself to a new and higher dimension. For example, if the expression of life we call a rose can lift itself from seed to shoot to bush to blossom to fragrance, this is proof that the life we call humanity can lift itself from fear to faith, from greed to generosity, from hate to love, from war to peace. Thus, every flower is the voice of our planet proclaiming that every individual, too,

has the ability to flower. It is the intent of GCU to draw forth the fragrant flower seeded within each university participant and to tend a garden of faith, generosity, love, and peace.

Do you dream of a world of peace, plenty, and illumination? Do you dream of unity in diversity? Do you dream of a quality-of-life economy? Do you dream of harmony among women and men of all ages, races, and creeds? Do you dream of safety and happiness for children everywhere? Do you dream of communities celebrating the

Sacredness of all Life? If so, my friend, know it is done and it is so, because all dreams must start from the place where the dream is true.

We who are birthing Global Citizen University invite you to join with us in dreaming the dream onward. For further information about GCU and the *Peace in Our Time* companion study guide to *Brothers of the Grape*, write:

Global Citizen Publishing, 237 West Avenida
Alessandro, San Clemente, CA 92672-4334 or email:
mailto:globalcitizenu@yahoo.com or
globalcitizenu@yahoo.com .

Whatever course you take in life, may your true nature blossom forth in all its beauty and magnificence. May you be the answer to the question, "What can I as an individual do to bring about global peace?" For, if we are going to create peace in our time it has to happen through us, not for us.

In Celebration,
Nicole Christine,
GCU Founding Director



**Arnold Michael,
D.D., L.H.D.**

BIOGRAPHY

Arnold Michael, D.D., L.H.D., dedicated his life to furthering a better understanding between the East and West in the old world of awareness and the new world of action. Therefore, the themes of his books blend mysticism and new thought, contemplation with positive thinking, meditation with spiritual mind treatment.

Dr. Michael's background contributes authority to his ability to provide this blend. From 1952-1970, he was a Church of Religious Science Minister and the Minister Emeritus founder of the Sacramento Church of Religious Science. From 1979 until his 1987 transition, he was first a priest, then a bishop in the Church of Antioch. Throughout his life, he was considered one of the outstanding teachers, writers, ministers, and counselors of the expanding New Thought Movement of the 20th Century.

In 1969, Arnold and his wife Kathryn (Kay) moved onto pine forested land where the pine trees seemed to talk to him in their whisperings. Here, he established the Church of the Talking Pines. Devoted to the Beloved Mother Mary, he began calling his work the Madonna Ministry. In 1981 he wrote these words: I feel a keen urge to serve as an instrument to bring to human awareness the nature and evolutionary purpose of the feminine aspect of our Father-Mother God in referred to as The Comforter, The Feminine, The Divine Mother, The Holy Ghost in so that we may consciously and more deliberately cooperate with Its purpose.

His first novel, *Blessed Among Women*, drew many

others to this work as Emissaries of the Divine Mother. In 1983, through his authority as a Church of Antioch bishop and the legally established status of the Church of the Talking Pines, Arnold began ordaining ministers in the Madonna Ministry. At this turning of an age, the ministers and bishops in this now international ministry are increasing in numbers and the ministry's message of service based on one's inner divine authority and commitment to peace, within and without, is spreading. The Madonna Ministry is the living expression of that which Dr. Michael praised: the divine process by which the human personality becomes the chalice of divinity.

Kay Michael's reflection on her husband Arnold sums up the essence of this Pied Piper of Peace. "To say that Arnold Michael was charismatic is somewhat understating his personality. When most people met him for the first time, they were impressed that they were in the presence of a Presence. Many later remarked to me, or to somebody else, that his blue eyes seemed to penetrate right into their soul; some said he had the eyes of an 'adept.' When he was asked a question of spiritual import, he often seemed to click into a higher consciousness and speak from a plane of knowing. These traits became more pronounced as he grew older until finally, during the last part of his life when he was an invalid, people would hear of him and come from far places, often bringing a gift, just to be at his bedside and to hear him talk and teach."

Core to Arnold Michael's teaching and how he lived his life was the belief that each person must evolve inner fear into faith, hate into love, and ignorance into truth. He planted this seed principle into the race consciousness and emphasized that peace will be a reality when this transmutation takes place in the souls of a predominance of humanity.

