

**THE FIRST BOOK OF
SAMUEL**

BY SAREJESS

**The story of one man's adventures
as he searches for personal
redemption**

PROLOGUE

There is an old legend that says that the inn keeper who refused to give up his bed for a pregnant woman and told her husband that they could use the stable for all he cared was forever cursed to be an inn keeper until judgment day. Never being able to redeem himself but forever chasing after the shekel in the hopes of doing good and following the precincts of the Jewish faith.

This story is about a wandering Jewish innkeeper at the turn of the 21st century this innkeeper found himself in Africa running an inn as usual

He starts his day by doing his religious duty by attending Shul and then returning to the inn to be a good host to his guests. In his time he had seen peoples of many nations serving them and hoping to find a way of redeeming himself in the eyes of mankind.

Later in the day he would take stock of what he had in the inn kitchen and then go to the local market to replenish his stock for the evening meal and once more return to the inn to play the part of the good host to his guests. His wife, a shrewd woman would keep the kitchen under her control making sure that the staff they employed at minimum wages did not steal a morsel of bread. She considered it a great sin she considered for a person to steal from their employers and this policy of economics she rigidly enforced.

At night the inn keeper would retire to the inner sanctum and count out the coins which he had made through the day making sure always that the inn showed a healthy profit. He had become very good at what he did; after all he had been doing it for more then to millennium. He had once owned an inn on the main square in Damascus and had served the likes of the Moslem's Mohamed. He had seen at first hand the evil that his followers had committed in Mohamed's name. At another time he had run an inn in the Christian city of Constantinople. Here he had seen the riches of the east going west and the evil of the Holy Roman Empire. Still another time he had owned an inn in the old city of Jerusalem here he had seen the ignorant Christian knights of western Europe butcher and massacre their fellow believers in the belief that they were infidels because of their dress.

The first inn he had owned in the old city of Jerusalem had been built shortly before the crucifixion of the Lord and he had given up an upper room the night before to the Lord and his disciples. He provided the where with all for them to hold Passover; however this had not redeemed him from the eternal curse under which he lived. The day of the crucifixion of Jesus he had watched from the street as Jesus carried the cross tree up the well-worn path to Golgotha, the place of the skull. The innkeeper had watched as others reviled and spat on Jesus but he kept aloof, watching the man to whom he had refused his parents a bed. At one stage the innkeeper had started forward with a cloth to wipe the blood from Jesus' face but a Roman soldier shoved him roughly back into the crowd with a curse.

Later during the rebellion of the years 67 AD to 70 AD he had given room to the leaders of the rebellion only to watch as the mighty Roman army marched into the city and slaughtered and carried off many thousands of his fellow Jews to captivity. He had lived through many tribulations of the Jewish people

CHAPTER ONE

6 BC The beginning of the Samuel story

The nation of Israel had been on the move now for weeks from every corner of the world the children of Israel came to be numbered by order of Caesar Augustus. The winding trail which led to the city of Bethlehem was crowded with people traveling. The wealthy rode horses or carts the poorer folk rode donkeys or walked. Thus Joseph of the house of David walked leading the donkey upon which his very pregnant wife rode. He was a big man with a kind face. The dark beard did much to hide his friendly countenance and many thought him fearsome but the fact was he was quite the opposite.

The hot afternoon sun bore down on them the dust clouds rising as the multitudes made their way to their ancestral homes to be numbered. This afternoon Mary had begun to sense that the birth for which the people of Israel had been waiting for since the fall from the garden could not be long off. She had urged her husband of a few months to make haste to try and reach the city of David before nightfall so that she could at least give birth to the promised one in a comfortable bed. She really did not want to give birth to the hope of Israel on the side of a dusty road in full view of the multitudes; that would not be right she thought.

They had traveled on reaching the hills, which over looked the city. Shortly before nightfall they found themselves looking down on the town. Joseph had his first inclination that there might be a problem finding a place to stay. The crowds which awaited entry at the city gates where restless and tired from their long journey and every one wanted to find a place to stay.

After waiting a while Joseph and Mary were allowed entry into the city Joseph asked one of the youths near the gate if he knew where the inn was. The boy of about ten pointed vaguely off in the direction of the center of the town and Joseph took up the reins once more and began leading the stubborn animal upon which his wife sat.

Samuel Ben Ezra was in a foul mood once again. He had been put out of the kitchen by his wife and mother in law who had

promised to beat him with the broom if he dared to return. The problem was not the fact that he was an interfering busy body it was just that he liked to please his guests. To this end he inspected every thing the women did. His behavior had at times so infuriated the women that they had contemplated murder but this had so far not happened.

This evening Samuel was worse than usual. The inn was full to bursting yet people still kept coming to the door demanding a place to spend the night. It happened that when Joseph's knock came to the door Samuel had just had another vicious argument with his wife Ruth. So he was not in a particularly good mood when he answered the door. Flinging open the door, he was confronted by the dark face of Joseph. "What do you want?" Samuel said in an off-handed manner taking in at the same time the woman on the donkey. She looked ready to drop he thought "A room for the night" asked Joseph "None here friend" said Samuel "the inn is full" "Oh now what are we to do?" said the woman almost in tears.

"I don't know. The whole city is full. The only place that you might be able to rest for the night is my stable" said Samuel half heartily. "A stable?" said Joseph incredulously "Yes a good clean stable; what's wrong with that?" he asked of Joseph taking in an offended tone of voice. "Nothing I suppose" said Joseph "But my wife is pregnant. Is there no other place you might be able to give us?" asked Joseph "None" replied Samuel "And it will only cost you a few pennies. Let's call it a census special" he laughed.

"Oh well we will have to take it" said Joseph. Samuel led the way to the stable, kicking open the door, which already hung loosely from its hinges. The stable was filthy. Seeing there was no where else to go, and Mary was on the verge of giving birth, Joseph said "all right we will take it." "Not so fast friend" said Samuel. "The price is 2 shekels. If you don't pay, I can all ways rent to some one else who is in need of it". Joseph reached for the money purse which hung around his neck and handed over the money. Samuel bit the money to make sure it was genuine. "Could you help me to clean the place a bit?" asked Joseph of the innkeeper "What, me clean up after filthy animals? You must be mad!" he said to the astonished Joseph, who was growing angrier and angrier every

time the innkeeper opened his mouth to utter some thing offensive.

Suddenly a strange look came over the face of Mary at the latest insult. "Innkeeper harken unto the words of a mother" she said. "You are accursed and you will wander the earth serving humanity until the end of time, seeking your salvation in many places but never finding it until the day you repent of your offensive ways and until you ask forgiveness of Him whom you have treated so harshly. You will seek until you are weary. You will seek in places that have not become nations. Yet but there is one hope that you repent and find your salvation for the act you have committed this night". The light faded from her face and she slumped forward as if asleep, on the donkey. Samuel reeled back as if he had been struck. He had seen those whom the spirit of JHWH possessed. He had stood in the temple when the old prophet Micah had been lifted up and had, under divine influence, spoken of a great time for the nation. Now he recognized the truth of the words and because he would not give one inch, he had lost his soul. Samuel recognized the seriousness of the words. He stumbled from the stable, physically ill at the shock he had just received. In the stable he heard the woman say in a soft voice "Joseph I think my water has broken."

The morning after

Ruth was angry Samuel had broken her best clay pot now she was busy in the kitchen baking bread. Banging a bowl of flour down on the table "Oh that man" she said to no one in particular Miriam looked up from her work "Did you say some thing dear?" she asked

"It is nothing mother, just Samuel doing his thing again" replied Ruth. "What has he done?" now asked Miriam with a sigh. She was used to her son in law getting up to strange things, always getting involved in some thing which had nothing to do with him or causing a problem with one of the guests. "Firstly we have no room at the moment because of the census but he still tries to get more people into the inn. Last night a man and his wife arrived from Nazareth. She was about to deliver her first born. So what does he do instead of sending them some where else? What does our Samuel do? He tells them they can stay the night in the stable! I mean have

you ever heard of such wickedness? He could have sent them down the road to Cousin Simon. I am sure he would have made a better place than a stable! Anyway, he tells the couple they can use the stable and he charges them for it; 2 shekels can you believe? Well last night at about midnight the woman is delivered of her first born a wonderful bonny boy. Well some Shepherds out in the hills come to the inn claiming an angel has told them to come and worship the new born King at the stable. So what does Samuel do? He charges them for coming to the inn to see the baby! Have you ever heard of such wickedness mother? I mean if the JHWH wants to speak to Shepherds I have no problem, but then Samuel looks to make a profit from it! This morning he breaks my best clay pot, the one that I use for making stew because he says he is cursed for letting the people stay in the stable.”

“Oh dear I wonder if he is not a little sick in the head?” said Miriam. It was not the first time her son in law had said done some thing strange. Ruth put the bread in to the oven and straightened up “I don't know what to think. He says the woman at the stable cursed him because he would not give up our bed for her to deliver the baby. Cursed to wander the earth until judgment day have you ever heard of such nonsense?” she said.

Just then Samuel Ben Ezra walked into the kitchen. A well set man of about thirty five, not very noticeable, he was your average Jew of medium build; fairly dark in complexion. Walking over to the stove he lifted the lid of a pot and looked inside. “Stop that” snapped Ruth. Sighing, he put the lid back and sat down on a low stool. Have you heard of such a thing cursed indeed” said Ruth “You should be attending to your guests and instead you moan around talking nonsense about curses! How long have you been at the stable talking to those people?” she asked. “You don't seem to understand,” he said “I did some thing wrong; something bad and against God” he said.

“Nonsense” said Ruth. “Now go and serve some wine to the guests who have just walked in. I can hear them calling for wine”. Rising from the stool Samuel made his way to the front room of the inn where voices could be heard calling for the innkeeper.

Miriam had left the kitchen and was gone for a while. When she returned, she was quieter than usual, singing softly to herself a psalm. "Where have you been?" asked Ruth "to the stables" replied Miriam with a with a tired but content smile on her lips. "So what does the boy child look like?" asked Ruth. "Oh daughter he is the most pleasant baby to behold!" said Miriam "He has bright eyes, health, well formed; what a man he will be one day." said the old woman. "But what a life lies before him. Those people are dirt poor. What a life of suffering for the child and when he is grown, a life of toil. Life in Israel is not easy in these days" said Ruth.

"Do you mind if I take them some food?" asked Miriam "Who is going to pay for it?" asked Ruth do you think we are so wealthy we can give away food mother in law?" "Don't be like that daughter" said the older woman. "Once we were also poor and others fed us. Don't be hard of heart child, it doesn't become you".

"What is going on with your family today?" said Ruth crossly "You both seem to have spent too much time in the sun. You and your son here take this pot of stew to them and I hope that when we are poor, others will remember this act of unwarranted charity" she said.

"Oh Ruth you should go and see the baby. He is so beautiful! I am sure that once you see him the hard heart in your bosom will melt" said the old woman. "Away with you before I change my mind" said Ruth.

Bethlehem 26 AD

Ruth was dying. She coughed and lay back on the bed. Samuel moved to wipe her brow. Her face was as grey as her hair. Samuel thought back to the days when they were young children playing in the hills of Judea. How long ago that was. She had changed over the last few years. She had begun following with growing interest the ministry of a teacher from Nazareth who had taught both in the Galilee and Judea named Jesus. At first she had gone along to hear what this young man had to say with much skepticism but that had changed. The more she heard of the young prophet the more she changed. Her shrewish nature had softened. She had even become quite pleasant to be around. Over the last few months she had

developed a persistent cough, which would not go away, it had withstood all remedies, now she was dying an old woman. Samuel still looked and felt young. He reasoned the curse was already having an effect.

He had loved Ruth from childhood. She had not been a pretty child, rather a tom boy, but she had always worshiped Samuel. He was older than she was and at first he had not taken much notice of her. She was the young sister of his friend Benjamin. Later as they had grown up he began to notice the changes in her and was drawn to her.

They had been married when he was twenty and she was fifteen. He remembered that summer. The fields had been harvested, the crops that year had been bountiful. She coughed again, the spasm using almost all of her meager supply of strength “Samuel, promise me that you will bury me in nice spot” she said. “You know how I have always loved the sun”. Samuel squeezed her hand “Dear Ruth wife of my youth I promise you that I will find a field that gets lots of sun all year round for your resting place“ he replied.

He wondered at the unfairness of life she was fifty-six and he sixty-one yet he remained young while she was now an old woman breathing her last. Their life together had been good. Yes there had been hard years, but one looked forward to better years when times were lean. He wondered what he would do once she was gone. He could not continue to live in Bethlehem. People were already starting to suspect that something was not quite right at the inn. He remained a man of thirty-five while his wife had aged. Maybe he would go up to Jerusalem and speak to a learned man there who might help him to unravel the mystery of the curse that kept him young. For a moment he was drawn back into his youth when he and Benjamin had been fishing in the stream near Bethlehem. They had sneaked off from the town to fish early in the morning knowing if they hung around town they would have to attend school in the synagogue. There had been a sound in the bushes near them. Alarmed, they had scrambled up from the stream bank to see what wild animal was in the bush. Finding nothing, they had returned to the stream and decided to take a swim. They had removed their clothes and plunged into the cold water, enjoying the feeling of the cool water

against their flesh. They swam for a while. When they had grown tired of swimming they had gone back to the stream bank only to find that their clothes had disappeared.

Worriedly they had begun searching the bush looking for any sign of their clothes without success. They had returned to the bank of the stream to find Ruth standing there with their clothes in her hands. Laughing at their embarrassment, she said she would only give back the clothes for a price. Benjamin would have to do her chores for a week and Samuel; well from Samuel she wanted a kiss. They had made a grab at her attempting to get their clothes back but she had been far too quick for them and had easily evaded capture. Embarrassed, Samuel had kissed her gently on the lips before surrendering his clothes.

Now she lay dying; an old grey woman. Her breathing was growing shallow now. She was close to the end. The words of the young prophet had a profound effect on her she had become content with life she had changed she had once more become a young carefree girl. It seemed that the toils of life had dropped from her shoulders. For years she had been the driving force at making the inn successful working hard. She counted every penny, keeping everything under her control. Since she started following the young Rabbi she had become a lovable person. Together they had once more discovered the joys of their youth, laughing at old jokes and stories retold a thousand times over a life time.

Samuel moved closer to her and kissed her on the cheek. She looked up at him and smiled "God be with you Samuel Ben Ezra" she said closing her eyes her breath growing shallow and labored. Samuel had tears in his eyes when he heard the death rattle in her throat.

CHAPTER TWO

Jerusalem 27 AD A day in the temple

No one could describe the feelings that Samuel felt on a fine morning in the early part of the year 27 AD as he reached the summit of the hill at which travelers first saw Jerusalem. It was especially moving for Jews who saw it for the first time. Jerusalem, it was the capital the city which King David had taken a thousand years before. It was Holy city; the city of Kings. The sunlight glinted off the white marble of the newer Roman and Greek buildings from the temple mount the fires of morning sacrifices were seen from afar.

Leaving the push cart at the side of the well worn track that leads to the city, Samuel stood for a moment looking down on the city. The mixed feelings which filled his heart were of joy, sorrow, and fear. Joy, which fills a man's heart when he has reached his final destination after a long journey, made more special, as this was the first time that he was seeing the city of David. He also felt sorrow, knowing that he was leaving his old life behind. Once he had buried Ruth there was really nothing to keep him in Bethlehem. People were already saying he was bewitched looking so young when his wife of many years had gone to her rest; an old woman bent with age old and grey, while he retained the appearance of a young man. Fear at what the wise man would say when he laid before him his unusual predicament.

Taking in the view, Samuel wondered how many others had stood on this spot over the city's long history and been humbled to stand in the presence of God's holy city and to know that in the temple rested the Ark of the Covenant; the visible presence of God's law. Samuel thought of the prophets of the Lord who had raged against the rebellious hearts of the people when they had turned and worshiped the idols of Baal and Aster.

Now Samuel stood on the hill, about to take the first steps in a new life. He began pushing the cart once more. The cart was loaded with the few meager possessions gathered over a life time of toil. They were but a few mementos of his sixty odd years in Bethlehem; a token to futility. Pushing the cart down towards the city gate he was aware that others around him

were also seeing the city for the first time. Others had seen it before. It was easy to tell the difference. Those seeing the city for the first time were singing songs from the Psalms the more seasoned travelers walked on hardly looking at the city, concentrating on negotiating the path to the postern gate.

Once inside the city walls, Samuel began to ask around for an inn where one could rent a room. He was directed to the inn near the city wall that catered to travelers from the country. Finding the inn was not difficult. A collection of mules and donkeys were standing in the street heavily loaded with a merchant's wares. The merchant himself was bargaining with a mid forties fat man wearing a dirty robe. "You don't really expect me to pay such high price do you?" said the merchant in Aramaic heavily accented with Greek. "All the others do" replied the fat man, rubbing his hands in anticipation. "This is a very popular watering hole many people want room here" continued the fat man. "Well I won't" said the Greek losing all patience with the man before turning to his caravan and leaving.

"Greetings, Welcome" said the fat man, his eyes falling on Samuel. "How may I be of service to you friend?" he said "A room and some food for me" said Samuel. "Fine, fine, I have many rooms" said the fat man. "You a tinker or something?" asked the fat man, his eye falling on the push carts. "No, an innkeeper from Bethlehem" replied Samuel. "Making a pilgrimage to the temple?" asked the fat man "Yes, my wife died awhile back and she asked me to make the pilgrimage for both of us" replied Samuel. "Oh that is sad" replied the fat man, "and who is taking care of your inn while you are here?" asked the fat man, pushing open the gate to the court yard. "I sold the inn" replied Samuel. "maybe I will buy a small business here in Jerusalem and start fresh" replied Samuel. "Well then, you are welcome. A young man like you will have no problem starting fresh here". "As long as you don't get involved with those followers of Jesus or any of those other Zealots" said the fat man. "Oh by the way, my name is Abraham Ben Joseph. Might I inquire as to your name friend?" "Samuel Ben Ezra" replied Samuel, with out much enthusiasm. Samuel had known this man but a few minutes and he was already fishing for information. Samuel checked himself. He would have to be careful. If word got back to

Bethlehem it could mean trouble.

Once Samuel had settled in, he had a meal. It was approaching the middle of the afternoon he decided to take a walk. He started off in the general direction of the temple. Jews of all ages always headed for the temple at the first opportunity and Samuel was no different. He made his way towards the building, stopping to take in the scene before him, the great stairway leading to the temple, the beauty of the building enveloping him. King Herod of cursed memory built this temple to win over the Jews. He failed because of his cruelty to the very people he was trying to win over. Samuel well remembered a number of years before when the troops had swept into Bethlehem, seeking children less than two years of age whom Herod had ordered to be mercilessly butchered. Newly born children were snatched from their mother's breast, to be slaughtered in the streets of the town. That had been at the end of Herod's reign. Samuel could still remember the sounds of mourning for the children.

Entering the outer court yard of the great temple for the first time, Samuel was astonished to see a vast throng of people. Some were changing money at the tables of money changers; others bargaining with the sellers of sacrificial animals. It was a shock for him to see this having never visited the temple before. Now as he wandered round the court of the gentiles, he became aware of under currents in the movement of the crowd. Once a person had changed money at the tables of the moneychangers they would move to the area designated for the purchase of sacrificial animals. The animals were vigorously inspected for blemishes before each purchase. Thereafter, the person who was making the sacrifice would move through one of the gates to the court of Israel. Samuel moved through the gate into the court of Israel. Here he found various teachers expounding on the law and the prophets. He moved through the crowds stopping here to listen to a debate and moving on again to another group. In one group, a teacher of venerable age was expounding on the age old question of what it is to be a Jew in a gentile's world. The man Samuel sought went by the name of rabbi Ezekiel a man known for his wisdom, also known for the fact that he was able to find answers to very tricky questions of law.

It was late in the afternoon before he found the old teacher surrounded by a group of students, "Let us not forget that Moses was buried by Yahweh himself on the mount," said the old man winning some point. Samuel waited, listening to the debate and waiting to get the old man alone so that he could lay before him his problem, Samuel felt sure that the teacher would have an answer for him. Finally, as the sun set, the group began breaking up. Samuel waited still until the last die-hard students had left before approaching the old man. "Rabbi I greet you said Samuel" "I greet you friend" said the old man as he gathered together a number of scrolls. "Rabbi I would like to ask you some thing. Would you join me in a glass of wine?" asked Samuel. "Yes friend, I will join you. It has been a long day and something to drink would help me to restore my strength" said the old teacher.

They made their way through the narrow streets of the old city to the inn. On reaching the inn, they climbed the stairs to the room set aside for meals. It was a high room that over looked the city. As the sun set, the old man stood at the window and looked towards the temple. The last rays of a hot sunny day reflected off the roof and walls of that holy edifice. Wine and bread was brought up by one of the serving women. The two men seated themselves on the cushions. Washing their hands, they began the meal. "Well young man you have my undivided attention. What is the question that you would ask?" said the old man after he had drained a glass of cool red wine.

Samuel began to relate the story of his life explaining to the old man that although he might look like a young man he was indeed over sixty years old. Samuel further explained to the teacher the circumstances of the curse under which he lived he explained that until recently he had lived in Bethlehem and had recently lost his wife of many years. The old man listened; occasionally nodding and asking a question here or there in the narrative to clarify a point. When Samuel had finished it was dark. The lamps had been lit, giving off a low light which filled the room. The stars had risen over the city. The two men rose and looked out at the city. The temple looked beautiful under the stars. "I see this is a complex problem you have set before me" replied the old man, as if facing such problems were his stock in trade. "I think another glass of wine might help to clarify our minds before we try to

find a solution to your problem,” said the old man. After another glass of wine, the old man said “I would advise you to try and follow all the precepts of the Law of Moses and the prophets. Live your life according to the law which you have known from your mother’s knee.” “I know it seems strange to say this about your problem but it is the only way.” The law offers you the answer to all your problems. Samuel listened to this advice with a growing suspicion that the old teacher had never confronted a problem like this before. Urging him to follow the precepts of the law of Yahweh was good advice, but how did it help Samuel in the long term he wondered. “Samuel Ben Ezra, I tell you in these days of mounting troubles if you follow the law and the prophets diligently, you will be blessed. Yahweh will see your righteousness and honor it with long life and remove the curse under which you live.” It was late in the night before Samuel bid the old man a good night. The moon had risen and the city-slept Jerusalem was a wonderful city. The holy city was beautiful in the moonlight. Now and again a dog barked some where in the city. Samuel slept, waking occasionally as one tends to do when sleeping in a new place.

27 AD Crucifixion

The condemned man stumbled and fell. Samuel made as if to move forward the lamb skin flask of wine which he kept with him always. He now opened and was about to offer the poor man a drink. A spear pointing at him stopped him. "Back!" rasped a Roman voice using the vernacular Aramaic. For a moment the eyes of the condemned man looked into the soul of Samuel. There was a moment of recognition and gratitude. Samuel was to remember the face of the man for many years as he saw it that day. Bruised and battered, the one eye swollen almost shut the blue discoloration of the bruise on the side of the forehead and blood dripping from his face where part of his beard had been torn away by the scourge. Then the moment was passed, the Roman shoved Samuel back into the unfriendly crowd with a curse. The condemned man tried to rise but was unable. The Roman pointed to a tall man standing in the back of the crowd "You! Help this one to carry the cross" he said. "I don't want to" said the man defiantly. "You will do as you are told if you don't want to end up on the cross yourself" barked the Roman who hesitantly moved forward to help the poor man who was once more rising to his knees.

The crowd surged round the condemned men. Now the three men and Simon of Sirina helped to carry the cross. Samuel stood, a lone soul surrounded by thousands of others, like a lost man. He had attempted to offer help in the carpenter's hour of need and even this he had been forbidden to do. How had it come to this he wondered? A week ago the crowds that now cursed him had welcomed him with palm leaves strewn on the road in front of the ass that he had rode. Then they had shouted Hosanna to the son of David as the ancient prophecies had foretold. Now these same crowds cursed him and spat upon him.

What a strange week it had been. First the triumphant entry into the Holy City and then there had been the uproar in the temple when Jesus had upset the tables of the money changers. What a scene that had been. The whole city had been in uproar. After that, then he had returned to preach and teach in the precincts of the temple. The temple authorities had tried in many ways to catch him out in points of the law, but somehow this simple carpenter from the backwater town of Nazareth had outwitted them with his simple wisdom and knowledge of the Law of Moses.

Yesterday one of his followers, Judas had come to the inn asking for a room for the carpenter and his followers to spend the Passover. Samuel had jumped at the chance to be of service to this prophet and his followers. The bargain had been quickly struck and Samuel had rushed off to arrange things. Then, just before dusk, the carpenter and his followers had arrived and he had shown them to the upper room which he had given them for the duration of the Passover. Later in the night Judas had slipped out. He seemed quite upset. He handed Samuel a few coins and was gone. A while later, the rest of the group had left, apparently on some urgent business. Later Samuel had heard that one of the disciples of Jesus had betrayed him to the Sanhedrin and Jesus had been taken in for questioning. This in itself Samuel found strange. The Sanhedrin did not sit at night as a rule and more especially during the days approaching Passover. Now Samuel was aware that when Ruth had died she had a strong and unshakable faith in this man. His words had penetrated the cold heart of a woman who had in her life been

some times a very unpleasant person to live with. Their love however, had endured until the day she had died. Now the young man who had caused such a change in her was on his way to his death and what a death it was. To die this gruesome way; nailed to a tree, it was a death fit for murderers and lawbreakers, but this prophet, reasoned Samuel, had done nothing to warrant such a death. Yet earlier that morning the crowds had shouted "Crucify him! Crucify him! Give us Barabbas!" So much so, that the Roman governor, who was not known for his kindness had allowed the zealot and murderer to go free, while an innocent man was lead to the tree.

Now in a sea of thousands of people, Samuel felt all alone. His heart was, in a strange way, affected by this man's agonies. Earlier they had laid the whip upon his back and given him the customary 39 lashes. This they had determined was the most that a man could take, for if one lash more was laid upon his open flesh he would surely die. The whip had laid open his back, its strands laced with pieces of bone and stones which tore out a man's vitals. Then mocking him, they had placed a crown of thorns on his head and a robe of purple around his bleeding and battered shoulders and jeeringly hailed him as King. This had not pleased the religious authorities whom had cried out at this mockery, that they had no king but Caesar. Now the vast crowd moved towards Golgotha's hill.

Samuel followed the crowd, watching as the condemned men were first stripped of their remaining clothing. The Romans meant to humiliate their victims by removing the last vestiges of human dignity. Thereafter, the victims were forced to the ground and their terrible ordeal begun in earnest. From this point, there was only one outcome; a slow agonizing death due to loss of blood and the build up of poisonous gas in the victim's system. Thus Samuel watched as the man's hands moved into position. One of the other condemned men screamed as the first blow of the hammer drove home the nail. When the victim's arms had thus been fastened to the cross beam, they were hoisted high. Agonizing screams of pain rang through the air as each man, nailed to their cross, was lifted upright, which in this case was a number of denuded olive trees. With their feet fastened quickly to the upright with another long nail the long agony had begun. Samuel stood

weeping as did a small group of women who were obviously family members and a few close friends of the carpenter. The sky was growing dark with clouds. It was going to rain that might bring some relief to the city which was sweltering in the heat. The condemned men though, would find no comfort from the rain.

27 AD the evening after Pentecost

“Well there certainly has been a lot of strange goings on here in Jerusalem in the last few weeks,” thought Samuel. It had started with the crucifixion of the carpenter from Nazareth, which Samuel had watched but before too long he turned away and hurried back to the inn. There were a lot of preparations for the coming Passover and Samuel more than ever wanted to do things right this year, the first without Ruth.

At midday the sky had become as night. Residents of the city had looked at the heavens with fear. Then at about three in the afternoon there had been a minor earthquake and the city was abuzz with rumors of the curtain which covered the Holy of Holies been torn asunder. There was also some minor damage to other parts of the city and then the followers of the carpenter had returned just before sunset entering quietly, some of them weeping. Samuel thought to himself at the time “This is not much of a Passover for those poor people. That poor woman had just buried her first born son and now she is in a strange city celebrating the greatest Holy day of the Jewish year and grieving over her son.”

Strangely the following Sunday before the sun had risen, some of the women had left carrying jars to perform the cleaning ritual on the dead man as required by the Law of Moses since there had not been time to do so the day of his crucifixion, only to return just after the sun had risen in a very excited state. Samuel had opened the door for them and watched as they hurried up the stairs to the room which he had put at their disposal. There was an uproar and a short while after, a number of the men who, up until now, had been as quiet as mice, came rushing down the stairs and demanded that Samuel open the door. Hurriedly he had opened the door. The big man who seemed to be their spokesperson, now rushed out the door followed by another of the followers of Jesus.

Later that Sunday in the market, Samuel had heard the whispers and the remarks. The gossip mongers were busy this morning, he thought. At the time there had been reports of tombs being thrown open and the righteous dead within these tombs had been seen walking about the city. "Hardly credible" thought Samuel. Then the latest news, which was being spread about the followers of the Nazarene, had said that angels had spirited away his body. An even stranger tale because as far as Samuel knew the Sanhedrin had insisted that the Roman authorities place a guard on the tomb, for had Jesus not said he would rise on the third day? Those who knew the Roman law, knew that if the guards who kept watch in that lonely graveyard had been neglectful of their duty, they would be put to death, yet the story persisted. Then there was the story that the followers of Jesus had been spreading about that he had indeed risen from the grave and would not many days hence meet with them. Samuel had returned to the inn more confused than usual at this turn of events. Later in the evening there had been raised voices in the upper room and Samuel had wanted to go up and have a look at what was causing the noise but thought better to leave them. They are still grieving; it would seem improper to disturb them during this time.

In the days following the disappearance of the Nazarene the followers of Jesus had been strangely quiet, seldom leaving the room; although they had left the room for a few days. Upon their return they had seemed strangely expectant of some, as yet unmentioned event in the last few hours. There had been some strange goings on in the upper room. A large number of the followers had gathered to pray. Then there had been the sound like the winds, which sometimes came rushing off the desert. But this was not the time for the wind, which enveloped the city in hot dust and yet the building had been filled with the sound of a mighty wind and there had been an unseen presence which had stopped Samuel in his tracks. He had been walking into the front room of the inn when the noise had come. He had found himself at the same time frightened and overjoyed by the wind. Somewhere deep in his soul he knew this wind meant him no harm but he had found himself on his knees weeping uncontrollably.

Then from the room upstairs had come the sound of many voices raised, speaking all at once. In the hullabaloo he heard the voices of Egyptians, Syrians, Greeks, Romans, Mesopotamian and Persians.

The followers of Jesus had streamed down the stairs and out on to the streets all talking at once all smiling all shouting praises to the JHWH giving thanks for the resurrection of there Saviour. Samuel recovered his equilibrium and wondered what had come over him hurrying out into the street he followed the group of men and woman who made their way to the temple. Entering the temple, they moved into the court of the Gentiles. Here they began to preach. The big man, who had seemed so fearful on the Sunday following the crucifixion of Jesus, seemed strangely transfigured. He stood upon the steps and raised his voice. "Yea men of Israel, harken to the word of the JHWH" he shouted. People who had been going about their daily worship turned and moved towards the man to hear what he had to say. It was not uncommon for persons who were caught up by the Spirit of JHWH to prophesy. Samuel turned away and made his way to the gate, no longer wishing to see what would happen to this man. He had witnessed what they had done to Jesus and he had no desire to see what the Sanhedrin would do to this follower of Jesus. Later in the evening as he reflected and thought of the stories he had heard of the day's events in the temple, thousands had flocked to hear the words of the man Peter, disciple of Jesus, whom they were now calling Christ. Peter had preached a message of Salvation in the belief of Christ come the messiah Jesus. If you would only but believe that he had died and had risen to pay the price for the forgiveness of sins. Peter had shouted across the ancient precincts of the temple of JHWH. The Sanhedrin was in emergency meetings to determine the seriousness of this new threat from the followers of Jesus. "I bet they are sorry they put him to death" reflected Samuel "Serve them right self-righteous bunch of hypocrites". It was said that many thousands had heard the call and were now joining the followers of Jesus.

CHAPTER THREE

70 AD The temple is burning Samuel

The fighting had got worse. The citizens of the city now crowded into an ever-decreasing circle; found it hard to survive the constant attacks by the Romans. What had happened recently had opened Samuel's eyes for most of the time he had been in agreement with the commanders of the city of Jerusalem. But since the fortress of Antonia had fallen, it had become more difficult for the average citizen to survive. For four years now the city had been fighting a battle for its freedom from Rome. But whom did the Jews think they were to defy the might of Caesar?

Samuel thought back to the beginnings of the war. Things had gone well and the citizens had greeted each other in the streets with the cry "We can do it! We can throw off the heavy yoke of Rome." Now so much had changed. One of the things which had upset many of the people of the city had happened just hours ago. Meat had become scarce in the city; so much so that none was to be found. But in the early morning some one had smelled the aroma of meat on the wind. Hurriedly a group of people had gotten together and gone to the house from which the smell was coming. When their knocking on the door had brought no response, they broke into the small house in the eastern quarter of the city. They found a young woman gently stirring a pot full to the brim with meat. On closer investigation, it was found that the meat was the remains of her infant child who had died during the night. This so outraged the city commanders that they had judged the woman and found her guilty of murder and practices contrary to the law and had thrown her from the walls of the city. In the mean time the Romans continued to assault the city, their war machines throwing great boulders into the city; the sheer weight of the projectiles crushing homes. Earlier today a Roman soldier had thrown a burning torch onto one of the walls

Of the temple and now the temple was ablaze. There was fighting in the streets. There was little hope left now. "Why oh why had this happened?" Samuel asked himself. He was not alone in asking this. Thousands of Jews in the city were asking the same question. Hurriedly he gathered together a bag of coins and made his way with as much stealth as he could to

the point from where he would be able to slip away through a tunnel to the safety outside the city walls.

Samuel had at first given place to those Zealots who needed accommodation the run of his inn. Simon Ben Judah had come often to the inn to discuss with the leaders of the rebellion ways and means to defend the city in times of the war that they all knew must come. And come it did. Samuel remembered standing on the walls of the city on the day when four legions V Macedonica, XII Fulminata, XV Apollinaris and X Fretensis under General Titus had marched up the dusty road from the sea. Now as the city burned, the Romans finally set free to do as they pleased in the city began their vengeful work, slaughtering all zealots that they came across. Anyone who was found with a weapon was struck down. Those few hundred who could, made their way to the secret tunnels, which allowed access to the valley of Kidron. They hurried through the tunnel to make their escape and this would bring new dangers, for Jews caught on open ground were liable to be cut down by the Roman cavalry and chariots, but this did not stop them. The temple was burning, it was time to escape. "The temple can always rebuilt later" reasoned Samuel. Right now he wanted to put as much distance between himself and the slaughter as he could.

What made this destruction worse for Samuel was the fact that he remembered hearing that the leader of the Christians had made a prophecy many years before that destruction would be visited upon the Holy City. "Oh Abraham our father, how you would weep if you saw what has befallen your children" Samuel whispered to himself. What would become of the children of Israel he wondered? The Romans would never allow them to rebuild the city. Samuel had heard of this before. The Romans had destroyed rebellious nations and had carried off into slavery their remnants. Was this now what awaited the remnant of Israel? Had not Galilee been depopulated already by the Romans?

95 AD Antioch The child that called Samuel father

This was most probably the last time Samuel would see Miriam. He had decided that it was better to make a clean break from the woman who had been no more than a babe in arms when he had first come across her mother Judith in the

ruins of an apple orchard a few miles from Jerusalem. Together Judith and Samuel had stood on a hill overlooking the city of Jerusalem, watching as it burned brightly in the night; the flames from the temple causing long shadows on the rest of the destroyed city. They had looked fearfully at the destruction which had been brought upon the city by the rebellious spirit of the zealots and the vengeful acts of the Romans. These two Jews in the night looked on in shock at their Holy city.

It was the last memory that the woman would carry away of her beloved city and what a memory to carry. They had turned away beginning the long march, which would bring them to Antioch. Here they would rebuild their lives. It was good that they did not linger for in the valley below a certain Roman Centurion of Germanic extraction was leading his men through the night in search of escaping citizens of the destroyed city. This particular soldier would at times come to play various roles in the life of Samuel as he too was accursed to wander through time; seeking his own salvation. During the trip Judith would become weaker, weeping for the loss of her husband who had been killed in the final days of the fighting. Furthermore, the destruction of the city on Zion's mountain would come to deeply affect her. Samuel did his best to protect them, seeking out the best route to take and finding food for them. Because of the Romans' wholesale removal of the people of Israel from the land, it had been difficult but they had survived, coming at last to the city of Antioch. At first they had been forced to live disguising their heritage due to the fact that the Emperor had decreed that all Jews were to be scattered to the corners of the known world to be sold into slavery for the arrogance of the people of Jerusalem. They had lived as husband and wife, the small child growing to accept Samuel as her father. He never having had children took great delight in bouncing her upon his knee and giving her special treats from the table; a fig, a pomegranate. Little Miriam had grown into a fine young woman; while her mother had grown old and bitter at the memory of the loss of her city.

One day a traveler had stopped at the inn. He was a follower of the Christians. At first Samuel had not taken much notice of the man, he seemed no different from all the other travelers that frequented the inn which he had set up shortly after

reaching Antioch. Samuel did notice however that Judith began to spend a lot of time listening to this traveling preacher. It was not long before Samuel noticed that Judith would accompany the preacher named Timothues to meetings in the city. Samuel began to fear for her and the child who accompanied them to these meetings. The only other group who was being persecuted more then the dispersed Jews, was the Christians.

When confronted one night in their bedroom by the possibility that her actions might bring down the wrath of Rome and the local priests of the deities of the gentiles, Judith had confessed that she had “found much comfort in the words of brother Timotheus” that she “had found salvation in his words and that there was only one who could lift the burden under which she had lived since the destruction of the city.” “Which” she added “had been foretold by Jesus, the one who had died on the cross for the salvation of all mankind, not only the Jews.” Samuel had scoffed at her words and said that he was a Jew and he was bound to follow the laws of Moses. Had not many of the principal followers of the Carpenter been put to death because of their belief in a God that could be eaten? Why even a Roman citizen who had been a staunch follower had lost his head when he appealed to Rome.” “I have found the master Samuel, do not be angry but rather rejoice that my burden has been lifted” she had said. Samuel had gone to bed in a huff, thus they had agreed to disagree.

It was about a year after the preacher had left to spread the word, which Judith, worn out by a lifetime of work, had succumbed to the ailment which would take her from this world in the year 85 AD. Miriam was a young woman of 15. She had always been a good child. She and Samuel had wept when Judith had finally closed her eyes for the last time. Judith had died with a quiet dignity and an unmovable faith, knowing that she was going to meet her master and savior. Samuel had been heart broken at the loss of this woman who had brought a certain amount of joy into the closing years of the first century after Christ; but Miriam had an unshakeable belief “that her mother would rise with the righteous. Had not the master said so?” She argued. Another five years would pass, in which time Samuel would continue to run the inn. Miriam had found herself a young Christian man to marry.

Johannes was a stout well built man who treated her well and worked hard. The only problem Samuel could see was the fact that he was a Christian. He a little grudgingly attended their marriage ceremony. A tear rolled down his cheek when he thought of all he and this young woman had been through since the night they had left Jerusalem. It had not been many months after their wedding when Miriam had come to the inn to tell Samuel that he should rejoice as he would soon be a grand father. Samuel greeted the news with joy. He thought of the long years ahead when he would love and bounce his young grandsons and daughters on his knee.

This however, brought a new problem to mind for in his ageless state it would soon become apparent to all that he was not aging as others did. Thus on a day in 95 AD he called his family together and told them of his "longing to see once more before he died" the city or the remains of the city of his fathers. When Miriam had said she would "accompany him there," he had steadfastly refused. "No my dear this is a journey that I must undertake alone. "Remember when Moses climbed the mount, he went alone." He said in his own defense. There had been weeping and there had been some harsh words. "Oh father you cannot go! Who will run the inn?" "I have decided to give the inn to you and Johannes" said Samuel "as a parting gift."

In the end they had been reconciled; now they stood facing each other.

100 AD Roman holiday

Rome at the end of the first century was a hive of activity. It had not taken Samuel long to settle in and find his bearings once more. Of the fire of forty years before which had devastated the city, there were few signs. The great marketplace on the edge of which the inn stood, it was always busy at all hours of the day. Here citizens and common men from all over the extended Roman Empire came to do business; buying and selling goods which showed the vast selection in the empire. In the center of the marketplace stood a great block on which slaves were sold daily. Samuel had often stood here in the crowd watching as people bid on a slave. The good natured ribbing in the crowd was a common thing in Rome.

Here Quintus Optimus would appear with a group of friends looking to buy a new batch of slaves. This group of which comprised mainly wealthy senators and citizens would out bid each other to buy the best merchandise which was on the block; a youth from Carpathia today, a woman from Arabia tomorrow. The bidding was done with much good-natured ribbing despite the obvious sufferings of the person on the block. When a mother was torn from her young son to be sold off to wealthy Roman, there would be gales of laughter. Much wine was sold and drunk round this block. Occasionally when he could, Samuel would try to buy a slave who was obviously of Hebrew extraction but not for any other purpose than to set the man or woman free. Having stated this practice upon his arrival, he was confronted with the fact that once he had set the former slave free he would in almost all the cases have to give the person shelter and a job, for the person would have no home to return to. Thus over the first few years he had set at liberty almost twenty people who in the end he had to accommodate. He found work for them round the inn. Seldom was he disappointed by these people who having been born into slavery or been very young when taken into slavery. They knew the great value of the gift which Samuel was giving them.

Today was a Roman holiday. The early morning air was filled with the sounds of barter as the busy farmers brought to the city their flocks and their grains which would they wanted to sell as soon as possible. For once their carts and wagons were empty they would find their way to the great coliseum to await the fun of the afternoon. The Coliseum hosted chariot races, gladiator fights and even the feeding to the lions of some poor soul who had fallen afoul of the Roman authorities. Samuel seldom attended these events as he found that his stomach and his conscience would trouble him in the night when he lay in his bed and replayed the events in his mind. However today being the emperor's birthday, no one was excused and all of the citizens made a showing of attending the circus with great gusto.

Samuel and the small group from the inn had crossed the great square of the market and made their way to the coliseum. Here they stood patiently waiting to enter the great stadium. While

they stood there, vendors would move among the crowd selling refreshments, which the crowd bought in great numbers knowing that the afternoon's entertainment would take some time and no Roman wished to be without his or her refreshing wine or fruit juice for long under the hot Italian sun.

At midday there was a flurry of trumpets to announce that Caesar had arrived. The crowd waited for the great man to take his box, standing when Caesar stood, the crowd roared with one voice "Caesar, Caesar, hail Caesar".

The first item on the day's agenda was a fight between a number of gladiators who had been training for many months. The strong men of many nations entered the arena and proceeded to march towards the imperial box. Proud heads held high, these men marched. There was Aralias, the Nubian, a mighty strong man, he had fought and won many battles. If he won today, he would be set free. The crowd pointed to their favorites in the group. A number of individuals in the crowd began placing and taking bets on who would win and who would be vanquished. "I choose Reluis" said a man standing close to Samuel. "He is a good fighter. What odds am I given?" he asked a rather shady character who moved among the crowd with a scroll of Papyrus taking bets. "20 to 1" said the man, not favoring his client's odds much.

In the mean time the gladiators had reached the foot of the box. Here they stopped. As the crowds grew quiet, they listened and waited for the traditional greeting which these men were obliged to offer up. "Hail Caesar, we who are about to die salute you" they shouted. Caesar rose and acknowledged their homage.

The stadium was cleared and the first fighter entered. The two men, one a large Greek and the other, a medium sized Jew by the name of Zacharias, circled each other. One held a sword, the other a trident and net, facing each other in an unequal match. The writer would like to say the Jew came off best, but this was not the case. The two men flew at each other then withdrew. Here was a battle of wits against brawn but it was always an unfair contest. The smaller man tried many tricks to keep his larger opponent off balance but unfortunately the bigger man was of the solid type of man, who has a fast eye

and easily able to judge the next move of his opponent. Eventually the man with the sword struck a lucky blow, downing the smaller man. The blood stained the sand of the stadium as the Greek looked up towards Caesar, waiting for the sign to spare the life of his worthy opponent. Caesar slowly lifted his hand. The crowd waited in silence. What would the decision be?

Ever so slowly the hand moved into the position with the thumb facing downward. The Greek turned once more standing over his fallen opponent. He raised the sword in front of him and drove it suddenly down into the throat of the dying man. The crowd cheered the decision. A cold hard place shivered in Samuel's heart.

CHAPTER FOUR

As much as Samuel would liked to have stayed on the western edge of the empire, he sought out a traveling caravan of Hindu merchants who had been traveling for many months to the capital of China to sell there wares. One of the most prized of these possessions was the spice saffron which, was believed to have great healing qualities. Thus this flower that bloomed in India had its succulent center plucked and dried for delivery to the Chinese, who used this spice in many various ways. Samuel had joined the caravan early in the day and like most of the travelers who moved with these men from the west, he watched to make sure that things were going according to plan and so he turned away from this scene of horror and went back to the city.

210 AD The Gobi desert

The caravan had stopped for the day. Samuel adjusted the sword belt. It was best to rest at this hour until the sun began to set. Then in the cool of the day, it would be time to start off again. Samuel was worried. Since the first battle with the Mongolian bandits a lot had happened. The group's leader Abraham had been killed. Samuel had barely escaped with his life, having managed to extract the dying Abraham from a circle of horsemen who were tormenting him, stabbing repeatedly with their long spears. This had so enraged Samuel that he had taken on of the few remaining horses and had led the charge towards the horsemen. The long Carpathian sword flashing in the sunlight as it rose and fell; its color changing from silver to red as he hacked at the horsemen. The men, taken off guard by the ferocity of the attack by this group of Hebrews withdrew for a time, waiting for another chance to attack. As Abraham, who had been a very charismatic leader, lay dying he had looked up into the eyes of Samuel and said "I leave the children of Israel to your protection. Take good care of them for I entrust to you a sacred duty, Samuel Ben Ezra." Dying moments later, Samuel was filled with grief for this man had inspired him. Abraham had inspired many. If it had not been for this man and his wisdom, the group would not have been brought together. Had it not been for this man born in the dirty backward town of Antioch, they would not now be where they now were; seeking a place to start again. A place away from the influence of the Roman empire with its despot Caesars.

Now as Samuel checked on the camels and the men he thought almost continuously of the words of Abraham. "Fear not Abraham" Samuel said under his breath, "I will take good care of these who you have put in my charge". The rabbi approached him. This sickly little man had one enduring quality; it was his smile and the way his face lit up when he spoke of the Law of Moses and for this Samuel loved him. Though the Rabbi had a good life as a teacher of his people under the Romans, he had been caught like a moth in the flame by the vision of Abraham. Now with Abraham dead, he looked to Samuel, indeed the whole group now looked to Samuel, for leadership as he was the natural successor to Abraham.

"Samuel I was wondering, do you think they will come again?" He asked this thinking of the nomads who had brought destruction on the group. "I do not suppose they will give up until we have beaten them" said Samuel. "But Samuel do you not think it is the will of God that we perish here asked the man?" Samuel looked at him incredibly "Rabbi I have work to do. Go read the Torah or some thing. I have no time for idle speculation. The camels need to be watered and the men need to rest before..." The ominous words hung in the air. Samuel hurried away to see that the look outs were well positioned and ready to warn if they saw any thing.

Later when the sun was setting, the caravan began moving off towards the east. The journey was a long one with many dangers. Samuel had elected to travel at night, in this way hoping to avoid the danger of running into the nomads which so plagued the caravan and hoping to gain some time and distance as the nomads did not travel at night. The nomads had a fear of dying at night for it was said should a nomad of the desert die at night his soul would wander for all time in the desert of the night and no nomad wanted to do that. They wished to win and if mayhap they should fall in the heat of battle let it be in the light so they might find their way to the eternal garden, where there gods lived. Thus Samuel gained a certain security from knowing that by traveling at night his charges would put some distance between them and the nomads.

Traveling at night also had advantages in that the heat that made men and animals lethargic and less alert for dangers was

gone. Now as they rode, they were alert. The bow men alert, their bows at the ready for battle the watchmen sitting high on the backs of the lead and the last camel keeping a watchful eye for dust clouds which might be the nomads. The one danger though that Samuel had not foreseen was the sudden onset of a desert wind; which began to blow softly at first, but with increasing ferocity. Hurriedly the caravan sought shelter in the hollow next to a dune. Here the camels and men lay down and waited. There was not much chance of traveling now as visibility was non-existent; to even try would be madness, for it had been known to happen that whole caravans had been swallowed up and no one survive the wind. Separated, the men of caravans had soon succumbed to thirst and hunger, their bleached bones left in the desert and occasionally uncovered by the shifting sands to act as warnings to those who came later. The men pulled their head scarves around their faces to stop the ever present dust from blinding them permanently; this had been known to happen. The wind was to blow for the next twelve hours.

When the wind began to die down the caravan began to move, again shaking the dust from their clothing and checking to see that all present had not succumbed to the pervasive power of the desert wind. Now in a hurry, the group began to move off, the camels snorting in protest at been awakened from their sleep. They traveled until just after sunrise when they once more settled down.

China 220AD

The years following the arrival of people were not easy ones on the group. At first there had been huge problems with the language then there were problems with regard to the two vastly different cultures. Samuel had found himself wondering if the long journey through the desert had been worthwhile. Financially the group was doing well; the problem seemed to be one of cultures clashing. This was not the first time that cultures had clashed but this was the first time that cultures of so vast a difference had met and there were bound to be problems. A new dynasty had arisen shortly before their arrival and with this had come uncertainty and doubt, but these doubts the local overlords had soon put to rest. This was a strong dynasty under Emperor Wu. He was a learned man who

above all things, longed to enhance his empire with new learning.

He had established schools of learning in all the provinces. There were many who studied the heavens for signs and wonders. There was even a prophecy of some two thousand years that told of a group of elect men and women who would come from the west bringing a new way of life, which at first would be found strange. These people would come into the empire at a time of great change and their learning and wisdom would be incorporated into the empire. Finally, a number of great leaders in the field of learning and war would rise from among the descendants of the group.

Right now the group's problem was one with which Samuel had done a lot of soul searching. The local overlord Chan had sent an emissary to their compound demanding that they deliver a quota of young and healthy women whom would be trained to work in the teahouse of Madam Whun. It was customary for all groups entering the precincts of China to deliver up a number of their group for service both in the teahouses and the local militia. So far nothing had been asked of this group however, one day as the overlord had been traveling through his domain. He had happened upon a few of these new inhabitants of his domain. It was unfortunate that at this time he noticed among their number a young virgin, Martha Ben David, a girl of marriageable age, not yet a full thirteen, whom the overlord found to be quite wonderful to behold. It was because of Martha that the aged man had decided that he would order a quota of the people to be fulfilled with out any great lapse of time and so hoping to capture for himself this maiden or even another whose beauty might surpass that of Martha. The overlord Chan reasoned that it would further help to integrate the group into the Chinese way of life. If they took an active part in the life of the district; the men fighting off the bandits who occasionally thought they could take over the district, while their women would serve in the tea houses. If it should so happen that these woman bore children who were half-Chinese, then all the better. Their strange origins would soon be swallowed up in the millstream that was China.

However there was one problem, the group of Jews who had as their head Samuel Ben Ezra, had no wish to become Chinese or even take part in the mainstream life of the empire. Their only wish was to live apart from the rest of humanity seeking a path to their God. For more than a generation Samuel had led this group as they had traveled eastward through the great desert. They had traveled hounded by bandits and others who actively sought to do them harm; to rob them of their wealth and their women. They had fought many a hard battle driven of the Mongolian horsemen who struck terror into the hearts of other travelers the followers of Samuel Ben Ezra were a group of tough battled hardened people who sold their lives dearly. Now confronted with this new demand the elders of the group gathered round their leader seeking for advice. They had prayed and fasted and waited on the Lord for the answer to the question of the quota. Now finally they had come together to decide on what course of action to take. "I say we should leave this place and continue to travel east" said one grey beard. "No" said another "we should go back try and find a place to the west where we will be accepted." "Do you really think that they will allow us to live in peace asked another? I think not." "What do you suggest Samuel?" asked an elder who had so long remained quiet. He was a man who knew the worth of the man who had already led them so far, now he would listen and bow to Samuel's judgment

"We know that the emperor Wu is a wise and learned man we know too that the local overlord Chan is very strict and also a man who loves his pleasures. Have we not heard that he is among those leaders who often visit the teahouses?" asked Samuel. Heads nodded in agreement with his words. "All these things are true" said one of the elders, "but what bearing do they have on the present cases when we are asked to give up our wives, daughters and sisters to whoredom asked another?"

"The case is very simple" said Samuel. "The Emperor is a learned man even though he serves idols we must pray that our case find favor with Emperor Wu". "We must pray that the Lord enlightens his mind to our cause and grant us remission. We must offer to allow our sons to fight in his armies, but our daughters they cannot have. It is an abomination that this

overlord Chan has thought up out of lust for our women. Thus I will go to the capital and lay our case before the imperial courts” said Samuel.

Thus it was agreed that Samuel would take a number of treasures which the group had built up over their travels and present these things as bribes and gifts to officials and finally to the Emperor Wu, in the hope of remission of this terrible human flesh tax. So on a day in early 221AD the whole community had gathered to give Samuel their blessings and pray to their God to grant him traveling mercies.

Thus in the year 221AD Samuel found himself traveling through the country to the capital. There was much that he observed that was strange and new to him. He looked in wonder at the way they grew their crops and was amazed to see that most crops were rice grown in two feet of mud. All these things Samuel observed while traveling to the capital. When he returned he reasoned he would have much to tell his followers. That was another thing it had been more or less by accident that Samuel had become the group leader as they traveled with their caravan through the desert. The original leader Joseph Ben Jonathan had been killed in one of the first raids by nomads and it was natural for the group to choose the one among them who had fought most bravely. Now, eleven years since that attack he had become the mainstay of the group. The chances of Samuel returning were slim and he half doubted that he would live to return to the compound.