How this transmutation can take place is profoundly expressed in *Brothers of the Grape*.

BROTHERS OF THE GRAPE

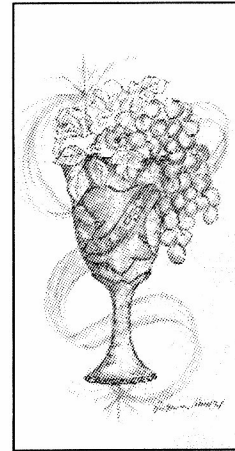
In my Soul's Garden
Grows the Grape!
A Secret Garden,
In Mystic drape.
Love, Beauty, Wisdom,
Flowers of God.
Plentiful spectrum,
From Holy Sod.
Divine Love.

Goblets of Light
Wine Divine.
Brothers Unite,
In Transmuted Wine.
Citizens of the World,
Manifested Love.
Citizens of the World,
Brothers of Love.

O Secret Grape, Sacred Grape,
We are Brothers of the Grape!
Drink well of Its Elixir,
All ye Brothers of the Grape!

Tatiana

Inspired by the Living Wisdom of the novel
Brothers of the Grape



The Chalice of Peace Artwork by Patricia Hurst

The vision of “The Chalice of Peace” was perceived by Nicole Christine. As one intimately familiar with the energy and the message of *Brothers of The Grape*, she held an image in her mind's eye that represented the essential components.

Patricia Hurst is a Phoenix-based Artist, Ceremonialist, and Madonna Minister who specializes in capturing another's vision in her creations. As the process of bringing this publication to fresh print evolved, Patricia and Nicole worked together to birth the image of The Chalice of Peace. The intention of this artwork, beyond frontispiece imagery, is that it independently supports the work of Global Citizen University and inspires remembrance in each of us that we are The Chalice of Peace.

Prints, matted to 11 x 14, are available for \$25.00 plus shipping and handling. All profits are donated to Global Citizen University.

To Be A Chalice of Peace greeting cards — Artwork by Patricia Hurst

Each card is hand embellished. The inside message contains Sovereign Alchemist quotation from the *Rubaiyat* by Omar Khayyam plus the words “We Choose To Consciously And Completely Embrace the Alchemical Power Of Love.”

Six (6) card packages are available for \$25.00 plus shipping.

In addition to The Chalice of Peace, other original artwork expressing the many aspects of the Sacred Feminine, Sacred Union, and our connection to Nature are available.

To place orders or to obtain more information contact Patricia at www.pkhurst@prodigy.net or at 480-225-4481.

"*Brothers of the Grape* is what I would call one of the first true world novels. It shows the drama of a fundamentally common humanness being literally hacked by national and cultural divisions. The world is in dire need of a new global world literature transcending all territorial and human divisions. *Brothers of the Grape* is a remarkable example. It could have been written by a member of the United Nations Literary Society."

— Dr. Robert Muller, former UN Asst. Secretary General and board member of University for Peace, Costa Rica

"*Brothers of the Grape* encourages each person to discover the importance of his or her individual life expression and to recognize how that makes a difference to the world."

— Lisa Michaels, Founder and Director of the
Institute of Conscious Expression

"*Brothers of the Grape* is more than a novel — it's an experience. While the story of human beings unfolds itself, an inner story of Spirit lifts the reader unto Him or Her Self."

— Walter Starcke, nature mystic and author of *It's All For God*
and *Gospel of Relativity*

"We are entering an era of planetary Peace and must change from a war to peace paradigm. *Brothers of the Grape* is a loving reminder of what we already know about becoming the Chalice of Peace. It is a must read for our time."

— Bishop Mei Lan Willis, Madonna Ministry Co-Director

"In *Brothers of the Grape*, we find a universal solution — Love."

Fenwicke L. Holmes, Ph.D. educator and lecturer

Brothers of the Grape is a novel within a novel, on one hand, a tale of intrigue and on the other, profound universal truths. A must read for those who are seeking philosophical answers to spiritual quests.

Bobbe Sommer, Ph.D., international speaker and author of
Psycho-Cybernetics 2000

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ISBN 0-9725696-1-8



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