221 AD The saffron merchants Lord Buddha and Samuel
China at this time was a land of wonder to the traveler for in each village the gay red and yellow banners, which brought good luck peace and harmony to the empire, flew. When Samuel set out for the capital which lay many weeks from the western edge of the empire he sought out a traveling caravan of Hindu merchants who had been traveling for many months to the capital of China to sell their wares. One of the most prized of these watched. He had to make sure that things were going according to plan and so he turned away from this scene of horror and went back to the city.
Possessions was the spice saffron which was believed to have great healing qualities thus the flower that bloomed in India

had its succulent center plucked and dried for delivery to the Chinese who used this spice in many various ways. Samuel had joined the caravan early in the day and like most of the travelers who moved with these men from the west, he watched he had to make sure that things were going according to plan and so he turned away from this scene of horror and went back to the city.

He walked leading a donkey, which in turn pulled along a small cart, which was loaded with the few necessities for travel, but mostly with the gifts and bribes needed for the empirical court of Emperor Wu.

When the caravan had stopped late in the afternoon Samuel breathed a sigh of relief. The weather was unbearably hot at this time of the year. Sweat ran freely from his face. He slapped a fly away to the disgust of a number of fellow travelers whom followed the teachings of Lord Buddha. "Traveler do you not know that our Lord Buddha forbids the killing of any living thing" they asked of him "What is a fly but a pest" he had replied, angry at their flawed logic. What after all, was the purpose of a fly if not to live and die and to be swatted away he thought? Later at the meal time a number of the people of the caravan sat around speaking of their travels and the wonders of China. Few among the caravan had seen the imperial city. It was believed to be one of the most beautiful cities in the world at the time. The conversation drifted from subject to subject that night as a group of travelers of mixed Asian sat beside the fire at the edge of a mangrove swamp. The frogs called loudly in the night air. The subject of religion came up. Samuel sat during all this time listening, sometimes translating between various people and the locals who had joined the caravan. "Lord Buddha said that it is wrong to kill even an insect for all life is sacred" said a follower of the Buddha. Another traveler who was from the hundstany region said "our gods tell us that the cow is a sacred animal and should in no way be hurt". "The path to enlightenment is a simple one" said another of the group, "we are born, live and die only to be reborn to live again many times until we have reached enlightenment so said Lord Buddha."

As Samuel listened it seemed to him that these people had some rather odd beliefs. How could they ever reach a place of enlightenment if they varied in so many of their beliefs?

Retiring to his spot beside the fire, Samuel fell quickly asleep. He slept for some hours, his mind turning over the strange conversation that he had heard that evening, before falling into an even deeper sleep.

He began to dream that he stood on the banks of the Yellow River and before him stood a temple into which he walked. Sitting under a tree in the garden of the temple was the living Lord Buddha who appeared to be in deep meditation.

Softly he approached the demi-god. "Stop" said the voice of the Buddha. Standing still, Samuel beheld a faint green light surrounding the head of Buddha. "You are the fly killer and accursed are you not?" asked the Buddha, in a not unkind voice.

"I did not mean to kill the fly, it was an irritating little beast" said Samuel. "All life is sacred" said the Buddha. "I know" said Samuel, "I have heard this often." "So you seek the answer to your problems from me stranger" said the living image of Buddha. "I can only tell you of the quest to the emperor Wu, but of your curse I do not have the power to lift it nor to change it. "It is an ancient and eternal curse placed upon you for your own wrongdoing" said the image of Buddha. They sat a while, the image of Buddha and the accursed Jew who was bound to wander the earth until redemption was found.

"What will happen at the court of the wise emperor Wu?" Samuel asked eventually. "Do you want the truth or a happy story?" said the Buddha. "I want the truth" said Samuel.

"You will be heard. Your request will be granted after many hindrances but their will be a heavy price to pay" said the Buddha. "Will my people be happy with the remission of the missive?" asked Samuel. "Yes, for a time they will be happy but as time goes by, the burden placed upon them by this remission will begin to tell and there will be no one in China more unhappy than you. You will feel you have failed them and will leave China but their contribution to China will be

felt for many, many years” said the Buddha. “And the curse, can you offer no answer or clue to me?” asked Samuel. “No, Accursed One, that is some thing you will have to work out for yourself, but in China you will not find that answer. But hearken, the dawn grows near and I must away from this place” said the image of the living Lord Buddha. “However know this Samuel Ben Ezra the contribution that your small group will bring to China and the Chinese people will be of enduring worth.” Thus saying the Buddha faded from sight and the temple was no more. The last image in the mind of Samuel as he once more awoke in the predawn light was of the endless Yellow River, next to the mangrove swamp.

221AD Samuel meets the Emperor Wu

It had taken many weeks for Samuel to reach the capital but he had finally reached it. He, like any other visitor who had never seen the jeweled city of China was amazed at the beauty, which surrounded him. The city was laid out on a broad plain with forests on the rising hills, which surround the plain. The great lake upon which the city was built reflected the sunlight from its depths. The city itself was laid out in a well ordered way with streets running north to south and east to west. Of a great market square there was no sign, although there were many lesser markets and it was at the edge of one of these markets that Samuel found a place to stay.

Then began one of the longest times of frustration for Samuel; for to gain access to the court of the emperor one had to request an interview with one of the minor officials in the great court. The great wooden palace, which dominated the East Side of the city with thousands of people flooding through the streets at all times of the day. Samuel found himself repeatedly making his way to the gatehouse of the palace to inquire if there was yet any word of his request and permission to see the emperor. Always the scribe would cross to the great roll upon which the names of those destined to see the court officials were inscribed. Upon always he would return and shake his head, his cheerful face displaying a perverse pleasure at the failure of the strange foreigner to achieve his request. This was to continue for more than six months before any headway was made. One day when he again appeared at the gate house the cleric made the regular trip to scrutinize the roll of parchment and this time he

returned and said, "You pay now three pennies for the stamp duty". Samuel for a moment did not understand what this minor official was saying. Finally when the man grew angry Samuel realized and hurriedly took from his purse the required coins. "You wait here" said the man pointing at a bench where a number of other people waited their turn. "Now we are getting some where" thought Samuel, as he began to think what he would say to convince the emperor to change the order demanding the Jews virgins for the teahouses. The day grew longer; occasionally one of the men waiting to see the emperor would be called away, but seldom returned via the gatehouse. It was a long day and Samuel grew hungry. He had been there since early morning. He waited in the oppressive heat as the sun climbed to its zenith then began making its journey to the end of day. Still the line of men seemed to grow no shorter. As night fell a number of guards closed the gates of the palace. Lights were brought and placed about the gate house. Men began bedding down for the night. It looked like it would be a long night and a hungry one for Samuel. Shortly before nine in the evening a cook brought round to the gatehouse a large pot of noodles which were dished out to all that were there. Samuel gave thanks to JHWH for this small mercy. Thus he found himself spending the night within the sacred precincts of the Forbidden palace of China. Falling asleep a short while later, Samuel slept until he was rudely shaken awake by one of the men. It was very early in the morning. It must have been just after four AM when he was summoned. Following a foot man he was first searched for weapons by the guard. He was then taken to a chamber where a number of court officials stood round where he would stay until he was admitted to the presence of the emperor. While Samuel waited, a court official came closer and began to instruct him on the etiquette of the court. He was told that when he entered the imperial presence he was to bow low and advance on his knees. When told to stop, he would place his head on the ground and remain thus prostrated until such time as told to continue. He was also instructed on how he was to address the imperial presence. He was not to speak first, he was to wait for the imperial presence to address him. He was to raise his head and speak but he was on no account to rise to his feet. Samuel nodded to all these instructions. Then the court official said "that will cost you 10 pieces of silver" as he

held out his hand. Samuel, having become accustomed to the methods of bribery in the court, handed over the coins.

"Samuel the foreigner" came the call after seven hours, which had past quite quickly having spent this time viewing the people around him. He was amazed to see the wonder of the paintings and tapestries upon the walls. They were of the finest silks and it was obvious that much care had been taking in the making of these items. On some of the walls there were paintings of the Emperor and his ancestors of glorious memory.

Approaching the inner chamber, Samuel fell to his knees and began moving along towards a raised podium. It was good that he had been instructed. For had he not when he stepped across the threshold guards stood ready to strike him down with sharpened spears and to drag him off for the sacred imperial presence was not to be violated by the spilling of blood. Although it had been known for the emperor to become violent and strike some one down who angered him.

"Stop" came a voice upon which Samuel stopped and bowed with his face to the ground and waited 'Well?' said a voice from behind a yellow silk screen.

"Oh great Emperor may you live forever. May your children be as the grains of the sea sands. May your enemies be struck down and may their offspring be decimated. I bring you greetings and praise from your subjects the Jews of qua" said Samuel. "I am glad that you have come" said the voice. Samuel wondered if it was customary for one to speak to the emperor through a silk screen. "What is it that you seek?" asked the voice of the imperial presence. "I would beg most great emperor for a remission of quota on behalf of my fellow Jews" said Samuel, "for great leader we have no problem in submitting our men to service in your armies but our women carry the seed of our race and may not be defiled. Our Lord JHWH has forbidden it." There was a gasp from the assembled courtiers who stood around. Never had any one made so bold a request. "What will you give me in return?" asked the voice of the emperor. "We will submit to any request. We will double our quota of men to serve in your armies. We will give more rice and silk

in exchange" Samuel said. "I see" said the emperor. "I will think on this and give you my answer shortly. Leave me now that I might meditate on this question."

221AD China the emperor

The court messenger handed the silk bag to Samuel then he turned his horse and was gone before Samuel had a chance to thank him. In the distance a gong chimed. Samuel opened the bag and drew out the wooden block on which a message had been carved. Present yourself at the imperial palace as soon as possible, was all it said. Dropping the block back into the bag, he hurried inside and called for the widow woman to ready his bath. The Grey haired woman mumbled some thing under her breath about "arrogant foreigners". In the meanwhile, Samuel went to the room reserved for him and began stripping off his clothing. The sound of water boiling soon drew him from the room to the enclosure where the bath tub stood. He lowered himself into the hot water, the heat relaxing him, the tension in his neck subsiding, as he lay in the tub.

Setting off for the forbidden palace, he said a prayer that he find "grace in the eyes of men," as the prophet Jeremiah had once told the people of Israel to do when faced with oppression from men. "Call unto me and I will shew thee great and mighty things which thou knewest not" the old scripture went.

Arriving at the gate of the palace he handed the silk bag to the gatekeeper. This time the man smiled and said "soon you get the answer you want?" "I think so" said Samuel, not really wanting to go into things with this minor official. It was an hour before he was called. He followed the guards as they lead him down the now familiar chambers of the palace.

While he waited, he once more went over things in his mind. With him, he had the expected gifts which he would have to present as a thanks offering to the wise emperor Wu. He did not have long to wait. Entering the imperial presence once more, he took up his position with his head bowed to the ground, on his knees on the back of his hands. He carried the gifts of rice and Sake and a folded length of silk, which had been made in the workshop of the compound. "Ah it is our strange guest" said the voice of the imperial presence. "I have

an answer for you" said the emperor, "one that I am sure you will like. The order for your women has been stopped." Samuel waited. His heart beating rapidly he knew there would be a caveat on this. "However in their place, you will place at our disposal every year one hundred fighting men from your tribe, also you will deliver to our warehouses 50 bags of rice and 25 lengths of silk as a tax for this, our imperial benevolence" said the voice. "Is this acceptable to you?" Samuel had been doing some quick calculations and had discovered that although it was a lot to ask, it was not an unreasonable price to pay for the release of the women. "Oh great Emperor may you live forever! This is a most wise choice you have made. I thank you for your benevolence and ask that you accept these few offerings as a sign of the good faith of my people." A slender, well manicured hand reached out from behind the silk screen and laid a parchment on the cushion in front of Samuel. At the same time, a court official hurried to Samuel's side and withdrew the gifts while the parchment with the imperial seal was placed in his hands. With that the interview was over. Samuel withdrew, still on his knees as custom demanded. Once outside the royal chamber, he broke into a sweat. "How differently it could have gone!" he thought as he hurriedly left the palace. A gong calling the faithful to the temple could be heard. Although the capital held many delights, Samuel no longer held interest in them. His one desire was to leave the city and to return to his little house in the compound, to discuss with the elders the decision the emperor had given and to set in motion those things which needed to be done to satisfy the emperor. For Samuel well knew that should the taxes not be paid, the full might of the mighty emperor Wu would fall on him and his followers. He stopped briefly at a shop of a dumpling seller and bought himself a bowl of rice and dumplings. Once he had completed his meal, he once more set off for the house where the old widow lived and collected his things, paid her and left. The journey home was a happy one for him for as he traveled through the country side he saw how the wise emperor had set up various improvements in agriculture which helped soil to give much more rice than previously possible. He drew great pleasure from stopping at some village at the end of the day and eating with the common men of the great emperor of China. Here he grew to love the simple people of China. Each

day there was some thing new to learn. He carried a small gift of rice to sustain him as he left the village at dawn and traveled through the heat of the day to the next village. The people were friendly as he passed the peasant farmers planting and harvesting rice they would call out to hi and to have a safe trip and sometimes they invited him to join them in a glass of sake. Very seldom were these requests refused by Samuel. Finally as the year 221AD drew to a close Samuel drew closer to his home. He grew excited at the prospect of seeing the group of people with whom he had crossed the great desert. A longing sprang up in his heart to be home and even though the journey was a pleasant one, he longed for the company of his fellow believers.

301 AD conversations with a Chinese woman

The stranger had arrived at midday. He had asked for one of the elder men of the village but was told that the man had died some three seasons back, in the year of the bountiful harvest. The stranger had been disappointed when Lin Chow had told him. "Oh that is sad news" said the man, as he took a seat on a boulder. "I don't know what you want with my grandfather" said Lin Chow. "He was also a stranger once in the empire of the rising sun" said Lin Chow. "I knew him once long ago" said the stranger. "He was kind to me and I wanted to thank him" said Samuel. "That must have been before I was born" said the young woman whose complexion betrayed her mixed origin, for she was half Hebrew and half Chinese.

A chicken picked at the root of an old tree stump near Samuel's feet. The dusty road leading to the village seemed deserted except for a few villagers who made their way out of the forest near the bottom of the vast valley.

"Tell me do the men of the village still do additional military service for the empire" asked Samuel? "Oh no those days are long past now. We give just what the empire and the overlord desires" said Lin Chow. "And do the woman of the village do service in the Tea-house" asked Samuel? "My, what a strange question?" said the young woman with a laugh, "How other wise would it be?" Was the evidence of her mother's service in the tea house not before him in the form of Lin Chow?]

"So many questions stranger, you have been in the sun too long. Rest awhile and we will care for you" said the young

woman, taking Samuel by the hand and leading him towards the house made of wood. A gong chimed nearby. Samuel turned and looked towards the sound as if surprised to see the presence of the temple of Buddha in the village. "Could so much have happened in such a brief period of time? Were there none of the Hebrews who came to the village alive or had all perished, that now none remained that their children had gone astray?" wondered Samuel. But now was not the time to ask questions. He needed to rest. The time he had spent in Asia had changed him much. He had for many years been in the kingdom of Korea. There he had learned much of the way of life of the people and now having a longing to be among his own he had returned to China only to find that they had so much changed that there was hardly a memory of their ever having been in the land of the rising sun. It seemed to Samuel that every thing he had fought for, worked so hard for over the last ninety years had come to nothing.

Lin Chow led Samuel up the worn wooden stairs into the house under the gaze of the other villagers who were returning to the village for their midday meal. Seating himself on the floor and folding his legs under him in the traditional way of Asians, Samuel watched the young woman as she began to prepare a dish of chicken dumplings over an open fire in the center of the room. The atmosphere of the place had much changed. The smells of China now pervaded the place; before in the early years Samuel remembered this very house which he along with other members of the community had built, had been a place of learning, a place where the Torah had been studied. Now it was completely changed. It was a Chinese home of the great grand daughter of the rabbi herself. Chinese seldom thought back to the early days it was in fact a miracle that Samuel had come across this young woman for she was the only one who had any knowledge of that part of the village history for she had tended her old grandfather who had been the last full blooded Jew to inhabit the village. Now on an afternoon in the year 301AD he sat enjoying a meal with the daughter of the house. He thought back to the time when he had led a group of like minded people across the vast Gobi desert, how in the first years they had fought nature and the authorities to build a life for themselves in this fair land only to find that 90 years later their dream had been swallowed up much as the overlord had originally intended. In the meantime,

Samuel had left the group to visit some of the nearby countries in the region in Korea. He had studied under many experienced masters the art of fighting; learning to kick high and to deliver a devastating blow. He in turn had truly become a master of this art and this training was to stand him in good stead in the long ages he would live through. Thus although despondent at the turn of events in China he knew from experience that life moved on, things changed. Of the thousands of people he had met in his time none brought him more pleasure than this daughter of the last remaining Jew in China. For once the meal was over she arranged a hot bath into which Samuel sunk his body, the hot water drawing off the weariness of the long journey upon which he had embarked. In years to come he would remember this afternoon and look upon it with a certain pleasure for once he had bathed and dressed he retired to a room set aside for guests. Here he slept awhile, a dreamless sleep, a sleep which his tired body and mind needed and in the cool of the evening, Lin Chow came to him.

CHAPTER FIVE

301 AD a disastrous sea voyage

The hurricane overtook the small sailing vessel as it made its way across the China Sea. The crew worked hard to save the vessel and their lives. It came to a point when the master gave the order that the goods were to be thrown over board to lighten the vessel. An enormous wave crashed over the deck carrying away one of the crew members. There was no way to save him; the scream of the man was lost in the roar of waves and wind. Samuel watched as the crew began carrying the goods to the side rail. The master merchant seeing this, hurried forward. "No, no you must not do this!" he shouted at the crew. They turned in confusion to the captain of the vessel. "Throw it over" he commanded, "I command here." "But I will lose a lot of money if you do this" said the master merchant. "You prefer to lose your life?" asked the captain.

"Surely there must be another way. Throw some of the passengers overboard!" snapped the master merchant. The captain looked at the man and said "You heard the man. The first one to be thrown over is to be this piece of filth in front of me" the captain said. Two of the crew moved forward and laid hands on the master merchant. "No, no!" he screamed. As the two sailors lifted him off his feet and tossed the man overboard, his silken robes flying in the wind.

The struggle against the elements continued but it became apparent that they were taking on more water than the frail wooden vessel could manage so after a number of days when the vessel began to go to pieces, hurriedly the crew and passengers climbed into the small boat which they hoped would carry them to safety.

Through the waves the boat now moved before the wind carried by the forces of nature when the storm abated the crew exhausted slept the captain commanded them to set the sail and make for land the problem was they had no compass and only the stars sun and moon to guide them. For the first four days they headed in a northerly direction at first there had been a little water which had been shared now with the water supply exhausted the men became thirsty some one drank some sea water but vomited violently the sun rose the boat drifting on a course set by the captain but the winds were light

and not much progress was made by the end of the fourth day three of the twelve men who survived had died from exposure the rest now weak managed with great difficulty to lift their bodies over the side. It was during the night that the captain began to have hallucinations there was a vessel he could see it he shouted at the men in the boat excitedly they sat up and looked in the direction he pointed there was nothing but the dark black sea. It became apparent that the man was a danger to the rest of them when he began turning the boat in the direction of his imagined vessel. Quickly Samuel and another of the crewmen rose with a club in hand and beat the captain until he was unconscious. The blood from the wound on his head mixed with the salt water which lay at the bottom of the leaky boat.

When the sun rose, it was found that another of the crewmen had died during the night Samuel now took the rudder aiming the boat in the direction of mainland China which he reasoned could not be more than a few days sailing.

Throughout the day, thirst drove the men mad. At one stage one of the men stepped off the boat, falling into the water and sinking and without a shout or a word he was gone. The captain did not recover consciousness, he died in the evening. There was no one strong enough to lift his body over the side so they left his body where it laid. There were now seven of them, sunburned and dying of thirst. The thought that now came to the minds of the men was not of their fellow men, for most of the time they dreamed they were feasting at a table with lots of water to drink or another dreamed of his family. But the thought that filled all of the minds of the men was water, for once this hope was gone the fearful truth lay before them that their fates were sealed. Death by thirst is not a pleasant way to die. The heroics of dying by thirst expose the terrible truth that one is bound to die surrounded by water yet unable to drink it; a very ironic way to die but not a pleasant one. Thus as the men succumbed, the boat drifted towards the coast of the Indian subcontinent, for the hurricane had carried them much further than they had expected.

Phaboo was playing on the beach on the morning of his fifth birthday. Had anyone remembered, it would not have made a difference for the tribe to which he belonged did not keep

records of when a person was born. A person was an infant, a child, a youth, a man or an old man. Thus it was he who first came across the small boat. Curiously he peeked over the gunwale; he recoiled in horror for the men on board the boat were dead. He ran quickly to call his father. "Pa, Pa come quickly there is a boat by the sea" he said. The father followed the sun to the waters edge. He too was shocked by what he saw. Quickly he sent the child off to get a village elder while he checked for signs of life. There was only one man who was alive, barely breathing, the rest were all dead. The village elders and a few men were coming to see the boat now.

CHAPTER SIX

Greece: Athens 367 AD

It was a hot and busy day when the ship on which Samuel had been sailing finally made landfall at the port city of Athens. Stepping ashore Samuel was struck by the number of people who were going about their business in the harbor. Some slaves were unloading grain from vessels; others were loading amphoras filled with wine and olive oil. The mighty Roman empires did not run on love of empire alone; it ran on the filled bellies of its soldiers.

Samuel looked up and for a moment was over whelmed by the sheer beauty of what he saw. Before him rose one of the most awe inspiring sights ever to grace the face of the world; the acropolis with its tall columns reaching to the sky. The sound of bells and gongs as the priests and priestess called the faithful of Zeus to prayer.

This was a land of legend, the land that had inspired the stories of Helen of Odysseus and of Agamemnon. How mighty Zeus would descend and spend a night of fervent love making with a shepherdess and leave in the early morning. It was the land where later a son would be born to the shepherdess and he would turn out to be one of the strongest men in all the world. It was also a land of jealous gods who played tricks on each other using unsuspecting mortals as pawns in their games of spite. And then of course there was the ambrosia of the gods; that wonderful liquid which could restore life and make one immortal if one happened to drink it.

Greece, once a mighty confederation of city states, was now nothing more then a large city under the rule of the mighty Roman Empire. This was the city faithful to the goddess Athena into which Samuel stepped that hot September morning in 367AD. His first priority was to find one Greek wine merchant by the name of Cladavarious, whom he had previously done some small business with. If Cladavarious was dead Samuel would then try to find his son or grandson. Samuel was still trying to get used to the novelty of being so long-lived as he moved through the crowded streets. He realized that he would have to be careful not to rouse suspicion in this regard. He had made one or two mistakes in the past that had almost lead to his exposure. Now he realized

that caution must be his watchword when it came to dealing with short lived mortals.

He entered the large city market place and was overwhelmed by the vast number of commodities available here. In one corner were the stalls of the olive oil merchants, on an embankment the stands of the sheep and cattle sellers, in the center of the great market place was the slave stand where slaves were hauled up onto the sellers block while the slave seller began his bidding war. "Here we have a fine young man from the regions of Arabia, healthy, strong arms and legs, good teeth, not unpleasant in features. Come citizens what am I bid? Do I here 5 Drachmas? Come do I hear six? This is a fine young man who could keep a lovely lady happy at night. Am I bid 7?" The people standing around bid. The young Arab eventually sold to a lascivious woman in her forties, who Samuel would later find out had a reputation for cruelty. Samuel passed on, coming at last to the row of stalls belonging to the wine sellers. Walking slowly he occasionally asked if any one knew the wine seller Cladavarious. He was met with shakes of the head. "No one like that here," was the response until he came upon a rather tall Greek who was picking meat from his teeth with a silver tooth pick. "Sorry to disturb you" said Samuel "I am looking for the wine merchant Cladavarious do you know him?" "Why I know who he was?" said the man. "Oh is he dead?" asked Samuel. "Yes he has gone, my poor dear father, he is gone ten years. But tell me stranger, what business have you with him?" "I knew him once in Rome" said Samuel. "He sold wines, I bought wine" he continued.

"You must have been very young in the trade then to know my father" said the man smiling. "I was" said Samuel cautiously. "My father owned an Inn. Your father visited us often" said Samuel. "Oh well then you will want to do your business with me" said the man. "I am Demetrius, son of Cladavarious, wine merchant to the Roman Empire at large and to you in particular, and your name is Samuel Ben Ezra. "At your service sir" said Samuel. "How may I serve you today Samuel Ben Ezra?" asked Demetrius. "I am new to your fine city and was wondering where I might find a place to start an inn. Something small, you understand nothing to imposing, you catch my meaning I am sure" said Samuel. "Indeed I do sir"

said Demetrius “if you have not found a place to stay I offer my house as your home until you have ‘found your feet’ so to say.” “Wait a moment while I set things in order here, then we can go home.” Calling to a friend who worked for him, Demetrius told the man to take care of business because something had come up, and to make damned sure that nothing went missing or “by Zeus” some one would pay. Thus saying, Demetrius the Greek, led our friend Samuel away to his home upon the hill overlooking the Acropolis.

Greece the Aegean Sea 367 AD

Demetrius the son of Cladavarious, the Greek was quite a man of property, having inherited the wine farm of his father with the wine shop. Later, when he married, he inherited through his wife the property of his father in law, a prosperous olive oil merchant, thus he was able to buy the house on the hill a short distance from the Acropolis. The view from the villa was spectacular, for it overlooked the Aegean Sea. One could look far out in to the bay and see ships plying to and fro as they came and went bringing goods to the city and leaving the city once more, with their wooden bellies filled with the wines and oil produced by Demetrius and other merchants like him. Samuel was impressed with the way in which this young man did business. Everything had its proper place in the scheme of things. Demetrius was a hard man on servants who tried to steal from him or failed to do their duty.

The villa was well ordered; tall columns graced the entrance and statues of men and women at sporting activities adorned the various rooms. Demetrius led his new friend Samuel across a large room, which seemed to be the place the family spent their evenings, to a small porch which overlooked the bay below. Calling for wine, cheese and bread, Demetrius made his guest comfortable. As they ate the meal, they watched the activity in the bay below. The sounds of the city were dulled by the great height of the building. Occasionally a small boy, Demetrius’ son Samuel assumed would come out and stand next to the chair on which Demetrius sat. On these occasions, Demetrius would break a small piece of bread or cheese off his plate and hand it to the child who would then hurry off eating the food. Samuel thought if that child continues to eat like that he will be a very fat young man. The thought was dismissed by something that Demetrius said.

“Pardon me friend but I did not hear what you said, my thoughts were on another matter. Pray continue” said Samuel. “I was saying that the Christians seem to be making great gains on the people of our fair Greece. Why there are so few who now worship Zeus and the other gods it is frightening that a religion can make such an impact. It is a new religion, only a few hundred years old. Now that the Emperor has declared it the religion of the state it makes it so much more difficult for the older religions. I remember when been a Christian was a crime now it is an accepted religion. What is the world coming to? I remember my father used to tell us that as a young boy he watched as Christians were shot with arrows because of their beliefs, but now that sort of thing is long passed. Samuel wondered what Demetrius would say if he knew that the man he was sharing food with had seen the founder of the religion. That still worried him; that he Samuel had seen Jesus die a criminal’s death on a cross, on a rubbish dump outside the city of Jerusalem. “Don’t you think our fair city one of the wonders of this world” continued Demetrius “with the temples and the Acropolis gracing our hill?” “Indeed it is a fair city” replied Samuel, who was for a moment reminded of the splendor of Jerusalem which now laid in ruins, the home to foxes and their young. Ah, the splendor of Jerusalem was of a simple kind; no trashy statues of idols but a city dedicated to the One God JHWH. “I see you are tired my friend I should have shown you to a room so that you could have slept. How foolish of me” said Demetrius, rising, “come friend Samuel, let me take you to a room where you can rest. Once you have rested, we can continue our conversation.

Samuel slept for a few hours rising at sunset to be greeted by Demetrius and his family sitting down to the last meal of the day. Samuel was invited to join them. Demetrius introduced Samuel to his wife Irene and to the four children who sat around a low table. Once the meal was over Demetrius once more led Samuel to the porch where they once more resumed the seats on two low couches. They continued to talk on various matters. “Now Athena goddess of wisdom, she is worthy of our worship” said Demetrius “but you my friend you have not said who you worship I perceive that you are a Jew but you do not observe those things common to Jews. You eat pork yet it is forbidden to you? What kind of a Jew are you then friend Samuel?” asked Demetrius. There was an

uncomfortable moment of silence before Samuel pointed out the lights of some vessel gracing the Aegean. Thereafter the conversation continued on other matters.

“Ah, friend Demetrius, the age when I was a practicing Jew is long passed. I lost my faith in an earlier age so as you see me today I travel the world today faithless” said Samuel. There you have my secret it is out” laughed Samuel. Demetrius opened and closed his mouth in disbelief, a man with out faith, a man that neither served a god. “What a strange man” thought Demetrius, as he refilled his wine goblet. The two men talked long into the night. It appeared to Samuel that Demetrius was like most Greeks, fond of debating, reasoning, coming together on various subjects. Demetrius talked on many subjects which interested Samuel. Indeed being around the Greek was a lesson in itself. Listening, Samuel filed away facts that were both of interest and of importance. Learning to listen to men as they spoke had served Samuel well in the past. He allowed Demetrius to talk, occasionally asking a question, or sometimes making a sympathetic noise to move the conversation forward.

Finally Demetrius rose from his couch and said “friend Samuel it has been a long day but now it is time for Morpheus calls on all men and now he a waits me so I bid you good night.”

Samuel and Demetrius were having a light breakfast of figs and milk. They were discussing Samuel’s idea of opening an inn. Demetrius was saying you must have a garden with a bit of a view a place to put a statue of one or two of the gods ... when their attention was distracted by a young man of about eighteen entering the house. “Greetings father” said the young man in the direction of Demetrius. The young man was handsome well built with a body of a god.

“Ah Theopolis my boy, come here a moment. I want you to meet a new friend of mine, Samuel ben Ezra, a non believing Jew” said Demetrius. Theopolis turned to Samuel as if noticing him for the first time. “Hello I am Theo. So you are a Jew are you sir? Well I have never met a Jew before but I have heard a few things. Can you tell me if they are true sir?” asked the young man. “It depends on what you have heard young

man” said Samuel. “Oh you know the usual thing one hears about the mutilation” said Theopolis. “Oh they are all true. Believe me when I say that it has never stopped me from performing” continued Samuel, the men laughed at this joke at Samuel’s expense. “Well I guess since you say they are true I will have to take your word” said Theopolis. Like most Greeks he was surprised that men could disfigure their bodies by cutting it. To Theo, this was the worst thing one could do to one’s body. He, like most Greeks believed in the absolute beauty of the body.

“Have you been training son?” asked Demetrious. “Yes Papa I have and training very hard. I haven’t had a drop of wine across my lips in weeks” said the young man, pouring himself a full mug of milk. “And so it should be. You only have a few weeks to go before you will have to set out for the Olympiad so you had better not start drinking wine now. You know we are all depending on you to win.”

“Did I tell you Samuel that Theo is taking part in the Olympic Games? It is a great honor for our family and for Athens if he wins.” Demetrious said this placing his hand on the younger mans shoulder and smiling with pride. “I have heard of the Olympic Games but I have not yet been to the games. Tell me do many people go to the games?” asked Samuel. “Do many people go to the games” said Theo jokingly “oh only the whole of Greece.” “Oh I did not know that the whole nation went. Well maybe this year I will go. Maybe I will see you win for your city. Do you get any prize for taking part?” asked Samuel. “Not really, it is for the glory of Athens that he will take part; a great honor for our family”

Athens 367AD Preparation for a feast

Samuel watched from the terrace as the young man trained. It was obvious that Demetrious had gone to great expense to arrange the best sparring partners and trainers for Theopolis' Olympic bid. The young man had been training hard for some time and now took every new exertion with ease, his breath coming easily as he went over exercises which he had practiced before. Demetrious stood next to Samuel and smiled “Well friend Samuel a great honor awaits us if my son wins for Athens. I am sure that the goddess will favor one of our city's sons.

“Are there not others from Athens that are competing?” asked Samuel. “Yes there are but no one stands as much of a chance as my boy” said Demetrius. “A proud father indeed” thought Samuel. “Have you decided yet what you will do?” asked Demetrius “about your inn I mean?” “Yes I had thought if it is not too much trouble to you if I stayed a while longer and look around for a nice place on the hill, but first I would like to see the Olympics and watch Theopolis make you proud.” “It would be a pleasure my friend” said the wine merchant “maybe we could do some business at the Olympics. There are always stalls and that sort of thing, for people need to eat and drink. We could make quite a bit of money there. You do the food and I will do the wines. People at the games love to spend their drachmas” said Demetrius, rubbing his hands together. “I think you might be on to something there friend Demetrius. Tell me, have you been to many of the games?” asked Samuel. “I have been to about ten of the games over the years, first as a young child, later as competitor and more recently as a spectator.” “Do you and the whole family go and watch the games?” asked Samuel. “Oh we all go” said Demetrius, but married women are not allowed to watch the games, it is a tradition he ended.

Theopolis finished his practicing and came up the marble stairs to where his father and Samuel were standing. Pouring a vessel of pomegranate juice, he threw the towel he had been using to wipe away the sweat and oil on the floor. Looking at his father he said “So is everything arranged for tonight’s feast?” “Almost” said Demetrius, “there are still a few things to do. Now that you are finished I will get the slaves to start roasting the sheep.” “That should attract the neighbors. I am sure their noses are very sharp. The smell of roasting meat should bring half the hill down to our house” he said smiling. Sometimes Samuel did not quite know what to make of this young man. He seemed at times to have a certain insolence and arrogance in him; a disrespect for his hard working father, all of these things did not recommend the young man to Samuel yet at the same time he had a sharp wit and a sense of humor. One could not help but like the young man.

“Now if you will excuse me friend Samuel I have much to do. Make yourself comfortable. If you like, try the baths. They are

very good. Theopolis take our friend down the street to the bath house and don't let that rogue Odysseus charge you too much for the use of the private rooms." "All right father your command and I obey" said the young man.

The music played softly in the background. The slaves had lit the torches and lamps shortly before the arrival of the guests. The aroma of roasting sheep filled the air as the guests filed in, the sounds of their voices carried to all corners of the villa. Some guests greeted each other like long lost friends. Serving girls moved in between the guests with jugs of wine refilling glasses with the cool chilled wine. In the kitchen an amphora broke. For a moment angry voices could be heard, and then the sound of the party getting under way once more drowned the sound of domestic upheaval.

Demetrius like a good host stood at the gate welcoming his guests. A patrol of soldiers passed by, stopping for a moment at the gate while Demetrius had a pitcher of wine brought for them. The commander, a legionnaire of the IVX brigade was well known round Athens and a keen follower of the games. "So citizen you think your son stands a good chance of winning the olive branch?" he asked. "If the gods favor us there we will win." "But Theo he is a good boy. He will win. I have invested a lot in his training. I even had a German wrestler brought here to wrestle against him to bring him up to standard. You should have seen the German a great bear of a man. The man smelled like Hades but we soon convinced him to wash. Well my Theo watched and learned and finally bested the man" said Demetrius. The Legionnaire looked over to where his men were standing. They had almost finished their wine. He called for them to hurry up and not waste time drinking any more wine. Once they had drunk, the patrol reformed the legionnaires, thanking Demetrius for his kindness before marching off at the head of his band of brother soldiers.

Theopolis was having a great time standing with a group of the younger guests joking and talking. There were a number of hopefuls who were also taking part in the games who had been invited thus the younger men tended to stick together while the older guests spoke of their days of glory when it had been their turn to run or race for the olive branch.

Samuel found himself in the company of a man from Tyrnisia; a strange man who loved his food. The festivities had hardly begun before he started looking for food to eat. Samuel was led to understand that he was one of Demetrius' late father-in-law's business associates.

“So you are a Jew” said the man. “I knew a Jew once; very sharp, took me for a song made a lot of money between the two of us before he left me high and dry. Ah but I cannot hold that against you now can I” said the man. “No you can not” said Samuel, who shortly thereafter moved off into the crowd of growing guests. The man disgusted Samuel and he did not want to be around some one who had a grievance against Jews or even an imagined one. He had seen things turn ugly before in those types of confrontations and he did not fancy himself a willing victim. Even though he was the guest of Demetrius things could turn ugly and he did not want to spoil the evening for his new found friend.

As the evening wore on the guests began to move into the banqueting hall. Trestle tables had been brought in and couches were placed next to the walls of the hall where guests sat and ate in the roman style. The tables seemed to be groaning under the weight of the vast array of food that was placed on them. Platters of hot steaming vegetables, silver plates of roasted lamb lay succulent in gravy, the aroma filling the hall. There were also bowls of fresh fruit from all corners of the known world. There were dishes of garlic flavored meat, cheeses from the hills of Greece Onion salads and figs preserved in wine from Demetrius' own cellar. Various breads and pomegranate wines were brought in and the feast began in earnest. The sounds of voices were a little muted by the act of consuming the great feast. As they ate, the people spoke and joked. Later Demetrius rose from the table and on a signal the musicians struck up a chord. The drums began to beat, the lute players playing a feverishly fast tune. Demetrius began to dance soon he was joined by other men. As the dance continued, the shadows from the dancing men cast weird and wonderful images against the walls.

During the first dance Theo sat watching. When the second dance began he joined his father. When the dance had ended

the men returned to the table to refresh their drinking vessels. When everybody was seated once again Demetrius stood up and addressed his guests.

“Friends tonight we feast in long preparation for the great games which we will shortly be setting out for. I want you to know that I am proud of my son Theopolis. Stand up Theopolis let the people see you. This young man with others will compete for the olive branch and for the glory of Athens. Join me in toasting their very good health and success at Olympia. Come friends for the glory of Athens let us drink!” so saying he dropped some of the liquid from his drinking vessel on the ground “A libation for the gods” he cried to which the guests roared their approval.

In all this Samuel was an observer, little realizing that only a few short years the Olympic Games would be suspended by the Emperor, who would proclaim them pagan and against the spirit of the new state religion, Christianity which was already knocking at the door of Greece. The baby who had been born in Samuel’s stable had really started things off in a new direction. But until such time the world would continue to enjoy the games that had been played for a thousand-years in a secluded valley in Greece.

Trip to the Olympic Games 367

Demetrius embraced his son saying as he did so “Theo my boy you go and do us proud. I will not see you again until you race for Athens. Remember son that we all want you to win. you will do us all proud. May mighty Zeus and glorious Apollo bless you and may the great goddess Athena give you wisdom to outwit your opponents thus saying the older man released his son.” They were standing at the cross roads that leads to Olympia. For a moment they stood looking at each other, the emotion of the moment overwhelming them. There were tears in the older man’s eyes. The younger man looked once more at his father before joining the crowd of gathered athletes who were on their way to the athlete’s camp. Demetrius and Samuel would continue on to the secluded valley where they would camp with thousands of others who had come to watch the games. Getting this far had been quite something, having left Athens sailing across the Aegean Sea to the small port of Delphi. They had set out traveling up river until they had

come to the conflux of the two great rivers, the departure point of the athletes from the rest of the population who had come to view the games.

Demetrius turned and set out with a hurried step. "Come friend Samuel we must reach the camp before nightfall and there is still quite a way to go" said Demetrius. Samuel took up the pace walking alongside the Greek although he was heavy for his age he moved with an agility, which surprised Samuel.

"We must reach the camp in time to make offerings to the gods" said Demetrius, to no one in particular. The crowd of Athenians around him sensed his urgency and continued on at their hurried pace. Coming to a small pathway they spread out to file through the small gap. On passing through the gap, one was able to observe the valley below into which thousands of people had already filled. Below them lay tents of branches cut from the forests and woods. Here every four years the entire Greek world came together to celebrate a battle between the gods which had happened eons before. Now the battle was in the field of sport Greek freeman against freeman competing for the glory of their cities.

As Samuel looked down he was struck by the fact that for such a small valley there were apparently hundreds of thousands of people from every corner of the known world. The Greek colonies from Asia Minor, from near and far they had come to compete in these games. The only other time he had seen some thing like this was many centuries earlier when the Hebrews had filed through the gates of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover at the temple. For a moment Samuel experienced a pang of heartache thinking now of the destroyed temple. The moment passed, Samuel turned to hear Demetrius speaking to one of his slaves; "Comacroplis if you drop that I will beat you! Now hurry up and follow me." he said as they once more set out. The slave Comacroplis hurried after his master with a large jug on his shoulder.

Shortly before dusk when their party had reached the valley floor, having found a place for their booths they settled down. Demetrius sought out Samuel. Finding him sitting under a tree asked, "Friend Samuel you must come and see we are

about to sacrifice to the gods. It is to thank them for bringing us thus far and to ask for favor for the games of tomorrow please join us.” Samuel rose and followed the Greek to a place near the center of the camp where a large number of people had gathered.

A priest of the temple of Zeus stood on a podium before an altar holding a sharp stone knife which had most probably been passed down for thousands of years from priest to priest while behind him stood two eunuchs holding a pig which had been brought for slaughter. “Hear oh servants of mighty Zeus! We are gathered here to give thanks and ask favor.” Thus saying, the two eunuchs lay the pig on the altar, thereafter the priest used the stone knife to slit the pig’s throat. Calling for libations the priest poured a healthy amount of wine over the dying pig before setting fire to the wood beneath the altar. The crowd roared its approval.

It was the third day of the games. As usual the spectators had risen at dawn and had rushed off to the stadium. Today was going to be a big day in the Grecian sporting calendar. The sacred flame was to be lit. On the first day Samuel and Demetrius had risen and hurried to the stadium with thousands of other spectators for the ceremonies, which were to follow. The monitors and trainees from the nearby city of Elis had marched in first waving their staffs of office proudly followed by the participants grouped together according to their cities of origin. The crowd roared its approval as their own city’s athletes marched by. When Theopolis at the head of the Athenian athletes drew opposite the stand where the supporters of Athens sat there was a loud cheering and clapping of hands. Once the march passed had finished. The crowd settled down. For the next part of the ceremony hawkers moved among the crowd selling their wares. A lot of good natured ribbing went on between the supporters of the various cities. The spectators from Corinth sat next to the supporters of Athens so occasionally there would be shouts that Corinthian athletes would win the gold olive branch. To which there would be boo’s and shouts of derision from the supporters of Athens.

Now the crowd grew quiet as the priests of mighty Zeus marched into the arena. Walking head and shoulders above the

other priests the high priest Alpheus walked with a pride known only to those who serve Zeus. A gong was struck as he mounted the steps in front of the temple of Zeus; moving to the altar he gave a signal. The other priests began to chant rhythmically "Honor and praise to mighty Zeus from whom these games were given to man. Honor to the great god of Greece. Thus they continued until suddenly they stopped, the two eunuchs led out a large wild boar which they lifted with the helping hands of several other priests on to the podium. The feet of the offering was quickly bound. The wind blew softly across the plains of Greece. Samuel brushed aside a stray hair. He was reminded that centuries earlier the Holy temple of Jerusalem had been desecrated by the offering of pigs to the self-same deity Zeus. But today it was here in Greece not ancient Jerusalem, which stood no more, now nothing but a ruin.

The high priest lifted the stone knife with both hands and showed it to the people before bringing it down and cutting the throat of the boar. The crowd roared with approval as the gong was once more struck. Thereafter the athletes stepped forward, each one standing in the blood of the boar making the sacred oath to Zeus that they would not cheat that they would abide by the rules of the competition that they were ritually clean and ready to take part in the games. The ceremonies continued for the rest of the day until nightfall when the spectators returned to their camp.

The second day had started much the same as the first day only this time the games had begun in earnest. Athletes taking part in the races had paraded before the crowd stripping naked and taking their place on the starting line. Heavily oiled youths stood ready to run for the glory of their cities, their muscular bodies displayed for all the world to see; the ideal of Greek civilization the human form at its best, with a blast from a trumpet they began to run. The first race was twice the length of the stadium as the runners ran past their cities spectators one could hear the name of the favorite athlete from their city been chanted. In the first race Theopolis did not take part but a younger athlete by the name of Appolous did. As he ran past the spectators from Athens the name of Appolous was chanted and shouted loudly. The race ended with the runner from

Corinth winning. A little disappointed, Demetrius said to Samuel “ah well what could we expect, Theo was not running.” In the next even Theopolis did run. It was a longer race, four laps of the stadium. Theo paced himself well allowing other runners to run ahead, tiring themselves out, about half way through the race Theo began to make his move. This was not missed by his father who became even more animated, shouting “That’s my boy! That’s my Theo, come on watch him run! What a beautiful boy!” he cried. The crowds around him took up the chant of Theopolis rhythmically as if spurring the runner on to greater efforts. When the race finally ended with Theopolis winning the crowds from Athens erupted in joyous shouts of “The glory of Zeus for Athens!” other shouted “The gods favored Theopolis of Athens! Glory to Athens!”

As Samuel observed all of this, it was hard not to get caught up in the moment, to shout praise for the young man, to be glad for his friend Demetrius but Samuel could not help the feeling that the athlete would one day do his father a great wrong.

On the third day with the sun shining and the birds singing in the sacred grove, the crowds took their places. The races continued; there were chariot races which took up most of the morning. At midday the crowds grew silent as if waiting for something new to happen. In this they were not disappointed. In the center of the arena was the great disk into which the most pure virgin olive oil had been poured. The magistrate of the city of Elis rose and moved to the steps which lead to the great disk. Here he waited it was not long before an athlete came running bearing a torch which he handed to the magistrate. A priest from the temple of Apollo intoned a prayer, speeches were made by the magistrate on the glory of the games thus when he ended he began climbing the stairs. On reaching the top he touched the torch to the disk which caught the flame from the torch and burst into flames the whole stadium erupted in shouts of joy that the sacred flame had been lit. The flame of Grecian civilization burned brightly; the flame that had given the world people like Homer, Plato, and Alexander the Great burning brightly under Roman rule. It would not be long before this civilization would be faced by a danger, which would change it radically

from worshipping a Parthenon of demi-gods to worshipping one god.

The games were over. The runners had run their course. The last ceremony of the games was the handing out of the golden laurels to the winners of each race. The magistrate of Elis once more climbed to the podium and began by thanking all of the competitors for their good behavior. Once more they had proved that Greece could be proud of its athletes. Thereafter as each athlete's name and city was called, the athlete would step forward to receive his prize. The trumpets blew and the crowds cheered as each young man stepped forward, naked as the day they were born. For Demetrius it was the crowning achievement for his son Theo to receive the prize for the pentathlon. The crowds from Athens cheered wildly when his name was called. The prize giving continued. Samuel asked Demetrius if there was a prize for those who came second, to which Demetrius replied that was a bit of a strange idea why should there be a prize for someone who had not won. The prize giving ceremony continued until the sun touched the low hills to the north before the crowds began breaking up. Tomorrow people would start to leave; others would stay for one last feast and an offering to the gods. But tonight there would be a grand feast in the camp as each athlete would return to the camp to be greeted by his family and friends.

Samuel walked with Demetrius one last time from the stadium admiring the fine statues of past athletes which adorned the park, little realizing that this would be the last Olympic Games that he would attend for many long centuries. Of course in a later time when he thought back he would remember these five days as some thing special, a happy time in his life when the cares which usually worried him had seldom come to mind.

There was a fire and meat was being roasted. There was a carnival atmosphere about the camp that night. Wine flowed freely. People greeted each other and wished each other well for the next four years when the games would be played again. There was expectancy in the air. The athletes were coming home. The people of Greece did not have long to wait for they had only been at the camp some small amount of time before the athletes began arriving. This was cause for rejoicing. Now

fully clothed in a light tunic, Theopolis arrived, the image of a young Apollo, to be greeted by much backslapping and congratulations. Samuel all the while sat to one side contemplating his next move. He knew that he had a good friend in Demetrius, but the time was fast approaching when he would have to once more start business at an inn. It seemed as if he had been serving mankind as an innkeeper forever. The strange thing about it he had grown to accept it and enjoyed it. Sometimes he made a lot of money doing it, other times he lost money but that was his eternal curse to serve mankind and give them accommodation for as long as they needed a bed or a meal Oh well tomorrow was another day. He would start once again to plan and decided where he would buy an inn what he would serve he had grown quite excited at the prospect. Greek food he found was varied. He simply loved the herb cheese that they made from goats milk, and the roasted lamb on the spit was another thing which he was quite fond of. If there was one thing the Greeks loved he realized, it was food, and well prepared food. He felt sure that he would be equal to the task at hand but tonight it was time for feasting congratulations and lovemaking, other things would take precedence tomorrow. But tonight for once he would enjoy himself. Pulling himself to his feet Samuel joined in with the people who were dancing. He was glad that through the ages he had changed his dress to what the locals wore. It was far more appropriate then wearing the long flowing robes of Israel. Now as he danced he blended in with all the other men who wore the short tunics of that age.

397AD Old friendships and days of Yore

It had been some thirty odd years since Samuel had come to Greece. The inn on the hill was doing well. His friendship with Demetrius and later with his son Theopolis had been very profitable. To blend in and to mask the fact that he did not age Samuel had taken to rubbing his hair with ash to give the appearance of aging. Early on in their friendship, Demetrius had said that it was time for Samuel to take a wife. To this Samuel had answered that he had a good looking slave girl in his employ that took care of his physical needs and there was no need. Demetrius had said “but you need children my friend look at me I am close to fifty and I have five sons and four daughters and even some grand children you need a good woman to keep you warm in your old age.” Samuel had

smiled but remained firm in his decision he wanted no wife.

Now as they sat on a stone bench in the garden of the inn Demetrius nearing his eightieth year he was content with life a rich old man with few problems in life. About ten years earlier it had been commanded by the emperor that all citizens of the Pax Roma would now worship only God the Father, his son the Carpenter of Nazareth, and the Spirit as taught by the church. The service and worship of Zeus, Apollo, Isis and even the goddess of the city of Athens, the wise Athena, were closed. Priests of these gods were put out to earn an honest wage while the followers of the Nazerites grew in number, churches were erected everywhere.

This had been a very sad time for Demetrius who was a staunch believer in Zeus and Athena. He said at the time the gods were good enough for my family for thousands of years, they were good enough for me. They blessed me now I am told by purple decree that I must cast them off, but like all other citizens of the Pax Roma he had undergone the baptism into the new faith.

At first he had stubbornly resisted, but after a time he had given in, seeing that there was not much chance of the old god being restored. He began to change until the present when he was one of the most devoted members of the church of Athens; an old man with a white beard and hair who rose before dawn much like he always had to worship Athena now he rose to greet each day in the name of his savior Jesus.

Drinking some wine he said to his old friend Samuel "I wish you would agree to be baptized old friend. You will see it is the only sensible thing to do. Forget about the past. Jesus can change all that for you." Samuel listened as the old Greek spoke then politely declined, saying he preferred to remain an agnostic Jew. The old Greek wanted to say some thing more but was interrupted by the appearance of Iona, the devoted slave who had been taking care of Samuels needs for so many years she had matured into a plump middle aged woman who lived to serve her master. Life had been good to her under Samuel she had learned to read and write. Her main function was to see that the inn was run well and nothing was left to get out of hand. Now she approached with a tray of sweet meats

and pastries for the old men.

Thus through an accident of domesticity, Samuel missed the chance to be baptized into the faith of the Carpenter once more.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Egypt 543 AD

Samuel had been traveling in Egypt for some time before he found the place he was to call home for the next sixty odd years. It had been a few hundred years since any Jew had lived in Egypt. At the end of the war with Rome the entire Jewish community at Alexander had been removed and taken into captivity.

Now he found himself in Alexander he had visited the pyramids at Gisa and stared in wonder at their great size. he had wondered how many of the stones had been laid in place by the hands of his ancestors who had once been enslaved by the wicked pharaoh?

He had arrived one day at Karnack he had wandered from temple to temple. Here he still found some old die hard Egyptians who worshiped the gods of their fathers. But they were a dying breed. Egypt had been decaying for a long time, now the Coptic Christians worshiped Jesus at converted temples who Samuel had once heard and known. How strange Samuel thought that Jesus a Jew should be worshiped as a god in the land of Egypt the oppressor of Israel.

Samuel found an old shop in one of the busy streets of Alexander and after much haggling, he convinced the owner, an old olive merchant that he could make a quick and good profit by selling his shop to Samuel. Once the bargain had been struck and the olive merchant began packing a few belongings, Samuel asked him what he intended to do now that he had some money. In fact Samuel had paid far more than the old building was worth. "Me, I am off down the Nile to spend my days on the old family farm. I've wanted to go back there for years just never had the money. Now I do." the grey haired merchant said as he pushed his smiling wife out the door.

Samuel set about converting the shop into an inn. First he hired a serving woman and a man with a strong back. He set them to work cleaning out the shop and adjoining buildings with a fine tooth comb. By the end of the first week there was a marked difference in the appearance of the building. The walls both inside and out had been given a coat of fresh white

limestone paint, a new sign hung at the door proclaiming to the world that the inn was open for business.

Samuel's next order of business was to arrange supplies of various foods and beverages for his expected guests. He arranged a lucrative contract with a wine merchant from Thebes, who would, over the coming years, bring him some of the best wines to be found in the world. It was this merchant who suggested that Samuel use the cellar of the inn as a place to keep these wines cool. He obviously knew his business. Egypt was a land over which hot winds blew bringing heat from the desert with the winds from the desert. A man's thirst grew and it would not be long before word got round that fine chilled wine was available at the inn. Within a week Samuel had a regular clientele who paid freely for the chilled wines. Ice was brought from the regions far in land from the mountains beyond Nubia where ice never melted on the mountaintops. Once placed in the cellar, it lasted for months keeping the wine and the stored foods fresh.

The serving woman whom Samuel had hired in his first week in Alexander turned out to be some thing of a master chef, producing combinations of roasted lamb and olives which was a great favorite if served with a side order of Barley. Barley grew in abundance in the Nile delta at certain times of the year. Samuel had watched the farmers who lived in this region and he had become aware that they had several planting seasons in the year. He noted that this type of farming had most probably been going on for thousands of years in Egypt.

The popularity of the inn grew steadily with new guests arriving daily, most of his guests were travelers from other lands who would stop to visit the wonders of old Egypt and wonder at the strangeness of it all. From Rome and Constantinople, came robed priests to visit the growing church, from Syria came merchants, and from Africa strange black men who were interested in the wonders of the stars. They would spend days observing the movement of the stars before buying grain and leaving once more on the long camel train which would wind it's way south to the dark continent. From the east came Arabs, from the far North came Iberians who were a mystery to most serious men and who would laugh uproariously at times but also tended to be sullen. These

Iberians would bargain vicariously, with the local merchant's business ever at the forefront of their minds.

The inn was a microcosm of nations of the known and unknown world.

Egypt 592 AD

AD 592 Egypt the start of a journey

For some time now Samuel had been wondering what was going to happen to him. He had been alive for six hundred and thirty years. His life had been filled with more experiences than one could ever possibly hope to have in a lifetime. He had already lived several life times. His forty years in Egypt had already brought to him untold wealth and yet he lacked that which would fulfill him. He was a man alone in the world. Occasionally he would take a wife but it hurt to watch the women with whom he shared his life, growing old and passing away. He had done this a number of times, each time it hurt just as much no matter how many times it happened, thus for the last hundred years he had lived alone, never sharing his feelings with anyone. Now he found that he wanted to search for the meaning to his life. Samuel wanted to try to find the reason he lived so long. He knew he had been cursed, yet he was looking for peace and the underlying reason of the curse and if possible to find the salvation which eluded him.

Thus early in the year of our Lord five hundred and ninety two he put his house in order. He appointed a steward to oversee his staff at the inn while he would set out to visit the religious temples of Egypt. He thought maybe to make the acquaintance of the older gods of the Egyptian Parthenon; he knew that Judaism did not hold the answers to his quest. So, on a fine winter morning, Samuel joined a caravan of Bedouins who planned to travel across the desert to a number of these sites. He had dressed pretty much as the Bedouins did for this trip; their reason for this trip was to see the sites. They had traveled across the deserts from Arabia and they wished to see for themselves the great buildings of the ancient pharaohs. The group consisted of men, women and children. These desert people were free of any concerns, as to the religious meanings of the buildings they might visit. They worshiped the moon god Allah, who unlike the God of Israel and the Christian faith was not a jealous god.

Thus they set out a happy caravan. Riding a camel was a new experience for Samuel and not a pleasant one, he found. By the end of the first day he was hot tired and dreaded climbing again upon the great beast which was his mode of transport. The heat from the sand of the desert was overpowering, rising in waves to greet you. It was known that people had died in these deserts due to losing their way and the lack of water, thus all Bedouins who traveled the desert always made sure to carry enough water. By midday he was feeling entirely roasted, taking a sip of water, he noticed that one of the Bedouins was approaching him with some thing in his hand. It turned out to be a small pebble which the Bedouin assured him would keep the moisture in his mouth. This little trick would help Samuel through the long ages in which he would still live.

Riding a camel across the desert was some thing new for Samuel. Although he had been alive for nearly six hundred years he had never yet had the opportunity of riding a camel. He found it a strange and unusual experience. Samuel had ridden donkeys and horses in his life but now as he approached the great pyramids of Gisa, he found himself rather uncomfortably perched on the back of one of these ships of the desert. He had been warned that it would be hot during the middle of the day and that he should rather take a trip to these great monuments later in the afternoon when the wind from the Mediterranean Sea would sweep inland, cooling the hot desert.

Samuel had been living in Egypt now for a number of years. He was saddened by the fact that the Christians who now lived in Egypt would dismantle parts of older temples to serve as building blocks for their churches. This was happening more and more often now days. When he had first arrived in Egypt, there had been a great number of temples, more or less in good order now fifty years later a number of these were no more, having been dismantled and used by the Coptic Christians.

The locals had even begun to remove the limestone blocks which covered the vast expanse of the pyramids; this Samuel found very sad. It reminded him of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD. As a Jew, this had been a heart breaking moment, to see the temple, the place around which

Israel revolved been destroyed. The temple was the place which according to the priests was the earthly domain of God. The life which Samuel led had shown him that Judaism had nothing to offer him and it had no answer to his dilemma. Now six centuries after being cursed to wander till he found salvation, he was still no nearer to finding the solution.

A bead of sweat ran down the side of his face. He wiped it away and swatted a fly as it buzzed angrily around his head. Dismounting, he wandered round the vast complex looking in amazement at the vast stone tombs. It was not his first visit here but it never ceased to amaze him that men could build such monuments to the dead. He had left in the early hours of the previous day; he planned to spend the night in a Bedouin tent near the pyramids. Exploring the area hoping to maybe find a clue as to his predicament, he knew that once he had been cursed by the carpenter of Nazareth that the Holy family had traveled to Egypt. Now six centuries later he was hoping to find some clue as to how the curse under which he lived worked. He did not look a day over thirty-eight yet he was six hundred and twenty seven years old. When night began to fall, he found a spot in the tents of the Bedouins. Settling down, he ate with the nomads and later he watched as night fell over the vast edifice. He fell asleep listening to the voices of the nomads. Occasionally a camel would snort but the night was quiet. He awoke suddenly needing to answer a call of nature. Wandering out into the desert he saw that the moon had risen and that the pyramids were bathed in an unreal light from the moon. On one side brightly shining was the white limestone, on the other long shadows were cast across the dunes. In the distance he saw the head of the Sphinx standing proud of the desert like a mighty beast set to watch over the tombs of the departed pharaohs. The shadows seemed ominous filled with dead and the fear of the unknown. How many Egyptians wondered Samuel, had faced the afterlife with fear and feelings of inadequacy about facing the underworld. Samuel had heard that some tombs had been broken open and the mummified remains destroyed. Samuel thought it strange that some one would want to do this. In Israel there had never been a problem with the earthly remains of the departed which were sealed in the rock tombs. They dead of Israel were left there until the Day of Judgment. The fascination that Egyptians had with preserving the body for the afterlife was something that

Samuel found very strange. The wind had dropped now. The desert was cold. In the distance Samuel noticed some one throwing wood on a fire at one of the Bedouin camps. Feeling the chill just then, he pulled his cloak about him. Samuel returned to the tent and settled down falling into a restless sleep, his mind filled with the sight of the pyramids in the moon light. Dreaming of the afterlife, images of tomb paintings rose up in Samuel's mind. Samuel dreamed he was trapped in a tomb. He was running out of breath, cold air surrounding him, and coming to a room in the tomb he was faced with the image of one of the deities of the Egyptian Parthenon, a blue skinned god of fearsome countenance. Samuel turned and ran only to once again be confronted by Thoth, a dog headed deity. Turning he ran back the way he had come only to be once more confronted by the god Amen. "What you seek you won't find here" thundered the god. Samuel awoke, the howl of the dog headed god Thoth still ringing in his ears. It was late. The sun was already up and the Bedouins were already starting to break camp as he emerged from the tent.

The next stop in his journey was Karnack. For most of the day the caravan moved across the desert towards this ancient site. The desert wind blew hot and most of the travelers kept cool by the long robes they wore. Samuel noticed that even the few north Europeans who were in the caravan had adopted the loose flowing robes of the Bedouin. At mid day the caravan halted at an oasis to rest out the heat of the day. It would be another two days before they reached the shores of the Nile where they would take a ferry boat to the opposite shore before resuming there journey to the ancient site. Samuel remembered the first time he had visited the site about forty years earlier. Back then there had been few visitors to Karnack. He remembered a conversation he had with an old man who said he was in his seventieth year. He said his name was Thothmet he claimed to be one of the last worshipers of Amen the ancient god of Egypt. On further questioning, Thothmet had said that his family had worshiped Amen from time in memorial at this ancient site where the great pharaohs of Egypt had build temples to the gods and mortuary temples to themselves. They steadfastly believed that at death they would be elevated to the rank of deity. Thothmet was busy that day with offerings of bread and beer to the deity of

Ramses II a great pharaoh said Thothmet. It was he who had made Egypt great. Of course there were other deities whom Thothmet did worship too, like the great Pharaoh Tuthmosis who had fought many battles and had brought the bodies of the rulers of the enemies of Egypt to this place tied to the bow of his great war barge. But today it was the spirit of the god Ramses II who was being worshiped.

Samuel watched as the old man and his sons washed and bathed a statue of the long dead pharaoh then opening a small vessel of perfumed oils they anointed the statue before drying it off, placing the statue in a wooden cupboard the old man then opened a barrel of beer taking a quantity he poured it on the ground in front of the deity, “a libation for the gods” chanted the old man as he then presented the bread to the statue to eat. It was poor fare for a pharaoh but then again Thothmet was only a poor farmer. Once the ceremony was at an end the cupboard was locked and food served to the congregated worshipers who consisted of Thothmet's family and a few others. Samuel was offered food but declined because he had been taught that it was wrong to eat food that had been offered to idols. Now Samuel wondered if the long dead Thothmet's children still worshiped the deity Amen and did homage to the almost forgotten pharaohs. He doubted it very much. Times had changed in the brief time that Samuel had lived in Egypt. The Coptic Church had become stronger now, if there were worshipers of the ancient idols, these things were done in secret.

Samuel was sitting under a tree when he was approached by one of the Europeans, a strange breed of men who had fair skin and hair. “Tell us” asked one of them who seemed to be a captain among their company, “what is it like to live in the land of Egypt seeing all of the wonders of the ancient land. To know our Lord lived here and saw the same wonders that we now see?”

Samuel pondered the question awhile before answering. “I see wonders every day. I see the sun rise over the desert. I see the ibis nesting near the Nile. I see the birth of their young. I see the sun set over the pyramids. Are these not wonders enough? I don't know what wonders the Lord saw when he sojourned in this land. I see the great temples that dot the landscape. I see

that Egypt was once a great land blessed with abundance but that has now long passed. What I see of Egypt today is, the doctors who are famous to the known world who teach in Alexander and Cairo. I see that churches have been risen up to spread the word of Jesus. These are the wonders I see today.”

Later in the day when the sun was stating to wane the caravan resumed its journey through the desert. Samuel had become used to the rhythm of the camel’s gait and found himself dozing as the caravan wound its way through the desert. Much later when the moon was rising, the caravan reached the Nile. The night was cold. Hurriedly fires were lit and tents erected. Tomorrow it would be half a day’s journey to reach Karnack.

After eating a sparse meal, the people settled down for the rest of the night. Samuel hoped he would have a restful night. The dreams of the previous night had disturbed him and the long trek through the desert had not allowed him much time to rest.

He had been asleep for about an hour when his rest was disturbed by the appearance of the dog head god Thoth, who came nudging him. Rising from his bed in a dream-like state, Samuel wandered among the pylons coming upon the statue of the deified pharaoh, Tuthmosis. Samuel was not surprised to see the statue open its eyes, red fire burning deep within the eyes of the statue; the thundering voice of the stone statue asked “Who dare disturb the rest of pharaoh? What business have you to disturb my rest? Have I not been asleep two thousand years at peace with the world of man and now a mere man dare disturb my rest. But wait, I see it is not a lowly mortal it is an accursed thing which stands before me, bound to wander the earth till end of days. What do you want? Leave me in peace I have had my day. Did I not rule the two lands with an iron rule? Did I not make Egypt great? Leave me, thing accursed of man let me sleep.” said the deity, now closing its fearsome eyes and returning to a state of rest. Thoth pulled at the loose flowing robes Samuel wore, leading him on this demesne of the graveyard who had from time unremembered wandered the resting places of the dead.

They came again upon a pylon here and stood gazing at the

bold statue of Ramses the great, rising as from sleep. The deity looked upon Samuel and Thoth, a blue green light burning from the fearsome countenance. "What do you want to of me?" asked the figure of Ramses "Did I not make Egypt free of foreign influence? Did I not defeat the Syrians? Did not Babylon bow before my greatness? What is it you would ask accursed one? Ask on for the time grows late when the name of Ramses will be forgotten and no longer worshiped here."

"Oh great Ramses" replied Samuel "What binds me to this earth? What makes me to live so long when those born after me have gone to their rest? Pray tell me what you know of it?"

"Ah the question is difficult said the figure of Ramses, did you not forbid a place of rest to the holy one of Israel? Even now you deny me my rest accursed one. Did you not send the Holy one off to be born in a lowly stable? How then when the answer is before you do you still not see it?" asked the figure, the luminous blue glow growing bright as the deity grew angry at the question.

"I do not know. I expected to find the answer here at Karnack" replied Samuel, in fear as he beheld the anger of the deity. "Leave me now lest I cast another curse upon you said the figure of the long dead pharaoh. You will not find the answer here."

Returning to the pylon once more, Samuel and the dog headed Thoth found a sacred barge waiting for them. Boarding the barge they set out. They had not traveled far before they encountered another barge. When the two vessels drew closer it became apparent that the deity Osiris great and wondrous was aboard. Drawing together, the two vessels stopped next to each other. "Who dares to interrupt the nightly journey of the sun barge?" thundered the god Osiris. "Who would put the world at danger for his own evil ends?" the angry deity continued. "Thoth speak for I am exceedingly angry" said the deity.

"Oh good Osiris" said the dog headed god speaking for the first time, "I bring before you one Samuel, a Jew who was cursed to live forever and a day. He seeks rest for his soul but cannot find it. He wanders here and he wanders there seeking

that which he cannot find. Now he has come among the gods of Egypt seeking that which is elusive. Oh great Osiris, be not angry, rather find pity for this accursed thing. "Indeed he is an accursed thing, more than a mortal yet less, for he will not find his rest here, for he is not of the two fair lands. Jew you will not find what you seek among the gods of Egypt. Depart from us you accursed one. Leave us to our rest. Leave us to our tasks allotted by father RAH."

Samuel drew back as the god became angrier and angrier. This was not what he had expected. Now in real fear he turned to Thoth and asked "Can you return me to the land of the living?" To this the dog-headed god did not reply but began to howl. A hand shook Samuel. It was one of the Bedouins waking him. Today they would journey on to Karnack but Samuel was beginning to believe it was a task which would be wasted

CHAPTER EIGHT

11 September 945AD The gardens of Arbiy

26 Muharram 334 Islam date

Samuel awoke, the sound of the call to prayer now almost three centuries old was being sung from the towers of Akbar. "Come worshipers of Allah. Come to prayer. The voice of the servant of Allah Mohammed his prophet is calling you. Come to prayer you servants of Allah come to prayer" sang the voice on the wind. For a moment Samuel considered turning over and going back to sleep. But on further contemplation he rose and washed himself before hurriedly pulling on the linen cloth. Covering his head in a turban, he made his way down the staircase to the ground floor of the vast guesthouse. He found others had risen and were making their way to the mosque.

Today he would discover more of the words of the prophet he thought excitedly. Had not the leaders of the faith promised that every day following in the footsteps of the prophet would bring him closer to Allah? Arriving at the mosque he removed his shoes like so many others around him. He was anxious to find a place near the teachers of the Koran. Hurriedly he made his way inside. The crowd around him jostled for a better position than his neighbor. The service began behind the lattice work. He sensed, rather than saw movement, which meant that there were women present, faithful to the prophet and to Allah. The prayers began. Samuel bowed his head low his head, touching the mosaic floor as custom and ritual demanded. He had not been a Moslem long, about five years. To Samuel it was not strange that he a Jew could serve the prophet. Had not the prophet Mohammed, Blessed be his name, had two Hebrew wives? It had come about that on his travels he had chanced to arrive in Arabia. Here the prophet was revered and Allah worshipped with the continuing pressure on him from those who lived around him. Samuel had converted to the faith of the prophet for it was prudent to do so. For if he had not, his business would not have done well. He would not have found much in the city of Akbar that would help him if he had remained a follower of Moses. However being a converted Jew, he had a major difficulty that he would first have to overcome. For to read the Koran, which was written in Arabic, the language of Allah, Samuel had first to learn the language and then learn to read it well if he was to

find any thing of enduring worth. Thus on this day Samuel had come to the realization that he had at last reached the stage when he was fully competent to read the book of the prophet.

When the prayers were over, there lingered about a number of persons who wished to speak with the holy man who had led the service. The holy man was in great demand having spent many years in the study of the Koran and in the desert, seeking the wisdom of Allah following the words of the prophet.

Samuel would have liked to ask the holy man a question but the fact that there were so many people who wished to speak to the man kept Samuel from coming forward. For one thing Samuel had noticed that people tended to hang around once their question had been answered, in order to hear the questions or the dilemmas of others and how the holy man would answer them. Samuel had no desire to have his question to the holy man spread abroad. The very nature of Samuel's problem would, if revealed, make him an outcast; and unclean in the eyes of the population of the city and of the congregation of Allah.

Now through out the five years that Samuel had spent in Akbar he had been appointed a mentor, an older man by the name of Aliban Mohamet, a venerable old philosophic sage with a long white beard, who instructed him in the ways of the prophet. Aliban Mohamet was a wealthy merchant of the city who would spend much of his day meditating on the words of the prophet as put down in the Koran. It was he who first began to teach Samuel the beauty of the flowing language of the Koran. It was he who taught Samuel the precepts of the book, and it was he to whom Samuel would often return to ask questions that had puzzled him. Since the beginning of his stay in Akbar, they met often in the garden of this venerable merchant to discuss the problems that beset Samuel. It seemed since he had become a follower of the prophet that there were so many things, which a man could do which would cause him to sin and fall from the path of the prophet.

The garden was filled with many fruit trees and many flowers. The scent of jasmine was one which permeated the whole garden, bringing it a sense of peace and reflections. The roses, which the old man cultivated, were another thing of beauty.

Aliban had tended them with loving care for a long time. Generations of roses had grown up in this garden tended by the caring hand of the old man, having long since surrendered his business activities to three of his sons.

The retired merchant looked upon Samuel as an adopted son to whom he could teach all the things he had learned. Thus their conversations in the scented garden revolved not only around the study of the ridged law of the prophet but also horticulture, at which the old man was a master. Some times they would discuss travels the old man had made. Samuel listened as the old man described things which he had seen in his life. Sometimes Samuel would smile and nod in agreement at other times Samuel would let the old man talk. It was good to hear what other people thought of things he too had seen. Samuel found himself reliving some of the time he had spent in Egypt through the words of the old man. Sometimes Samuel longed for a glass of good cool wine but these things were forbidden to the followers of the prophet.

Once the day was over and Samuel had closed the doors of the vast villa he retired to his room to meditate on the activities of the day. Thus on this evening he retired at his usual hour to reflect on the days activities and to once more read a section from the Koran. While he was yet reading he fell into a deep sleep leaning on his arm and hand.

While Samuel slept he began to dream that he was once more in the scented garden. The old man's chair was vacant but on a tree stump near by sat a man in the dress of a desert warrior. His appearance gave Samuel the impression that this man was lost, sitting in the garden at night. The smell of Jasmine filling the air Samuel approached warily not wishing to surprise the man who seemed to be in deep meditation over a copy of the Koran. "Peace be upon you' he said to which the man replied the same greeting. "Pray tell me stranger" said Samuel "what has happened to Ali bin Mohamet the owner of this garden?" "I know not friend" said the man a little confused "I once owned this garden but that was many years ago. Now I own nothing". The moon light reflecting of his face made Samuel wonder why he seemed so familiar.

"I think that I have seen you before sire" said Samuel "of what tribe are you?" He asked the desert warrior who now stood up and plucked a rose lifting it to his face to take in the aroma of the delicate blossom. "Alas poor man I was in my life a merchant, a robber, and a charlatan who deceived many into following me" said the desert warrior.

"I was the follower of the Moon and by my actions I caused many peoples of many nations to follow after me to believe as I do in Allah". "Alas I was deceived. I followed the ancient gods of my people then made sure that only one of them was the Supreme Being; now there are many lost souls who follow after my ignorance and pride." "Poor man if you have yet a chance to escape from the gardens of Aribiy do it now for the road to hell and hades is to be found following the path I laid out for many millions who even now find the pit open to them. The way of destruction is made plain to those who fall into the pit but alas poor man they only realize it when it is too late for it to make a difference."

These words so startled Samuel that he drew back as if he had been struck a physical blow. Who could this strange man be? For surely he could not be the prophet himself come to warn Samuel that the way he was now following was a path to destruction.

"Pray sire" asked Samuel "Art thou the prophet Mohammed?" The man sobbed as he flung himself against a tree. "I am he" the man sobbed in broken tears "now I spend my nights trying to warn those who are falling into this trap to turn, turn back I say for I am bound to spend eternity in hell fires for my sins and deceptions. Oh that I had never been born he sobbed" before fading away. For a moment longer Samuel lingered in the garden, before awakening with a cramp in his neck and a numb hand. For a while he lay on his bed, the cool night air of the desert blowing in. Samuel contemplated this strange vision. Had he really met with the ghost of the doomed prophet? Turning his head he found lying on the bed next to him the rose which the apparition had plucked from the bush.

Rising, our hero paced the room in some confusion before turning to his writing desk. Here he began resolutely to make up his accounts for he had determined that in the gardens of

Aribiy there was no salvation to be found and only destruction.

The following morning he sold all his property and left the city of Akbar never more to return to that accursed place.

978 AD Constantinople Samuel wonders

It was a place of wonder. Samuel found himself looking from one thing to another he had never seen a place more populated with people than the jewel of cities. Constantinople was all and more than he expected. A mother of all cities, daily the poor people of the city were fed from the bounty of the emperor. "Not much chance of establishing an inn here" he thought as he was drawn along amidst a crowd of people going to a shrine where a sacred relic of the true cross was held. "Then of course there was so much to see people from all the known world came here to look in wonder at the great church, which was said to have its roof held up by the very heavens." The Hagia Sophia was a church of gigantic proportions with its roof held up by a great number of very slender decorative pillars.

When the center of the government of the empire had moved to this far-flung corner of the earth Samuel had thought it but another fad of the wise emperor Constantine. But now that he beheld the wonder of the place he wondered what the followers of the carpenter could do in his name. Indeed it was a great city. With many churches of all descriptions and types masses were said day and night through out the city in worship of God.

The harbor of the city was always very busy with ships coming from all over the known world bringing produce to feed the great multitudes of people. In fact, many people had left their countries in the distant parts of the empire to come and seek their fortune in this great city. Many were to be disappointed. Those who returned to their own homes though would have stories to tell of the wonders of the great city. How did it compare to ancient Jerusalem which was now but a distant memory. When it came to splendor well there too were incomparable. Jerusalem was a holy city designated so by God himself. Had not Abraham offered his own son as an offering to God on the mount and had not God intervened and shown

Abraham the ram, which took the place of Isaac?
Constantinople for all its wonder was not a holy city as far as Samuel was concerned. It was a city of great wealth and beauty build to honor God but it was not Jerusalem.

Samuel found himself now under the great balcony on which was displayed on feast days the burial cloth of the carpenter. The cloth bore an image burned there when the young carpenter had risen from the grave. The image was forever etched in the cloth; neither painted nor copied it was an image that had been actually burned into the ancient cloth. The burial cloth was displayed to the masses of believers who would look up at the balcony in wonder whispering their prayers of adoration to their Lord and savior. As they prayed they fingered their rosaries, remembering the prayers that the village priests had taught them in places as far of as Spain France and Germany. There were even some Saxons from the distant Briton here who looked in disbelief at the cloth, wondering by what method the face of the holy savior had come to be on the cloth. A monk was busy explaining to them in their barbaric tongue the operation and bidding them believe in the miracle which they beheld. When the monk had finished speaking, the Saxons made the sign of the cross and fell to their knees and began to pray.

At mid day the great throng of people who were pilgrims and the homeless in the city assembled in the great square of the city where large three legged pots contained stew. Here the food was handed over to the people. Whoever presented his bowl received a portion of the stew and a crust of bread sufficient to last them until the next meal. When the people were fed there were a great many houses of refuge in the city where one might enter if there was room to spend the night. This, the wise emperor had decreed and paid for from his own pocket lest any member of his empire might be found wanting in the great city with out a place to rest his head. This was said to be that they should remember that even at the time of his birth Jesus did not have a place of his own to rest his head. Samuel with a knowing look, acknowledged this; not without a certain amount of guilt.

The food that the emperor paid for out of his own pocket was for the reason that he would not have it said that in the greatest city of the realm people died in the streets of hunger.

"Come friend" said a man who had many sores upon his face "Show me the way to the well of healing." Samuel as a visitor had not heard of this place and had informed the man of his ignorance. "Why friend how be it that you are in the city of wonder, the city of God yet you have not heard of the well of wondrous healing?" asked the man. "I am not of this city. I like you am a visitor to the city." replied Samuel. "From where did you set out?" asked the man now curious to Samuel's origin "I am a citizen of the city of Jerusalem in Israel." said Samuel "Ah blessed city of the savior; the city of our God" said the man. "One day I hope to make a pilgrimage there. To behold the sacred tomb of our savior, to stand atop Golgotha's hill to look down on the city of God, what a wonder to behold." said the man.

"Indeed friend it is a beautiful city, one which I am proud to call home." said Samuel "But come friend the line draws near let us stand ready to receive the daily portion of the wise emperor's bounty" said Samuel. "Alas friend I have no bowl I was hoping to get a crust, which I could soak in water." said the poor man. From deep within his soul Samuel found compassion in his heart handing over his bowl he said "Here take my bowl. I am not hungry." although the hunger pains gnawed at his stomach he found a peace at doing some thing for his fellow man.

Samuel's new friend hailed from Silesia in the great eastern European hinter land, the area had first come under the influence of Saxon priests in the 7th century. Thomas as his Christianized name was, had been afflicted by an ailment for which the only cure was to wash from and drink the water of the Holy well of ST Catalina at Constantinople. Thus he had undertaken a journey of thousands of miles and many months now on this day he had arrived penniless except for the offering of a few copper coins for which he was to pay for the healing water of the well. Having received the crust of bread and the bowl of stew he moved on while Samuel received only a crust of bread.

“I thank you friend for the use of your bowl” said Thomas “I do not know what I would have done. I have not eaten in many days” he said as he slowly spooned the hot steaming mix of vegetables and meat into his mouth. “I would like to give you some thing in exchange for offering up your meal” he said, “but alas I have nothing. Maybe if you go with me to the healing well the Lord our Father would see it fit to bless you too.” “I am indeed interested in this well of wonder” said Samuel, “for if knowledge of it could have reached half a continent away then it must indeed be some thing to behold” he said.

“Oh friend Samuel you would find it a place of healing. I have heard that there was a cripple who left his crutches behind and walked all the way back to Silesia. I hope and pray our holy mother will find it in her heart to do a wonder for me and restore my poor health” continued Thomas.

“Pray friend Thomas what is it that exactly ails you?” asked Samuel. “I was born in to a good family, good farming stock, all my brothers were healthy. Growing up there was little sickness in our home. Did I tell you that I have eleven brothers and six sisters? Well as I was saying, I was the only one in the family who did not enjoy good health from my birth. I have had a problem with my skin it breaks out in sores and no one really liked me. Because of it they thought I was a dirty lad but it is not a matter of washing which I do regularly, five, some times six times a season. It is the skin you see, it becomes dry and brittle. We have tried many things, goose fat, the liver of Oxen and for a time it works but then the old sores break out again. And I have to go about with my head covered our local priest said to me. Thomas you must have committed a great sin when been born this is why you have this affliction. I suggest you go to the Holy well of ST Catharine in Constantinople and ask the holy mother to heal you. So that is how I come to be here. I have walked half way across the continent to be here and most of the way I have had a stone in my shoe as penance for my sins. Now the end of my journey is almost upon me I am quite excited at the prospect of been healed by the waters of the well. It is like the pool in the bible the priest told us of where the lame man lay and the Lord our Saviour came and healed him. Maybe you know of the pool of Siloam.” said Thomas.

“Indeed I do know of many pools in the city of Jerusalem but none by that name” said Samuel, who in fact at this stage knew very little of the bible and had no idea of what the strange man from Silesia was speaking about.

As the day progressed they found themselves a hostel in the city where they would spend the night. Here people from many nations gathered to sleep, never in the same place twice. The city was a place of great wonder and the pilgrims found a place to rest their heads wherever they could. On the morrow they would seek out the well of healing.

These pilgrims like many who were to follow them over the centuries were a superstitious lot clinging fast to relics of a previous age. Almost a thousand years before the carpenter of Nazareth had been born and on the events of his life and death they based their lives. These pilgrims were striving for holiness and trying to live righteous lives so that they might one day enter heaven, where they would be rewarded for their faithfulness to the cause of the Carpenter. They searched for rest for their weary souls and healing for their bodies. However it was not yet meet for them to wander on that day. There were pilgrimages to be made, time to be spent adoring the sacred relics such as the sacred thigh bone of ST John the Baptist. There were waters to be drunk at the holy wells at all the holy places. There were pilgrims who would beat themselves with whips enduring tortures of the road as they walked resolutely to the shrines of various saints.

Our friend Samuel had seen many things in his long life but the religious fervor with which the people around him acted scared him. If he remembered correctly the carpenter was a man of sweet temperament and had always spoken openly of loving thy neighbor. The carpenter had said nothing of beating yourself for sins. It is true he had said ask ye therefore for forgiveness of those that you had sinned against and you will be forgiven, but the extent to which the people of this age went was frightening to him.

At the close of the day Samuel bid his new friend a good night’s rest before lying down and dropping off to sleep.

CHAPTER NINE

Jerusalem 1125 AD

As the Jewish innkeeper, let's call him Samuel, poured a drink for one of his guests, his mind was cast back to a day in the year 1125AD when the Christian knights and their followers had taken Jerusalem. They had breached a gate and had come pouring into the city killing all who they happened to meet at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. They paused for a moment, taking in the sight of a Coptic priest, waving a banner with the Coptic cross, before they rushed into the church, dispatching the priests. "Infidels!" they cried, finding a number of Coptic Christians in the church in the dress of the Arab population they rushed forward into the main building. The Knights followed by the hoards of unwashed half savage followers and began slaughtering the Coptic Christians with broad slashes of their swords and knives, the European knights not stopping to ask if they were Christian or not, slaughtered until the floor of the church was covered in Christian blood. The horses slipped on the bloody, wet surface.

In other parts of the city, the European Christian army was raping and pillaging. The scenes of death and destruction were to be repeated many times that day and the day that followed, before some of the more cool headed knights were able to bring their followers to order. Samuel had observed the killing and had hidden off in a dark alley in which his inn was situated. A dark, filthy, flea infested little inn, offering hospitality to any who could afford the rates he charged. By the third day after the city gate had been breached, Samuel ventured forth into the city to see what he could buy for the inn. There was not much available as most of the people who worked at the market had been slaughtered. Samuel knew for a while at least lean times lay ahead. However things being as they were Samuel reckoned that he had been alive for a thousand years, he would be able to survive. He had seen massacres before and he knew he would survive. It sickened him when he saw people been slaughtered for what their beliefs. Of course he was glad that the Moslems had been driven from the city, but at what cost? Samuel was wandering near the market when he was accosted by a group of drunken Christians. "What are you doing here Mohamed?" they cried "Don't you know that your people have been driven from the

city?" Samuel stood dead still and said "I am Samuel ben Johan, a Jew of this city. If you are a Jew show us!" said one of the crowd. This was followed by cheers and cat calls from a number of the mob. Samuel had to think quickly. He knew how a mob's playfulness could turn to hatred and destruction. Slowly he began backing up down the street. The mob was quick to notice this and they began drawing closer with significant glances at the daggers at their belts. One or two of the more drunken bullies in the crowd began drawing their weapons. Suddenly there was the clatter of hooves as a tall knight on a grey horse came trotting down the street. "What is going on here?" asked the knight in a heavy German accent. "My Lord we have caught an infidel" cried the leader of the mob. "Is this true?" said the knight turning in the saddle towards the Jew. "No sire I am Samuel Ben Johannes, Jew of this city" cried the Jew with fear. "I own a small inn a short way from here which I put at your disposal" he continued quickly. "I was out looking for food for my guests" he ended.

"What proof have that you are what you say you are?" said the leader of the mob. The knight looked on with interest. "Well, what have you to say Samuel or what ever you call yourself?" said the knight Gunther. "We did ask him to show us me lord" said one of the mob. "Quiet!" shouted Gunther. "Well Jew, prove you are what you say you are." Samuel had lived through many humiliations this was just another of them he thought, as he slowly lifted his robe and dropped his loincloth. There was a hush in the street as the crowd looked on. Samuel dropped his robe. "Are you satisfied now?" he asked. Gunther looked down at him and said softly "Yes Jew you will live to see another day." The crowd moved off down the road. Gunther sat still in the saddle and looked down at Samuel. "I am sorry that had to happen" he said "but we cannot be too sure now days. I apologize for my people's behavior. You said you have an inn nearby? Do you think I can get a cup of wine there?" asked Gunther. Samuel was taken aback by this behavior and even more so by the apology of the Christian Knight. He had heard that all western Christians were barbarians with little thought of their fellow man. "Sire I will lead you there now. I have some fine wines which you might like, grown in our Judean Mountains" he said as he took the horse's reins and began to lead the German knight to the inn. This was to be the beginning of a friendship that would span

two generations.

Samuel opened the door and allowed his guest to enter the inn. The main room of the inn was cool after the heat of the street outside. Gunther found a seat on a low bench and removed his helmet placing it on the bench next to him. Samuel brought the pitcher of wine and poured the amber liquid into a baked clay mug. Gunther took up the mug and drank deeply. "You have a good business here my friend" said Gunther. "A man tries" said Samuel, "but things are not always easy. I was trying to find some bread today at the market but alas there is no baker left so my wife will have to do some baking" said Samuel. "Ah yes I know we were a bit too hasty the other day when we entered the city" said Gunther with a sigh. Samuel detected a genuine sorrow in the young man's voice.

"These things happen" said Samuel "the infidels also did the same when they were angry with my people said the Jew. I have seen it happen before so I cannot really say it was any different but what I cannot understand is why you Christians killed your own fellow believers at the churches. I have heard that hundreds died at the point of Christian swords I don't understand how your people could do it." "Ah yes that was a mistake. Some of us did try to stop the rabble but you know what men are like when their blood is hot for battle" Gunther said with a shrug.

The innkeeper's wife entered the room with a platter of sweet meats and placed them before the knight, her eyes averted. Gunther began eating and as he ate he began telling the Jew of his experiences traveling from his home city of Bremen, in the German heartland; how green the country was, so different from the holy land. The Jew sat listening, occasionally asking questions. When the name of Constantinople came up the Jew's face lit up as he listened, and his questions became more specific; what was the distant city like and what did people do for a living. What did they eat and were there many inns in the city; to all these questions the German knight gave honest answers with what he knew. It was not his fault that the information he had was mostly second hand and mainly superstition. It was like that all over the world in the 12th century.

They talked till late in the night before retiring to bed. The subject of their discussion was mainly the distant lands the knight had seen. All the while Samuel was carefully taking note of what was being said, storing it away for later reference. One did this more often as the years passed by because “you never know where you might one day open an inn” thought Samuel.

Over the following days Gunther became a regular guest at the inn and it was not to long before he made the inn his base. This afforded the innkeeper and the inn a measure of protection from marauding Christians from the west, who after a few weeks in the holy city began to lose their fierceness. As they adapted to the city’s climate now they were to be seen wandering around the city with open mouths wondering if this was the place where the Lord had drunk from a well or if this was the house with the upper room. All the while Samuel kept his own council not wanting to give too much away. One day Gunther arrived at the inn in a highly excited mood.

After he had refreshed himself, he called Samuel to his room and carefully unwrapped a small splinter of wood with much emotion and tears in his eyes. Gunther showed Samuel the treasure and said “I have found a piece of the true cross of the Lord! Look at how old it looks, it must be real” said the German. Samuel looked at the splinter and said nothing he had seen the Christians searching for relics and buying them from unscrupulous merchants who charged high prices for their fake products. Samuel was about to say something to this effect when he happened to look into the face of his German friend and saw the light on his face. Samuel thought that just this once it might be okay to say nothing and let the German believe what ever he wanted to.

About three months after the city of Jerusalem had fallen; Gunther decided that he would like to see the place where the Lord was born. He asked Samuel if it was possible for him to go with him to Bethlehem to find the place. Samuel agreed more out of a sense of loyalty to his new friend than any feeling of finding the place. It had been a very long time since the inn at Bethlehem had been destroyed. The Romans had taken very good care of that, Samuel remembered. So on a hot summer morning they set off before the sun rose. Gunther on

his large horse and Samuel on a mule, the road was dusty at this time of year and the fields between harvests. The olive trees along the way looked greener than ever that year. In the early afternoon they arrived in the sleepy village of Bethlehem. There were already a number of Europeans in the village. Gunther asked them if they knew where the stable had stood and was shown to a small stable which Samuel knew to be no older than 20 years. Here they found various gifts people from the village selling relics of the stable and bones of saints. Samuel could never understand the obsession the Christians had with relics. After Gunther had prayed in the stable and bought a bone of a little known saint he asked Samuel if he knew of any thing in Bethlehem that might be of interest to him. Samuel thought for a moment and said I will show you an old ruin that stood here in the time of your Lord. He led Gunther to the southern end of the village to the spot where the inn had once stood and said, "Here once stood an old inn, long before your Lord was born. It was in my family. Here my ancestors were born and here Herod's soldiers came looking for your Lord" said the Jew. They wandered about until unknown to the German; he stood where the stable had once stood. The Jew thought "you don't know it my friend but I have allowed you to stand on the spot on which your Lord was born I have given you a gift of great worth. But you will never know and that is the way it should be you have been a good friend to me you saved me from the mob and now I repay you."

In the late afternoon they left the village and began climbing the Judean hills. When night fell they stopped for the night. They camped out at a wadi surrounded by palm trees. Once they had eaten their small meal of olives and bread they settled down for the night, the wind was blowing softly from the west and it cooled the air after the hot summer day. They soon fell asleep.

It was much later when Samuel woke. Coming gradually to the surface of wakefulness, he listened to the sounds of the night. The wind had stopped blowing and he could hear the sound of an owl hooting in the distance. The bright full moon was setting on the horizon. He listened and found it strange that there was no other noise around except for the owl that hooted in the distance. The animals were a little restless and

Samuel wondered if Gunther was still sleeping soundly. At that moment Samuel thought he heard the sound of voices whispering softly on the night air. Slowly he felt for his short dagger, as he was doing this he felt Gunther's hand fall on his. Samuel looked to his left and saw the German was awake and showing him to be quiet. As he drew his dagger the knight slowly climbed to his feet and moved away into the shadows of the surrounding trees followed by Samuel. Working their way slowly and carefully round in a big circle they had almost gone all the way round the wadi when they came upon the five men. The men were moving slowly towards the camp which was now empty. Gunther moved quickly up behind the last man in the group and silently dispatched him with his dagger cutting the man's throat, careful to lower the man to the ground before moving off into the bush towards the next man who was moving to the camp.

The second man was very alert and nearly gave the game away when Samuel stepped out in front of him before Gunther hit him with the hilt of his broad sword on the crown of the head. Now that the odds were almost equal Gunther and Samuel closed in on the three remaining men. With swords swinging and daggers flashing, the fight was over in a matter of moments. Gunther and Samuel fought together well. When the last man was cornered, Gunther called out for him to surrender to save his life the man replied that he had served Allah and would see paradise. He would die the death of a martyr before he would surrender. Thus saying, he flew at the German knight who dropped him with one blow from his sword, which was now covered with blood.

Samuel and Gunther returned to the camp and saddled their beasts before leaving the site of the battle. "I knew some thing was wrong when I heard the owl calling" said Gunther, "The owl never hoots unless someone is going to die." "Yes I was surprised by how silent the night was then I heard the voices in the night and I knew that there was someone who wished to harm us" said the Jew.

The sun rose as they climbed towards Jerusalem. Once they had climbed the last hill before reaching Jerusalem, they looked on the holy city, the towers shimmering in the early

morning light. The old walls looked so welcoming. The sound of bird song reached them as they began the descent into the city. The city walls loomed up over them. As they came closer they walked the path which hundreds of thousands had passed over through the ages. It was dusty and worn with the feet of pilgrims who had gone before. Once they entered the city, the light changed. As they made their way through the winding streets towards the inn Samuel felt happy to be in the old city once more. On one corner they were challenged by a group of soldiers who Gunther quickly informed that he was Count Gunther Von Bremen and they should be about their business before they felt the flat of his sword. When they reached the inn and had roused Samuel's wife to make them some breakfast she scowled at Samuel and wanted to know why his best robe was now spoilt with blood flecks. Samuel realized that he better change before his wife could say more. He left the room, returning a while later. "My friend you will have to excuse me later today as it is the Sabbath tonight and I have some duties to which I must attend" said Samuel.

Count Gunther Von Bremen unlike most of his contemporaries was a well-read man. This was largely due to the influence of his mother, who had taught him to read and write from an early age. Later he received his education from a monk whom had been to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage. So, it was not unusual for Gunther to ask questions of the innkeeper that the innkeeper some times found embarrassing. Samuel also noticed that his German friend was of an inquisitive nature.

When Samuel had completed his Sabbath obligations he found Gunther once more wanting to know some of the local history of the holy city. "Do you know where the garden of Gethsemane is?" Gunther asked Samuel knew and offered to show him the place on the following morning thus on a hot Sunday morning in April of the year 1125 AD, Gunther and Samuel once more left the city for the short journey to the garden. When they arrived at the garden Samuel began showing him around. Coming upon an old olive press which had been in the garden for three thousand years, Samuel explained to Gunther how the presses worked and told him of how the grove workers would tend the grove tapping the oil from the olives. Some of the trees were very old. As they

wandered through the garden they came upon an old tomb which had been hewn from an outcrop of rock which had recently been opened by grave robbers. Samuel was quite shocked by this sacrilege to the old tomb but Gunther explained that he had seen this before. When Christians from the west thought there was treasure in a tomb they would break it open and desecrate it looking for the riches they thought were buried there.

Samuel replied that it was not part of Jewish custom to bury riches with the dead. Riches were gathered for your lifetime and for your children. Climbing to the apex of the hill, the two men looked over the holy city, watching the early morning light falling on the shimmering domes and flat roofs. Of the city a slight wind was blowing from the east and groups of knights and their followers made their way to and from the city. The sound of the church bells could be heard ringing out, calling the faithful to service as they made their way down the hill towards the city.

After he returned from the church service Gunther sought out the innkeeper and told him that he would be leaving in a few days for the Galilee, as he wanted to find a place to build a castle for himself and his followers who were camped out at various quarters of the city. Samuel expressed his sadness at the German's leaving and wished him blessings and traveling mercies.

Gunther had been granted a tract of land in Galilee where he could build himself a stronghold and a place for his children to grow strong when he eventually had them. Gunther asked Samuel a number of questions on the history and custom of the district and Samuel was glad to supply the information needed. Gunther was glad to hear that the Sea of Galilee was a vast inland lake and there were many places on the shore where a stronghold could be built.

So it came about that three days later the German bid farewell to his Jewish friend as he set out to build his kingdom in the Galilee. The caravan of Gunther Von Bremen consisted of about three hundred Christians from Germany who had followed their knight from the German heartland. In the hope of finding a better life for themselves and also answering a call

from the Pope to win back the Holy Land from the infidels.

It said a lot for Gunther that so many of his townsfolk had survived to reach Jerusalem as the followers usually were the first victims of plague and war on the route to the east Gunther was admired and respected by all those who followed him.

1135 Brememmm Germany the Jew-Sniffer

One of the ugliest things in this time was the forcing of the Jews into the ghettos of all European cities. Count Günter Von Bremen had returned from the holy land to be confronted by a missive from the church in which he was instructed that the holy father had deemed it fit to move all Jews into a single area in each city and it was the Count's duty to see that these measures were introduced in the city of Bremen. To this end the Count had been instructed to appoint a jew-sniffer a person who would actively seek out those Jews who refused to move to the ghettos or who concealed their Jewish roots.

Now at that time lived in Bremen one William Longmont who had a rather shady past and would do any thing for a little gold. He had himself returned from the war in the holy land a few years earlier. William Longmont had set himself up in a lucrative business of spying for the papal courts of Europe. The holy father knowing of this man's ability had suggested that Count Günter appoint this man to the post of Jew-sniffer.

"Go find me this man" said the Count with a distasteful look on his face as he handed the letter to his bailiff. The whole business sickened him for had he not enjoyed the freest hospitality under the roof of Samuel Ben Ezra of Jerusalem? Now the Count was being forced to imprison his friends and fellow religionists in a restrictive area where they would live together never to see the open sky in the dark and dank city. They were to be relegated to the poorest quarters of the city of Bremen.

William of Longmont so named for his exceptionally long gait, was a German of the most ancient origin. When confronted with the new duty, Longmont smiled; he had dealt with Jews before and knew how to handle them. "I do not see the wisdom of the Holy Father's instruction in this case but I am forced to implement it" said the Count, to the tall man. "I

suppose the Jews like living together” said William. “Yes I suppose as much as rats like living together” said the bailiff who was a very hard man. Who liked the Jews not at all.

The Jews were gathered together and moved to the poorest section of the city. A wall was erected around the four streets in which the Jews were moved and a guard set at the gate. The whole process took a few months.

In the mean time the Jew-sniffer spent his time making himself familiar with all of the known Jews of the city. Once he had become fully familiar he began to watch them to see who else he might catch in his trap. William of Longmont kept a book of who came to the door of the house of Ezra the money lender, who bought bread from Joel the Jewish baker. He would climb to the highest point in the city on a Friday afternoon and look for the signs of fires been extinguished at a certain hour thus he would work out who was observing Sabbath then he would compare this information with his list of known Jews in the city of Bremen. On finding a Jewish household which was not on his list Longmont would make careful note and continue to watch and investigate. On the 16th day of November in the year of our Lord One thousand one hundred and thirty five the count at the head of a number of men at arms, the bailiff and the Jew-sniffer set out early in the morning to round up a number of suspected Jews. The first house belonged to a merchant of the city. Josef Benjamin was the one chosen for investigation. The group arrived outside the house. A knock at the door brought no response. “I am not surprised” said William “all good Jews would be at prayer at this hour.” “Break the door down” ordered the Count. Quickly three men at arms brought their axes to bear on the door. When the door was broken, the men at arms stood back to allow the Count through the hole. On entering, Günter was confronted by a sight which saddened him much, in later years. There the merchant with his family stood facing the wall praying in the ancient language of the Jews, moving in rhythm to the words he uttered. William Longmont walked past the Count and dragged the old man away from the wall. “You filthy Jew!” he shouted. “How dare you defile our city with your filthy words!” Longmont threw a punch and hit the merchant in the mouth. The men at arms moved through the house, quickly capturing every one who was in the house

finding evidence of their complicity in the crime of being Jewish and celebrating the Sabbath.

When all of the occupants had been assembled in the street the Count had them put in irons and marched them off to the ghetto. Turning to the merchant the Count said "There will a fine for disobeying the Popes order. You may gather some of your possessions before you leave for your new home" he said. Hurriedly the merchant ran back into the house and soon emerged with a large bag slung over his shoulder. "Have you got everything?" asked the Count. "Yes sire" said the Jew. "Well then I suggest you join your family in your new home" said the Count, as two of the men at arms marched him off to the ghetto. While the Count and the men marched off to their next victim's house the good people of Bremen began to gather in the street. Once the Count had left, the people who had been standing whispering began moving in to the house, ransacking it in search of gold and other rich furnishings. In a few minutes the house was completely empty of all goods, then some one dropped a lighted coal on the wooden floor and due to the nature of the building, the old wood had been highly polished over centuries, the bees wax took but a moment to catch fire. Soon the house was engulfed in flames. Word spread that the Jews had set the house on fire in revenge for been turned out. Pretty soon there was a riot in the city. If it had not been for the strong number of men at arms that the Count commanded the Jews of Bremen might very well have died that day.

This course was to be followed for many centuries when the people wanted a scapegoat they would turn and blame the Jews who would bear the brunt of the problems.

1155 AD The Count reflects

There comes a time in every man's life when he begins to take stock of the sum total of their life, their achievements, their families and what they would be leaving to posterity. Thus on a certain day in the year 1155 AD the now aged Count Gunther Von Bremen had occasion to see for himself the sum total of his life. While his grandson Herbert was being bounced upon his knee, the Count began to think back to the time he had spent on the crusades in the Holy land, of the time he had spent with the Jew Samuel Ben Ezra. One of the most striking

things about this period in his life was the way in which he had been teachable and having a deep sense of right and wrong he had been pliable and to this end his friendship with the Jew had stood him in good stead. He had learned many things which he might have over looked if he had not been instrumental in rescuing the Jew from the mob back in the hot summer of the year 1125 AD.

In particular, he had learned that even though there was a vast chasm between the two of them on religious ground, the Jew Samuel was honestly seeking a way to please God. In his friendly way he had taught Gunther the precepts of the Jewish religion. He had shown the young European Count the God of Abraham, Isaac and Moses. In turn Samuel had listened as Gunther had expounded on the beliefs of the church, of the difficulty of the current time, sin, the church when two popes proclaimed their preeminence over each other. Gunther also explained in his simple way that he believed that the blessed savior had come to this earth to redeem all men both Jew and Gentile. Samuel had listened yet had seemed to have his mind on other things. The running of an inn in the old city of Jerusalem took much needed attention even at the best of times. Thus when Gunther had finished explaining the reasons for the beads of the rosary Samuel had excused himself. Begging the young Count's indulgence for his rudeness but his help was needed with the cooking in the kitchen. "Pilgrims arriving need to be fed" said Samuel, leaving the count. Shortly thereafter Gunther had left Jerusalem to visit the Galilee and had not found time to return for many months. When he did, he found that Samuel was no longer at the inn and thus the conversation, which they might have, had never happened.

Now in old age Count Gunther Von Bremen was confronted with a relative of the man he had met so many years before in Jerusalem. The relative bore the same name as the man he had met in the alleyway that day in 1125 and what was more bore a marked resemblance to Samuel Ben Ezra. This Samuel who was newly arrived in the city of Bremen was a cloth merchant by trade and had on account of the old friendship with his cousin Samuel Ben Ezra, sought out the Count to present him with a gift of great value in remembrance of the old friendship his cousin bore the Count.

Thus Gunther came to reflect on his past. The count remembered the fact that on returning from the Holy land he had to implement in the city one of the ugliest things he had ever done forcing the Jews of the city of Bremen into the ghetto. Of the Jew sniffer which he had appointed, there was much to be said, all of it bad, for this man had taken an inordinate fondness for torturing those whom he caught out in the lie. The priests of the city seemed to take great delight in following his example. Sunday after Sunday the priest would thunder from the pulpit "it was the filthy Jews that were bringing the great states of Europe into disrepute." All the while Gunther held his tongue but certain bitterness against the expounders of his faith began to grow in his heart. One day after three years of this, he had become extremely angry by the latest outrage committed in the name of Christ. An old Jew had been found outside the gate of the Judden strasser after curfew. The mob incited by the priests and the Jew Sniffer had set upon the old man tearing his beard from his face and beating him until he resembled not a man so much as a lump of beaten broken meat. How far had the brave souls of the church fallen to Satan's bidding? On hearing this, Gunther, Count of Bremen had summoned the priests and the Jew-Sniffer "Enough" he had said to them "Enough I say of this wanton debasement of our fellow humans. Do you not realize that our blessed Savior was also a Jew?" He asked. "But they killed our Lord" ventured one of the most obnoxious of the priests. "Priest you gain say me to your peal" thundered the Count. "These Jews have done nothing to deserve this. They are but humble folk going about their business and yet you blast them from your pulpit every Sunday inciting hatred" shouted the count. The Jew Sniffer with an evil look on his face said "May I remind you sire that it is done on order of the Holy Father." "You have no right to speak" shouted the count into the man's face. You are the lowest of the low a pariah on humanity praying on the life's blood of a people who were once blessed of God." He continued. "Now I want this humiliation of the Jews to stop. You may put them in the Judden strasser but in no wise will you find other ways to punish them needlessly" he said firmly.

Eventually after five years the Jew-sniffer William of Longmont had resigned his post claiming "poor health" and

had left the city. The Count and the Jews of the city of Bremen had breathed a sigh of relief at his leaving since then the post of Jew sniffer had been carefully guarded and only people who could be trusted by the Count were appointed to the post, much to the disgust of the church.

Now the Count had finished thinking of the old days. He sat back, called for the child's wet nurse and poured himself a glass of mulled wine. "Winters were getting colder" he thought "or maybe I am getting old".

CHAPTER TEN

Spain 1492

Samuel was serving his customers the thick Andalusian stew which so many had enjoyed. Of all the people Samuel had ever served, the Spanish seemed to enjoy their food the most today.

Christopher Columbus was in a foul mood. He had come to see Ferdinand and Isabella, monarchs of Spain. After seven long years, his grand design for a voyage to the Indies had been rejected. Now as he ate his final meal at the inn where he had been a guest of Samuel Ferreira for seven long years, he bemoaned the fact that it had all been for nothing.

“Ah Samuel give me a little more stew before I leave” Columbus said throwing a few coins on to the table. Samuel served the man, and then returned with a bottle of red wine. Sitting down on a stool, he uncorked the bottle and poured the wine into to stone mugs. “Bah you want to know what happened,” said Columbus. “I will tell you, as it will make a good story. That is the thing about you inn keepers. you listen while people tell you their stories.” said Columbus.

“I was up early, dressed in my best suit of clothes and with my charts at the ready. I set off to the court. Today was to be the day I finally got what I wanted, a fleet of ships to sail west to the Indies..” Samuel moved restlessly. He had heard all about the voyage westward, Columbus never stopped talking about it. It was not that Samuel did not believe him, it was just that he was not sure that one could reach the Indies from the west.

Samuel poured another tot into the man’s mug “Continue sir” said Samuel. “Well my step was light and it seemed as if the sun would finally shine on me. The birds were singing in the roof tops as I made my way to the court” said Columbus.

“Oh cruel, cruel fate! How I looked forward to being the admiral of the Indies of the west!” he cried. “Now it is no more. The queen looked splendid in her dress of pearl, she listened and even asked some questions as I spoke. I grew convinced that she believed in me” said Columbus. “But alas she was confounded by a small group of councilors who stood by listening. When I had finished, she withdrew with the

councilors and I was left alone while they spoke about my plans and made a fool of me.”

“Returning, one of her senior councilors informed me that she was not interested at this time, as there were more pressing needs. He even suggested that I should try the merchants of Venice for funding. Knowing my history do you think I would do that? The Venetians would want profit and grantees even before we set out.”

“Master Columbus do you not believe in your theory?” asked Samuel. “Why yes more than any thing in all the world!” said Columbus. “Then why not approach the merchants of Venice. Put before them your theory. You have charts which will convince them. Yes, yes I know you have tried before but try again make them believe in your plan as you do. Merchants are more level headed than high born nobles.” said Samuel. “Why yes Samuel you might have a point there. Maybe you have hit upon something that might work.” said Columbus. “How did you say it, the merchants of Venice might be more open to a scheme that might bring them a profit?” said Columbus. “Thank you friend, I think this will be the last time I see you. I wish you well in all your endeavors” said the future admiral of the west.

“I wish you well and I hope to hear a good report of your journey to Venice” said Samuel as Columbus rose from the table.

It had been some hours since the explorer had left the inn when a messenger from the court arrived at the inn. “I seek Master Christopher Columbus” said the man. “Pray call him I have an urgent message for him.” said the courtier. “He has left some hours ago,” said Samuel. “Quickly man tell me where has he gone, which road did he take” said the courtier. “I believe that he has taken the road to Venice” said the innkeeper. “By horse or cart?” asked the courtier growing increasingly agitated. “By donkey cart” said Samuel.

Leaving the inn the messenger raced down the street to the city gate the road from Córdoba to Venice was a long one and the messenger wished to complete his business before dinnertime.

Spain 1492 Samuel and Columbus talk

"Well Don Columbus you are going to get your ships" said Samuel. "Yes, Master Samuel I am to get my ships and more" said Columbus, as he broke a piece of bread from a loaf which lay before him on the table. "I am very glad for you Don Columbus. You have tried for so long and worked so hard on this project, I am surprised that you did not give up long ago, but then you are an exceptional man" said Samuel.

"Indeed master Samuel I have worked hard but I am convinced more than ever that I can reach the Indies from the west. I believe there will be much profit in this project. The king and Queen are the most far sighted sovereigns in the world. This project will show those foolish Portuguese that they were wrong to reject my plan" said Columbus.

"What titles you will have! What estates! You will be a grand Lord once you discover the route to the east by going west. I have much faith in you Don Columbus" said Samuel. "Ah yes the title, well I will have the title of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea of course and titles to any lands that I discover which are new, I will hold in their highnesses name" said Columbus.

"That day when you left here, my heart bled for you. I must tell you Don Columbus it was a dark day indeed. I thought 'What a tragedy! Don Columbus has gone off to Venice to find backers for his project when all the time the King kept you on a string here. What a waste of time!' well then a little later in comes a courtier. And I think to myself 'Hello what can he want' then he says 'I want Don Columbus I must see him right away' well I say 'Don Columbus why he has left for Venice.' Well that was the quickest I have ever seen one of them courtiers move. He ran out into the yard jumped on his horse and rode off like the devil was chasing him."

"That must have been quite funny" said Columbus. "I was just making my way through the countryside, downhearted at the rejection I had at the court, when all of a sudden I see a dust cloud rising behind me. Well I get off the road thinking it is a group of horsemen on urgent business or even bandits. Well as the cloud got closer, I saw it was a courtier and he did not look any too happy. He was beating his poor beast into a lather,

then he saw me and he pulled up." "The Heavens and St Anthony be praised" said he "I am glad to have found you Don Columbus. By order of Ferdinand and Isabelle, King and Queen of this realm, you are ordered to return with me, as their majesties await you in council". "Well at that time I had already had enough of their ordering and nearly did not follow but then I thought well I can hear what they want and I can always leave once they had finished speaking. So we returned. The Courtier was none to happy at having to ride almost half way across Spain. He did a fair bit of complaining on the way back. Anyway we arrived early in the morning and so we had some time to rest before they were ready to see me. Her majesty I must tell you is a beautiful woman. I was called at half past one o'clock so I entered the chamber and there they were, the king and the queen. I could see that they had been arguing. Some of the nobles did not seem happy. The Queen, well she was radiant, and the King he was his usual formal self. The queen said to me "Well met Don Columbus by our order you are given permission to go and seek your route to the east. We grant you three vessels and crews for this voyage, on the understanding that any lands you might discover you will claim in our name and for Spain. Also know this Don Columbus that wherever you reach it is your sworn Christian duty to convert the infidels and unbelievers to the one true church and the one true faith. To this end we assign you a number of priests who will accompany you on this voyage."

"Well I was so surprised that I did not know what to say for a moment, but when the moment passed I noticed that the King and the Queen were smiling at me. I tell you Master Samuel, there is nothing quite like the benevolent smile of the most righteous Sovereign in all of Christendom"

"I can but dream" said Samuel. "May I pour you some more wine Don Columbus?" "Ah yes that would be most welcome" said the great explorer, pushing away the empty bowl of breadcrumbs and fried fish bones. Samuel liked the man but he did so wish that he would pay for the food and drink he consumed.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Spain 1534 A heretic burns

It was already hot even though it was not yet eight o'clock in the morning. There was a slight breeze but this did nothing to alleviate the coming heat of the day. Samuel moved out into the street. It was already full of people moving towards the square.

Samuel tried his best to blend in with the crowd. It wasn't too difficult, his olive complexion tended to be a boon some times. The cobbled streets of Servile were busy this morning. The crowd was a mixed lot of peasants, nuns, nobility, and just about every sort of person one would expect of the city of Sivilla. Samuel was shaken from his reflections by the sound of people shouting in the square. Today Don Pedro Della lasvegus ex Kings councilor was to be burned at the stake as a heretic. A few years previous the church had become worried by the large number of heretic beliefs which were starting to spring up and had set up courts of inquisition the one in Servile had caught a number of fish in its nets, the latest being Don Pedro. He had been a councilor to the King for quite a number of years, a noble Spaniard of an old established family. He had served the king abroad and at home loyally for more years than he could remember, but recently he had been accused of holding heretical beliefs. He had been heard to mention that if a man wished to be saved from eternal damnation then he should pray for forgiveness and ask specifically for this forgiveness from God. Furthermore he had been heard to mention that he did not see what benefit it was to confess ones sins to a priest in confession. This had alerted the inquisition that was always ready to believe the tales borne to it by persons who either were jealous of Don Pedro's popularity with the king or by people who ardently believed that they were acting in accordance with the churches best interest.

At first after his arrest Don Pedro had been haughty and disdainful of the priests and wardens who had questioned him. He genuinely believed that the king would come to his aid. This had not happened however, and the king had dropped him like a hot coal. Deserted by the king and any others who might have said anything in his defense on his long service to

the Spanish court, Don Pedro was left to the grand inquisitor, and soon the torture had begun. Hot coals were applied to his feet in an attempt to make him confess his heresy, when this did not work; he was lifted with a set of ropes and pulleys to the roof of the torture chamber. The brown robed priest standing to one side then on his command, Don Pedro was dropped to within two feet of the floor, dislodging the joints in his shoulders. He screamed in agony as he was once more lifted to the roof. A shout and he was dropped no more than a few inches. At other times there was a shout but he was not dropped. After the second day of this he was questioned on the subject of his accomplices in these heresies which he believed. The priests reasoned that for one so senior in the Kings council there must be others who were involved in the attack on the church. To this Don Pedro would not answer, thus for days he was tortured but never a word did he utter.

In the end when it became apparent that they would get no confession from him, they promised him that on the day of his execution they would allow the executioner to strangle him before the flames took him if he would confess. Don Pedro, a now broken man looked into the face of the priest and spat; this sealed his fate. He had rejected the mercies offered by mother church and would burn. He would die a heretic.

Thus it was that Samuel the innkeeper a man who had known Jesus the carpenter from Nazareth stood watching a follower of this same Jesus been burned to death by others who professed to be followers of this same Jesus. The doomed man arrived on a cart being too badly tortured to walk through the city streets. He was roughly helped up onto the stake by the executioner. The executioner removed the lighted taper from the hands of the accused. Once more a priest asked him to confess his heresies before he died. To this the doomed man said nothing. The crowd was in a holiday mood waiting for the fun to start but the prisoner was not playing the game. Either through weariness of the whole matter or because he was finished with this world, the accused looked out on the crowd, a strange peaceful light reflected in his eyes. Samuel shivered. The last time he had seen that look was on the face of Jesus while he hung on the cross of Golgotha.

The executioner was signaled by the priests and church

officials to light the fagots, which surrounded the doomed man. The smoke rose lazily into the air. As the fire began burning the dryness of the weather helped the fire to spread quickly. All the time the poor man looked out into the crowd but not in horror of what was happening. When the fire reached him he began to pray in Spanish asking the Lord for forgiveness. A hush fell over the crowd as he continued until quite suddenly the flames took him. He screamed not at all, the smell of burning hair and flesh filled the square. The crowd watched in a mixture of sadness and wonder as they realized that a holy martyr had died before their eyes and they had done nothing to prevent it. The crowd began to dissipate. No one wanted to meet his neighbor's eyes, all feeling ashamed. Samuel turned and walked back to the inn where he had served Don Pedro an occasional tankard of wine.

Samuel pushed open the door of the inn. Entering he found the smell of lamb drifting through the ground floor. Quickly he moved to the bar and poured himself a tumbler of red Tuscan wine. Swallowing it in a huge gulp, Samuel turned once more to the duties of the day. For a moment his thoughts turned to the execution he had just witnessed. He had been horrified by what he had witnessed. How could the followers of Jesus be so cruel? If only they had known what their master had been like then maybe they would see the way they should behave toward one another.

Maria, one of the servants, entered the large front room with a pile of dishes on a tray that she started setting on the tables. She worked quietly and quickly, singing to herself. She suddenly became aware that Samuel was watching her. "Hola Samuel" she said "How was it? Did the heretic scream?" she asked him. "Hola Maria. No he did not. He died with dignity, not uttering a word until the flames reached him, and then he began to pray."

"Dio he must have been a saint to face death so bravely" she said shaking her head and crossing herself. Samuel could not understand this thing. In one breath she was calling Don Pedro a heretic, in the next a saint. The Christian faith seemed to be full of inconsistencies Samuel thought. He left Maria to finish her work while he checked on the kitchen.

In the kitchen he found the cook stirring a large pot of lamb stew. It was now close to eleven in the morning. Soon the inn would be full of people coming to eat a meal before the mid afternoon siesta. Samuel hurried out into the small back yard and began picking carrots to add to the stew. He loved this small garden. It didn't get a lot of sun but it got enough to grow vegetables. Samuel had come a long way from Israel. It had been so many years ago that now when he thought of Israel it was always in an abstract way. He seldom thought of his family who had passed into Abraham's bosom many ages ago but he still remembered the wonderful summer days in Bethlehem as a child. He remembered the sound of his mother's laugh; it always made him happy when he thought of her. Today was going to be hot. He wiped the sweat from his forehead as he continued to work in the garden. The sounds of life in the city drifted into the garden as did the smells of wood fire burning in preparation of the mid day meal.

His thoughts turned once more to the gruesome death he had witnessed earlier Don Pedro Lasvegas was not the sort of person who you would consider the type of person to have come to this end but yet it had happened. Samuel was glad that when he had entered Spain he had come disguised, as a Christian, laying aside his identity as a Jew. It was most probably the wisest move he could have made. He had religiously followed the Christian observances while he was in Spain it made sense because word had spread to the rest of the world that Spain was a Catholic country and Catholics were well received here. Thus Samuel had become a catholic for all intents and purposes. He had been here for about forty years now. Soon he would have to move again. He never stayed longer then forty years in one place. People began asking questions if one stayed longer, he had learned this from bitter experience, but for a short while longer he would linger in the Spanish sunshine.

This morning's execution was not the only one. Recently there had been a marked increase in the burning of heretics. Samuel was beginning to worry. If people really wanted to they could begin asking questions that would expose him thus he began thinking of where he would like to travel to next. Maybe a colder northern climate he thought he heard that France was a nice country, maybe he would go there next or maybe

England. King Henry was well known for the problems he was having with the Church of Rome. Maybe he would be well received in England. He could open an inn in one of the counties. He had heard from travelers that England was a very green country, rich in trees and Samuel had a fondness for tree. Yes, maybe England would be his next home.

Once again his thoughts turned to Don Pedro's end. Six months ago Don Pedro had walked into the inn and ordered wine for himself and a friend. They had talked and enjoyed an afternoon in the inn. At that time Don Pedro's tongue had loosened more and more, laughing and joking like the noble man that he was without a care in the world, now Don Pedro was no more.

The main room of the inn was full. It was early evening and a group of minstrels had just started up singing and playing a lively old folk song. The guests eating at the tables joined in, stamping their feet in time to the music. The smell of good food wafted through the room as the guests tucked into their food. Samuel was busy serving a table of travelers with some of the local red wine.

He was paying little attention to the people leaving and entering the inn, so he did not notice the black robed priest enter. Samuel only became aware that one of the members of the feared inquisition was present. When he noticed the dark look that passed across Maria's face, he turned and saw the tall thin man seated in the corner drinking a glass of wine looking in his direction. Samuel smiled and moved forward his hands extended in a sign of welcome like any good host would greet a valued customer. "Greetings Padre, can we offer you some food or more wine?" "No I am content" said the priest, "but I would like to have a word or two with you if you have the time" he said. "Certainly Padre I am at your disposal, please continue" said Samuel.

"I have reason to believe that Don Pedro De lasvegas used to frequent your establishment did you know him?" asked the priest. Immediately Samuel was on his guard. "Was this a trap?" He would have to proceed with caution he thought. "Padre so many people come in here it is not always possible to know who is here. Of course I know the name but I must

say that I am not sure that I ever spoke to the man other than to serve him food and wine” said Samuel cautiously.

”Come, come man, I know you know of whom I speak. I have a confession that you had speech with him shortly before he was taken prisoner” said the priest. “I give you my word Padre that I know nothing of the man other than maybe to have served him food and drink” repeated Samuel who was becoming very annoyed with this priest. “If you have some one who says other wise bring him and let him say what he will to my face and I will prove that he is a liar” said Samuel, feigning anger. He crossed himself as if the subject would bring a curse on him. The priest lightened and smiled.

”It is well that you answered as you did Samuel Ferreira for if you had answered in any other way you would now be on your way to the gaol for questioning. However, rest assured that we have no confession. It was but a ruse to see how much you knew of the man. Yes we know he drank here often it is a good business this little inn and I suppose many of the Kings courtiers stop here. However there is another matter that I would speak with you on but not here. Later if you find the time, join me at the Cathedral. I will be waiting. Ask for Padre Tomas and you will soon find me” said the priest rising and moving towards the door.

Sweating heavily Samuel left the front room and went through to the kitchen cast his eyes around to see that all was going well before descending the stairs to the cellar where he poured himself a large glass of wine. He wondered what the priest might know. “Was this an attempt at trapping him?” He thought back over the years to see if there was any thing in his own past that might look suspicious. He attended the cathedral regularly, paid his tithes trying to blend in, as a good Christian should. It was not the first time that he had masqueraded as a person of another faith. For a few years he had even been a Moslem. That had been back in the 13th century. It had been expedient to do so, ones survival was paramount. He could not remember any occasion when he might have given away the fact that he was by birth a Jew. After so many centuries it hardly mattered, but one always had to be careful especially now when the inquisition was trying to catch heretics and false Christians. Draining the glass he returned to the kitchen, going

to his room he washed his hands and face and put on his coat he would go and see the priest hear what the man of the church of Christ had to say, but he would be on his guard.

The sounds of music drifted up to him. He closed his room's door and descended the stairs and left the inn. There was a chill on the evening air, he shivered and pulled his cloak closer as he made his way down the cobbled street towards the centre of the city. He entered the old cathedral and took a candle and lit it and placed it in the holder with the hundreds of others on the stand. He could hear the chant of even song on the air as the priests sang some where in the body of the vast building. Strangely he found a sense of peace in the old building in some ways it reminded him of the temple. It no longer stood in Jerusalem. It had been destroyed by the soldiers of Rome in the first epoch of the Christian era.

Samuel became aware that the Padre Tomas was watching him. Samuel crossed himself and rose from his knees. "I am glad you have come" said the priest. "It was very wise of you not to ignore my invitation" he continued.

"I am a faithful servant of the church padre" said Samuel. "I do what I am told to do. Pray tell me what is it that you want of me?" The priest smiled a cold hard smile; the eyes though, the eyes did not also smile, Samuel noticed. The church has noticed that a number of men who are in this Godly city like to visit at your inn. These men who are well disposed to the Kings court sometimes say things when they are in their cups and this is what brings us to you. As the innkeeper you must nay you do hear things spoken of that could be embarrassing both to the Court and to Holy Church. Therefore his eminence the bishop of Servile is giving you the opportunity to help rid the church of these men who by their carnal nature have been drawn in to the sin of heresy.

Samuel left the cathedral. He had much to ponder on. What the priest had asked him to do saddened and sickened him. Firstly, as Jew it was a betrayal of all in which believed. Samuel knew of many Jews who had served the royal house of Spain loyally. Secondly, as a man it was disgusting to think that the officers of the Christian church had offered him money to spy on his customers and report on what they had

said. It shocked him to think that he had even considered it, even for a moment, before dismissing the suggestion.

In his long life he had experienced a lot of things but this thing that the priest had proposed was by far the worst thing that had ever been asked of him. For a moment he remembered the eyes of Don Pedro as he burned at the stake. According to Padre Tomas this same Don Pedro was a heretic and some one who refused to accept the church law as laid down by the Catholic Church. Don Pedro was a man with a questioning mind who did not accept things at face value, but rather probed a subject until he came to the place where he knew the truth of the matter, despite other people not wanting him to know. This had been his real crime. They had searched Don Pedro's home and found a collection of books which were of a nature which would make the padre shudder when he thought of them. This had been "the final straw that had broken the camel's back" according to the padre. The church had put up for a number of years with Don Pedro's questioning of the faith but it had come to a point where he started making statements about the faith which in all likelihood would have caused others to doubt the teachings of Holy church. This was some thing that the inquisition would not tolerate.

The more he thought about it the more the idea sickened him. He had listened as the priest had spoken and had begun to shiver, not with cold but in the knowledge that here he was in the presence of pure evil masquerading as holiness. Samuel did not know what to do. He had told the priest that he would consider what had been asked of him and would return in a few days with an answer for the padre. But as Samuel walked down the streets of Seville, he knew he would not return to the Padre. Samuel knew it was time for him to leave Spain. This had only made his departure more pressing. Realizing that time was short, Samuel quickened his step in the direction of home.

He did not take any one into his confidence; he knew that would be too dangerous to those he would be leaving behind. If the inquisition became suspicious they would attempt to question those whom had served him and this he did not want to do. Samuel retired to bed and spent an uneasy night, waking often, listening for the footsteps of the inquisition. In the

morning he left the inn and found his way to a lawyer. Here he made over the deed to the inn to Maria who had served him now for more than ten years. With the deed in his pocket he returned to the inn, going directly to his room. He packed a small bag with as much gold as he could comfortably carry. Once this was done he cast his eyes around the small room for the last time before going downstairs to find Maria.

”Maria I have some thing that I need to give you” he said, when he found her washing potatoes in the kitchen. “Oh Samuel what can it be she said?” “I am going on a journey and will be gone for a few weeks if anything should happen I want you to have this he said handing her the deed and a bag of coins. Maria, sensing that some thing far more important than a little business trip was taking place took the parcel from him and said “Senor, I believe you are saying farewell. What ails you that you are leaving us” she asked?

”Ah Maria you are wise beyond your years” he said “but the time has come that I visit some of my relatives in the country. I have not spoken of them before because they are far from us but the priest brought news which needs me to see my family before it is too late so I am off to the mountains of Andalusia” he said. He kissed Maria lightly on the cheek and left the inn.

The first day he did not travel far. He knew if he took ship from Seville he would have to offer papers to show that he had permission to leave. But further down the coast he could always find some way of getting off shore, so he walked about fifteen miles, the first day arriving at dusk at a little village which bordered the outskirts of Seville. Finding no inn he asked around and found an obliging farmer who let him sleep in his barn for the night.

Having spent the night in the barn he rose early, refreshed, and started walking. The countryside through which he walked was an old farming district settled a thousand years earlier. There were many old trees under which he could find shade in the heat of the day. As he walked, he observed the birds flying and the sight of workers in the fields gave him joy. It reminded him of his youth round Bethlehem when the farmers would go out early in the day to tend their fields and animals. As the day passed, the heat grew. He knew that before mid

day he would have to find a place where he could rest. High summer in Spain was not the place to be walking during siesta. It was just too hot. In the late morning he found an old olive tree and settled down to rest. He planned to walk until well after sunset. Settling down he soon grew drowsy in the heat of the day and fell asleep. He was roused by some one kicking his feet violently. Opening his eyes for a moment he was not sure where he was or what was going on. A tall Spaniard stood over him "Up heretic" said the man kicking Samuel in the face. Stumbling to his feet he was quickly bound by some of the soldiers who were standing a round. Once he was bound, they began drinking water from the near by stream which trickled happily through the mountains.

"So you thought you would escape from Padre Tomas" said the captain of the guard "you made a mistake my friend." "I am no dammed heretic" said Samuel. One of the soldiers punched him in the face. "Silence heretic" shouted the man who had hit him. They tied him with a long rope to the back of a donkey and set off back to Servillia. The trip back was not going to be as enjoyable as the trip from the city.

Samuel lay in the cell. The sound of dripping water rang loud in his ears. Some where in the vast dungeon of the castle, some one screamed a long drawn out agonizing scream full of pain and fear. Samuel did not move too much. He hurt; the soles of his feet were full of blisters from the latest torture. At first the priest had been gentle asking him questions, probing his answers trying to catch him out in a lie.

As the days passed, the questioning had become angrier. After the third day, the priest had turned to one of the men who stood in the corner of the room. He smiled a thin cruel smile and nodded at the man, a fat man well fed who hurried forward Padre. "Continue" was all the tall priest had said.

The fat man had seized Samuel and strapped him to a table.

Speaking quickly to one of his two assistants, the fat man instructed them to bring the water pitcher. A rough cloth was placed over Samuel's face, covering his mouth and nose. The cloth was drawn tightly across, making it difficult to breathe. As Samuel struggled to breathe, the cloth was sucked into his mouth. Someone poured the water into his mouth forcing the

cloth deeper into his mouth as the water ran through the cloth and into his throat. Suddenly the cloth was pulled from his throat tearing the lining from Samuel's throat. The pain was excruciating. He tried to scream but this hurt even more than staying quiet. "Confess" said the man "and the pain will stop" said his torturer. But Samuel remained silent. After all he had nothing to confess. He had been sickened by the priest's proposal and had fled; now the priest was getting his revenge. Maybe it had been wrong to flee, it could have given the priest the wrong impression, but Samuel was not sure the inquisition could have been watching the inn for a long time before he had been approached. Why was he suffering like this because a haughty Spanish nobleman had frequented his inn? The cloth had been reapplied and the torture continued. When his torturers had grown tired of the water trick they had applied hot irons to his feet causing him to scream in pain, but still he had nothing to confess. Finally the day had come when they stripped him of his clothes. The sign of his origin displayed, there was no more question, only torture now. He was being tortured for being a secret Jew. Of this, they knew he was guilty. For a few days they left him to recover. Human nature had taught him that this was not the end of the torture, only a brief respite from the horror of the torture chamber. The priest came to see him, now friendly that he had been discovered "Jew tell me how many of your kind do you know who live in our kingdom?" he asked. Samuel looked up at the priest and slowly replied "None. I have not been a Jew for many years and I don't know of any Jews in the kingdom." "Lies!" shouted the priest growing angry. "You Jews always lie! That is why you are outcasts! The Holy Father has offered you the chance to redeem yourself, yet you remain stubborn in your disbelief. "You are truly the children of Satan" the fire of fervent religious zeal burning in the priest's eyes.

The priest left and the torture began again the next day. Now it was as if they were trying everything to get him to confess. "Give us the names Jew! Give us the names!" this phrase was to be repeated again and again after each fresh torture. But Samuel could give no names.

Finally one day he was told "Jew tomorrow you will burn for your heresy." The priest came once more and said not without kindness "I gave you every opportunity to confess but you

refused, why?" To this Samuel croaked in a broken voice
"because I have nothing to confess to."

"Confess now Jew. Give us names and I will have the executioner strangle you before the flames reach you." Samuel shook his head sadly, the realization that this priest would never understand what he was asking for.

The following morning before the sun was up Samuel was awakened and handed some clothes to wear. Limping badly, he was led from the cell which had long been his home. He felt no sadness at leaving it. He had faced death before, this would be no different he reasoned.

As Samuel was led through the street, along with a small group of others who were to be executed, he heard the insults that were hurled at them. He felt the rotten vegetables and eggs which were thrown at him but it did not worry him.

On the square the first three people who were to die that day were led to the scaffold, because they had confessed they were quickly strangled. The fires lit which burned brightly the crowds were in a holiday mood watching as the day's entertainment continued. When it was Samuel's turn, he climbed to the stake, the executioner taking the taper from him. A priest came forward and once more asked him to confess. Samuel said nothing, sadly the priest turned away. Looking out into the crowd Samuel thought he saw the face of Maria but he was not sure.

The executioner set the fire. The wood was dry and quickly caught fire, the smoke rising in to the bright blue sky. At first Samuel thought that dying would not be so bad. He would always be able to start life a new when his body was resurrected. However as the fire burned the heat began to hurt, drawing out the moisture from his flesh when the fire finally reached him it really hurt. "The agony!" he screamed. He wondered how Don Pedro could have stood the fire with out screaming. He looked out into the crowd and saw Maria. She was weeping. His feet and legs were now catching fire, the pain was terrible. His skin blackened and blistered from the heat. The fire gave a huge surge and he was consumed, his whole body was now ablaze. "The agony!" he tried to scream but was unable. His lips were burnt off in a matter of

moments. His eyes boiled in his head. It felt like his brain was on fire. His heart burst from the heat. He thought of Maria, poor Maria. "I hope she finds a good husband" this was his final thought before he died.

CHAPTER TWELVE

England 1534

Samuel opened his eyes. It was a foggy morning in the glade with thick fog rolling in from the sea. He was thankful for this. His recent experience in Servilla was still etched vividly in his memory; even the thought of his life in Seville brought a certain amount of pain. Rising, he moved quickly towards the bend in the river where the fishing boats were pulled up on the shore. The crews of the boats were already getting started. Samuel joined the nearest crew and started working. He had decided that for a while at least, he would try some thing other than inn keeping. England in the year 1534 was a land in religious turmoil due to the King wanting a new wife. Samuel had, had enough of religion and inn keeping, for a while he wanted to get out and explore the world. He had never been in England before; it was a wet and green country, something which he had never experienced before. He had lived in many places but never a place as green and wet as England.

A small lad was coming round handing each of the fishermen a loaf of bread for breakfast these people seemed to eat such simple food. Samuel wondered how they survived on their bland diet of bread, beer and fish. Sometimes there was beef or mutton, but in general, these fisher folk ate fish, baked fish pie, fish salted and lots of bread. Foods from the New World, which had been plentiful in Spain, were unknown here in England. This saddened Samuel, as the foods of the New World tended to spice up a dish. He knew it would only be a matter of time before the foods of the west arrived in England. In the mean time he would eat their bland foods, after all one must eat to live.

As the mists began to lift, the fishing fleet moved out in to the wide bay. Whole crews rowed the boats out into the channel in search of fish. The sails of the boats hung limp with hardly a breeze to stir the sails.

After rowing for an hour they stopped, drank some ale and baited up their hooks and cast their long lines into the dark water. Talking softly among themselves of local gossip and the state of life in general, the men tended to stick to small groupings. The boat held sixteen men. It was not uncommon

for the crew to be divided into smaller groups working and talking together. At first Samuel had listened learning from those around him of life in the kingdom of England. The King Henry VIII had recently divorced his wife of many years in favor of the Lady Ann Howard, this after a break with the Church of Rome. Pope Clement VII had excommunicated Hearty Hal as the fishermen called him for setting aside the most devout of queens for a lady in waiting of the house of Howard.

Things in the church in England had not been going well lately since Hearty Hal had come to the throne. There had been a number of changes. Monasteries had been closed and priests turned out to find honest employment. A number of priests had died as a result of resistance to the changes. A few who were too old and infirm had also died, spending their last days in barns or in hedge rows. In general, however, things had come about without too much difficulty. The land of the church had been reclaimed by the King and parceled out to land hungry Nobles who were now building their new great houses on the former church lands. The dissolution of the monasteries had another effect that did not bode well for the country. At first the villages had been kindly disposed to the monks, but as time went on the attitude had changed. The monks refused to work and as a result the villages were less disposed to help them with food and the necessities of life. The result was the country was now dangerous as roving bands of ex monks had turned into bandits, robbing and stealing to survive. A number of them had been caught and hung.

On this fine morning Samuel sat fishing and listening to the talk of upcoming weddings, who had died and who's milking cow had run dry. There was a lot of talk of witchcraft and naturally the talk turned to who could possibly be the witch who had turned the cow dry. Samuel listened and began to realize that no matter how much the people believed themselves to be Christian they had a lot of superstition in their beliefs. Although the sign of the cross was forbidden, sometimes people could still be seen making the sign of the cross.

Samuel thought back to his first days in England. The greatest

barrier was the language. He had learned English in the 12th century from a group of crusaders in Jerusalem but the language was archaic. The English now spoken was a more evolved language. He had however managed to pick up enough of it to be able to converse quite well after a few weeks. He had found himself in a coastal district with people who did not travel to the big cities, neither were they friendly to strangers, however be that as it may, Samuel was able to find a way to win over their friendship and confidence. By claiming to be a fisherman from Spain who had lost his way in a storm, later to be wrecked on the coast, this story was believable enough. Samuel could not imagine that these folk would believe the real story of his arrival in England. If he did tell them he knew he would find himself once more been burned at the stake as a witch or a lunatic; better to stick to the story of the shipwreck.

As the day progressed the boat began to fill with fish. It was a good day. A great number of sturgeon were caught at mid morning. The men stopped fishing and had a meal of salted fish and bread with liberal amounts of fresh water. The salt fish Samuel found made them drink copious amounts of water. He tended to stay away from the salted fish eating as little as possible. Once before he had been in a boat in the open sea without water and the thirst he knew could drive men to madness and murderous violence. Maybe life in England would not be as bad as he had at first thought. There was no inquisition here, although Jews had been cast out of England hundreds of years earlier. He knew if he did not arouse undue suspicion, he would not be suspected of been any thing other than a good Christian who had lost his way.

Samuel knew that in a land which was changing one had to tread carefully, if one was to make a living. "Yes" he thought to himself, "England could be good to him" and he in turn would masquerade as a good Christian.

At first the long fishing lines that the fisher folk used did some damage to Samuel's hands. He was not used to this kind of work and he found it hard standing in the boat pulling the fish up from the depths of the dark water. It was back breaking work. The fisher folk noticing his difficulty helped him, teaching him how to bind his fingers with small bits of rag

before using the line. The pain in his back was something he would have to live with until he got used to it.

On Sundays no one in the village worked. It was set aside for the worship of the deity and not wanting to stick out like a sore thumb, Samuel would join the rest of the village as they paid homage to the Savior. It was after one of these services when he was approached by one of the members of the parish. The young man seemed somehow familiar. William Longmont was the name he went under. He looked and seemed to be a man of no more than thirty years of age. "Good day Samuel good service today would you say" the man said. "Yes William, as you say, a good service."

"Shall we walk a little? It seems such a shame to stay indoors on such a fine day, even if it is the Sabbath" said William. "Yes a walk would be good" said Samuel. As they walked, they talked of the countryside and its beauty, like two villagers out for a stroll, and without a care in the world. However once they had passed the last hovel on the outskirts of the village a certain change took place in the demeanor of William Longmont. His face took on seriousness that no one in the village would have known in everyday life.

"Samuel Ferreira I know you well" said William "I have seen you a number of times through out these long years, almost always as an innkeeper. Now I find you in a fishing village on the coast of Cornwall. Why the change friend? For I must assume that you are a friend and that like myself, you are cursed to wander until judgment day. Why have you changed your way of living? Why a fisherman now?" asked William

Samuel looked with fear at this man who seemed to know the truth of his existence. What horror was this now brought upon him, who was this? Was it the devil come to torment him now in his quiet time of life? Samuel would have to be extremely careful with his words and judge his words well before he spoke them. Laughing nervously Samuel said "William thy jest is indeed a poor one! Come now, be hearty and stop thy presence."

"I know you well Samuel. I have been watching you. I have known you both in Spain and in Israel and Egypt I have lived

a hundred lives and died a hundred times for like you, I am cursed. I was a soldier who smote and mocked Jesus so long ago on the road to Golgotha and was cursed by his mother to wander till He returns on judgment day. I saw you burn in Spain and I did not envy you that death. I can tell you I have been drowned, I have had my head hacked off, I have died of hunger, but never have I been burned. Always I have been resurrected to live again, this cursed life of a soldier or a workman. Now when I find some solace who should come wandering into my life but another, who, like me is accursed. Tell me Samuel what did you do to be cursed to this long existence? Entertain me for I have lived so long that I have grown bored. Entertain me for an hour, but first let us find a secluded spot to rest and speak. For at any time a suspicious villager might come upon us and carry away tales of witchcraft for these are simple folk who are easily scared into religious fever. These are a people who see witches and wizards in their very ale.” said William.

Samuel followed his new found friend in silence into a thicket of trees. William seemed to know his way well around the area and it seemed to Samuel that he must have been in this district for some time, to know his way so well. Seating themselves under a great oak which had been planted two hundred years earlier William said “I am sorry to have given you cause to be alarmed but there is no easy way to talk on the incident of our continued long existence. I started life as the son of a minor Germanic chieftain and was soon drawn into the Roman legion. I have served in many places. I have seen kingdoms rise and fall. I had been in the legion a number of years before I was transferred to Palestine in about 26 AD. There I served in the old city of Jerusalem. On a certain day Jesus was brought before Pilate who judged him and had him put to death because of the Jews.”

“I had been drinking the previous night. It was always like that round the festival times. I am a soldier and soldiers drink when there is pressure and in times of trouble so on that morning I was still drunk, having drank too much of the good wines. As Jesus was being led to the place of his execution, I noticed that the crowds were enjoying themselves, watching his agony. He had already been beaten and was limping badly. People were throwing stones and rotten eggs at him. When I saw him

stumble, I approached and kicked him roughly, telling him to stand up and take it like a man. His mother who was following close by suddenly screamed out. 'Curse you soldier! doomed will you be to wander this earth until he whom you have smote returns to judge you'. So it was as the years passed I neither grew old nor perished like others around me. In about the year 50 AD, I decided to leave the Roman legion, as people were beginning to comment on my youthful appearance. At the age of fifty two I still looked and appeared to be a man of no older than twenty eight. But I do remember that on the day of the execution I had seen some one who stepped out from the crowd. It was a man of about forty, who had cleaned the face of Jesus."

"Later in about 983 AD I again saw this man who was then an innkeeper in the old city of Alexander in Egypt. I happened to stop by an inn located in the old city one day and this man served me chilled wine. The wine was good after a hot day in the sun. It most probably was the best wine I had ever drunk. I remembered the man and the wine, though most probably if the wine had been of a poorer quality I would not have remembered the man, but in any event I remembered the man. At that time I was in service to the Moslems who had over run Egypt. Later in about 1125AD I happened to be fighting in Palestine under the Emir of Jerusalem who was defeated. I had stayed in the city once the slaughter had ended. I came out of hiding and watched the new masters of the city. How primitive and dirty they seemed, these Christians who had liberated the Holy Land as I was still under orders from the emir I watched a knight who frequented an inn run by a Jew. One day the innkeeper and the knight, a German left the city and went down to Bethlehem. A few others and I planned to attack them the following morning when they returned to Jerusalem. The night was clear the moon was up and there was a slight breeze blowing some one made a noise and alerted the Knight and the innkeeper, they attacked us and killed my companions. I was questioned and fought alone in a final battle with the knight. I died bravely."

"That innkeeper was you. I am sure you remember the second incident, but not the first so imagine my surprise when a few months ago I saw the same innkeeper burned at the stake in Servilla. But when I once more met this same man in my

home village in Cornwall, I was even more surprised.”

As the two immortals spoke they relived the days of their lives in strange lands on an old Germanic chieftains son and the other a Jew who had grown to adulthood in the years when the Roman eagle marched proudly over their ancestral homes. Now more than 15 centuries after, the two cursed men retold the stories of their lives, reliving interesting moments. Sometimes one would help the other remember, some thing which had happened in all the long centuries they had lived. Samuel had not been aware of the fact that during the 13th century all Jews had been expelled from England, had it not been for a chance remark that William had made he would never have known. Samuel had been in the Far East thus his knowledge of European affairs at that time was a bit hazy.

Samuel spoke of his travels in China during that period of the time he had spent at the court of the grand Khan with fondness and nostalgia. William listened and at times looked at Samuel as if he was telling him things that he had never encountered before. As evening drew near the two men began walking back to the fishing village. The sun set late in the summer so it was closer to 10 o'clock in the evening before they re- entered the village. Samuel wished his new found friend Godspeed and a good night before finding his way to the large warehouse where he slept. Tomorrow would be another hard day of fishing for him.

He awoke while it was still dark. He knew not many hours had passed since he had fallen asleep. It had been a long day and he had been tired now in the middle of the night he found himself once more awake. He rose and went to the well to draw some water to drink. The water was cold and crisp, a dog barked in the distance, he listened to the night he took in all its sounds. The mist had settled and all sounds were muted by the thick fog. Returning to his bed he lay thinking of some of the events of the previous day. He remembered the time he had spent in Egypt in the 9th century. Those had been halcyon days. He had enjoyed life then, exploring the great pyramids, visiting the temples. He had run a good inn, one of the best he had ever owned. He remembered that due to the heat in Egypt it had been difficult to get ice for the chilled wines but he had managed to buy some from a passing sea-merchant and he had

stored it in the deep old cellar. Yes the inn had been a flea infested hovel but the chilled wine had been a big drawing card. Soon even the rich people of the city had visited the inn seeking out the chilled wine which he had served. This had changed though once Egypt was invaded by the armies of Islam in the 10th century. For a short period, he had continued living in Alexander but finding life under the rule of Islam too restrictive, he had once again returned to the ancient city of Jerusalem. One thing he was certain of, he had seen kingdoms rise and fall with the passing of time.

An owl called in the night. Samuel shivered and wondered what sort of significance the fisher folk of England would read into that? He slumbered and as he slept, he dreamed it was a bright sunlit day. The desert was hot and as he made his way across it on the back of a camel the faces of the camel drivers shown vividly in his dream. Somewhere a cock crowed. He thought what a strange thing for a cock to be crowing in the middle of the desert. The cock crowed again. He woke with a start. The dawn was coming, the new week was about to start. Samuel sat up and pulled on his boots to begin another day in the fishing village.

The mist was laying heavily over the village as he made his way down to where the boats were laid up on the shore. Some of the fisher folk were already there, speaking softly. Samuel noticed that these folks never spoke loudly in the morning. It was not in their nature to speak loudly even during the light of the mid-day sun

During the time Samuel was in the fishing village, he had tended to stay away from the officers of the church. This was understandable considering the recent treatment that he had received from the hand of the inquisition. However he could not help noticing the marked difference between the church in England and the church of Spain. In England some of the monasteries had already been partly dissolved.

The monastery of St John by the sea, which was adjacent to the village of St Johns, was not as large or prosperous as others but it did hold some lands. In the time that Samuel was there he struck up a friendship with some of the monks. Their

nature was sweet and gentle. These were humble men who had taken the cloth and the vowed to better the lives of those who lived near them and also to devout prayer to the deity.

Samuel had met the Abbot one day as he was walking in the country. William had left the village to continue his life in London town. William was always the adventurer, seeking out new and interesting places and people soon becoming bored with the mundane life in the village of St Johns only returning occasionally to rest and restore his mind. One tended to need periods of rest from the world when one had lived so many life times.

The Abbott of St John by the Sea was one Father Alfred, who loved to walk in the country. He loved checking on the lands which the monks tended. One day Samuel happened to run into the Abbott as he was inspecting a fruit tree orchard. At first Samuel had been hesitant to engage the monk but as they spoke of the trees and of nature of which the good father was a keen student, Samuel warmed to him. Soon they were discussing crops and other matters quite freely. Samuel had gained some insight on the subject in his long life. What impressed Samuel about this humble man of the church was his nature, his gentle spirit. Father Alfred always put the interests of the village and his fellow monks before his own.

Over a period they grew to know each other quite well. On one occasion during a Sunday afternoon stroll, Samuel had brought up the question of the desolation of the monasteries. Father Alfred started talking on the matter. "Yes" he said there had been some organs of holy church which were corrupt and yes the King had a right to investigate. However it was the method that concerned Father Alfred. Another thing which worried the monk was the fact that most of the current problems in the English church were a result of the break with Rome. Which the King "God bless him" had instituted to divorce good queen Catharine, but now the king was married to Lady Anne Boleyn. It was a worry for the Abbott knew it would only be a matter of time before the hungry eyes of the local nobility would turn to the lands of St Johns by the Sea. It also worried the Abbott what would become of his flock of monks and the villages. Sir Peter Seymour was not known for his kindness. There had previously been trouble at the market

when goods grown on the monasteries' lands had been sold to the villages at a cheaper price than those set by Sir Peter Stewart. From that time Sir Peter had turned an envious eye on the church lands which were well run, strict in economy and a delight to the eye.

It was about the month of November when the boats were pulled up for winter refitting that Samuel first noticed that an unusual number of men at arms were beginning to come to the manor of Sir Peter Seymour. Samuel watched with growing concern as the number grew. There was no other reason for the large number of men at arms to be congregating at the manor house than the possible dissolution of St John by the Sea. The country was not at war and it was a bad time of year to be traveling. The snow lay thick on the ground. Fearing for his friend, Samuel one day in late November decided to go and see the Abbott and make known to the Abbott his fears lest he be found shirking in his responsibilities to a friend.

Rising early Samuel left the village and walked the short distance to the monastery. Knocking on the great wooden door, he waited. From within he could hear the chant of early morning plain song. "How beautiful" he thought. Once he had been admitted he was shown to the Abbott's cell, a plain room, and small, with nothing more than a bed, a chair, a table and a crucifix against the wall. He did not have long to wait before the monk entered. Samuel noticed that the man was looking old and worried. By Samuel's reckoning the Abbott was about in his fiftieth year of life. "Godspeed, Samuel. What brings you here on such a cold morning asked the Abbott?" "Good father I have concerns for you and your monks" said Samuel. "Sir Peter gathers more and more men at arms at the manor daily. We see men arriving from the capital. There can be only one reason for this" continued Samuel. "Ah good friend I know. We have received word of these comings, but what can we do? Nothing I fear, but wait and see" said the Abbott. "Surely there must be some thing that can be done, some plan must suggest itself to you on a way to avoid what is coming" said Samuel. "I am afraid there is nothing that I know of but we will continue to pray" said the Abbott grasping his rosary with a weak smile.

"It is the middle of winter, surely Sir Peter must know if he

does this thing now, your monks will have no where to go, no one to take them in and they will die of starvation, illness or turn to robbery” said Samuel.

“Samuel there is nothing that will befall us lest it be by the hand of God” said Father Alfred.

It was late in the afternoon. Samuel and a few of the men from the village had been fixing nets, and doing repairs to the boats, when a young boy came running, out of breath and in a horse voice began to tell them that Sir Peter and a body of men at arms were on their way to the monastery. The men left what they were doing and made their way up the path from the beach. They all knew what was about to happen. They had heard of it before now it was happening to them in the distance they could hear a bell tolling.

When they reached the flat land on top of the cliff they saw smoke rising in the distance. The men, now fearful, quickened their pace. The weather was cold. The snow and ice felt hard under their feet. As they walked no one talked. The sound of their boots on the ice crackled loudly in the air. In the distance they could hear voices.

When they reached the road leading to the village they saw a group of horsemen led by Sir Peter. At the rear of the group, were six monks bound together by rope at the necks and the hands.

As the horseman approached, the villagers drew to the side of the road, allowing the men at arms to pass. Sir Peter brought his horse to a halt and looked down at the fisher folk “What are you scum doing here?” he roared. No one spoke. “Well” asked Sir Peter. Samuel stepped forward doffing his cap, “Squire we are returning home from our day’s labor on the fishing boats” he said looking calmly up into the cruel dark face of the knight. “Make sure that you return to your homes soon” said Sir Peter kicking his horse into action once more.

Once the men at arms had moved off, the villagers looked sheepishly about them before starting for home. Samuel took the lead with a few of the more brave souls and took the road to the monastery. When they arrived at the monastery they

found that it was on fire. Nearby, Samuel found an old monk kneeling over the body of the Abbott. The good Abbott had an arrow sticking out of his throat. The villagers stood looking at the burning monastery before noticing that the old oak nearby had been used by the men at arms to hang some of the monks. The dead monks, their hands and feet swollen, tongues drawn out, swung back and forth in the slight breeze. Samuel knelt next to the old monk who was saying a prayer for the dead. The old man, doing the last office for the Abbott, the eyes of the dead man looking up and gazed over the pool of blood round the body that had already frozen.

When the old monk had finished praying Samuel asked him “What happened here? The abbot told me that he would not resist the men at arms, why did he change his mind?”

“He didn’t” replied the old monk. “The Abbott had already surrendered the keys when one of the men at arms tried to steal a gold cross from the Abbott. When Father Alfred protested, Sir Peter shot him with a bolt. Some of the younger brothers were so shocked that they protested and you see their fate, they hang on yonder tree” Sobbed the old monk. “Sir Peter said they needed to be taught a lesson. They took away the rest of the brothers, bound like cattle.”

“Why did they leave you then?” asked Samuel. The monk lifted his robe. Samuel saw the reason quite plainly. The monk only had one leg. Sir Peter had left the old man to die in the cold. The monastery did not hold any treasures. Its only thing of value was the lands and now the monastery had been destroyed. There was nothing left in the way of Sir Peter's greed; he would now hold the lands. No more would the villagers get food from the monks of St John by the Sea.

Samuel called the few villagers who were mulling around, shocked and not sure what to do. “Come let us bury the good fathers” said Samuel “Let us do our duty to these men of faith. Let us do this last office.” Samuel closed the eyes of father Alfred before taking a spade and began to dig in the hard ground. All the while the old monk wept, not knowing what would happen to him. It was long after nightfall when the fisher folk left the ruined monastery, taking the old man with them. The light of the burning monastery lighted their way

home.

The villagers helped the old monk towards the village, however what to do with the cripple was not resolved that easily. There was a heated debate in the village marketplace on who would care for him. Each villager who was asked gave some reason why he could not care for the old man. John the blacksmith was far too busy. Arthur the baker said he had far too many children and his wife was expecting another. Samuel listened to the various reasons before stepping in and saying he would take care of the old man if the other villagers would provide him with a daily ration of food for both of them. To which the some villagers agreed hesitantly others like Samuel taking pity and agreeing quite readily.

Samuel helped the old man to the hovel where he lived. When Samuel had first come to the village, the hovel had been in a sad state. But he had in his spare time fixed it up as best he could and now a fire burned at the hearth and it was warm.

Over the next few days Samuel watched as the old man relived his life, sleeping often, mumbling in his sleep of his days as a youth in Surrey. Later he would wake and speak in broken sentences of the monastery and his life there. He had come to the monastery after a life of toil as a sailor on the high seas, as a crewman on a rich merchant's ship. However when he had lost his leg in an accident the merchant had taken him to the door of the nearest monastery and abandoned him to the care of the monks.

As Samuel listened he became aware that the old man had lost the will to live, he was simply too old and injured in spirit to change again to a new life style. After a week he developed a cough and began to grow weak. One early morning Samuel awoke, finding the old man breathing heavily he rose and gave the old man some water. The old man's eyes were shining brightly in the low light given by the ox fat candle. "I would thank you friend Sam for your hospitality. It is not everyone who would take in an old broken man in these days of trouble" said the old man. "It was nothing that any man would not do for an old servant of the church" replied Samuel. "Ah Sam how easy the lie lies on your lips. You don't think the monks at the monasteries know what the people think they tow the

line from King Henry. You are an exceptional man Sam.”
Nothing more was said. The light in the old man’s eyes
growing dim. At dawn the old monk died, coughing once, then
a great fountain of blood erupted from his damaged lungs.
Samuel held him in his arms as he watched the light fade from
the old face, breathing his last.

Later in the day the old monk was buried in the churchyard
with only Samuel and a cleric in attendance. Having no coffin,
the old monk was wrapped in a sheet and laid to rest in the
cold earth.
The cold winter wind blew as the grave was covered up.
Samuel turned walked to the hovel, gathered a few pieces of
clothing and left the village on the road leading to London.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1630 AD Batavia South East Asian subcontinent

Having been some years occupied with the making of profit in Batavia Samuel one day decided that the time was drawing near when he would once again need to return to Europe. It was not that he really wanted to for his time in Batavia had brought him great wealth, however the matter of his longevity had once more come to the fore. He had first come to Batavia in the year 1610 and from a humble start had build up quite a considerable fortune. Through trade he had increased his small fortune over the years. Now while others came to the east to work for Jan Company had varying luck with their fortunes by and large most had either returned to Europe not much richer than when they started out or were laid in the cold dark earth of Batavia having been carried away by fever or disease. Yet still Samuel had prospered until he found it difficult to hide his increasing wealth.

With this in mind he set about putting his affairs in order, arranging for a return trip was not one of the easiest things to arrange. A passage aboard a Dutch East Indiaman required the help of many officials within the organization to sign off the necessary documents before the junior merchant Ferreira was permitted to board the vessel which would carry him home to Amsterdam. Thus one day at the end of the year he boarded the vessel which was making ready to sail. Once his chests had been stowed he came on deck to watch the workings of the vessel. It was a novelty to watch as these rugged men, these sons of the sea applied themselves to the work of sailing the ship. He observed how they ran on command up the rope ladders which placed them on the cross trees of the vessel high above the deck. One mistaken step meant the difference between life and death for should a sailor fall from the mast he would be broken on the hard wooden deck. If he survived the fall he would be a cripple for the rest of his life, without an income to speak of. Seldom were men who sailed these great ships married for the voyage to the East kept them away from their home ports for many long years and seldom would a woman marry a man who she would seldom see. Samuel had seen men before who had fallen from the mast. They would hobble along on their walking sticks, bent, broken things begging a penny here and there for gin.

As the ship left the harbor of Batavia on this fine afternoon the breeze tugged gently at the sails overhead. Samuel looked back across the waters towards the city. There he could see the tower of die Groot Kerk towering above the houses, which had been build in the typical Dutch style with the practical Dutch eye for detail.

The days following the sailing caused Samuel much stress and he was ill for he had once spent a few weeks in a small boat on the open sea and the very thought of spending any time in a small boat brought the full horror of those days to his mind. Every night when he retired to bed he would whisper a prayer that no hurricane or storm overtake the ship. The captain, a big hearty man laughed at his fears one evening over dinner of salted beef. "Come Mynheer Ferreira, surely you cannot think that our fine ship cannot take a little water?" "I tell you I have sailed these Oceans for twenty years, man and boy and the only thing I fear is being caught by pirates. That is one thing I will never allow to happen" said the captain. These words brought comfort to Samuel's weak stomach. He had never been much of a sailor, now he found himself taking the air and speaking with other passengers who were returning from the east. The one thing that was foremost on all of their minds was the preservation of their chests of coin, which each had accumulated through their years of service.

As the ship headed south along the coast of Africa, they sometimes put in for water. The Dark Continent had a strange attraction for Samuel; he found that he enjoyed the brief trips ashore. Here he would wander always under the eye of some of the crew members stopping to pick up a stone which he would drop into his pocket or a shell with strange design which he would clutch to his chest, as he returned to the ship. It could be said that Samuel at that time was much a product of this time, a little first hand knowledge and centuries of superstition. Thus was the man of the early 17th century making a great step into the age of reason, for some of the great thinkers of reason had already been born and were making their first steps into the world with inquiring minds. Now as the ship traveled south, the days of illness were over, taken with a desire to live life to the fullest. Even as Samuel gained his sea legs, others began to weaken for at that time unknown to man the African mosquitoes which carried the

deadly malaria sleeping sickness overtook those who had gone ashore along the coast of Africa and were stricken with the illness from which they suffered terribly. On occasion the victim of the illness would shiver as if in the depth of a winter storm while the next moment the poor victim would throw off their coverings and be bathed in sweat as if in a great fever.

1631 AD Some where on the open ocean of North Africa – Southern Europe.

The master of the Dutch East India company vessel Die Goed Hoop held sway over life and death. Everybody was aware of this. "Better not to tempt the fates and the master" was the old saying. When the bell had been rung both the crew and passenger on board had assembled on the deck. The captain Jan Van Eck stood on the poop dressed in his Sunday best red frock coat and maroon pantaloons. It was time for the Sunday service and reading. Next to the master stood the predekant bible in hand.

When everybody had been assembled, the captain began to speak. "Today we will give thanks for the completion of our voyage from Batavia. We will offer up to the Almighty our thanks that the pirates which perused us were beaten off. We will give thanks for the fact that the Almighty saw fit to bring us once again into Dutch waters and to our homeport of Amsterdam."

"Many among you have endured great hardships during this voyage without complaint and for this I thank you. It is due to your hard work that we have come this far. Soon we will be reaching our berth. Until that time I would ask you to continue to behave in a manner befitting good Dutchmen. Predecant Williams will now do the reading." The slight man stepped forward and began to read from the bible.

Samuel, standing with his head bowed began to think back over the course of the voyage. There had been days when he had been violently sea sick. He had seldom experienced sea sickness on such a scale. On rounding the Cape of Africa he had been allowed to go ashore for a few hours while the crew gathered fresh water. This had been a good thing for had they continued without stopping, Samuel doubted that he would

have survived. It was paramount that he did for in his sea chests he carried a vast fortune which he had slowly been building up over the years in Batavia. To lose the fortune due to death would have meant a great deal of hard work had been lost, as he would never be able to recover the property from the Dutch East India company. Then there had been the incident with the pirates of the coast of North Africa when, for three whole days the merchant ship had run before the wind changing course as the wind changed, in the hope of out distancing the pirates. At one stage he had taken the spyglass and had looked in the direction of the pursuing ships. He was shocked to see the look of hatred and scorn on the faces of the pirates their cutlasses at the ready, the pirates had tried their utmost to capture the Dutch vessel, which experience had taught them carried great wealth. All aboard knew that if the pirates ever caught up with them there would be no mercy, all aboard Die Goed Hoop would be butchered like animals; men, women, and children.

Finally on the third day the captain had given the order that when night had fallen and the last vestiges of day had fled the open sea, all lamps and lights were to be extinguished before the ship was put about in a northerly direction in the hope of out witting the pirates. It was then when the most dangerous time had come, as the ship plowed its way northwards in absolute darkness. Should anyone drop some thing or speak, the sound would carry across the open waters alerting the pirates to the presence of the escaping merchant ship. The greatest worry of every one on board the ship was the fact that they might accidentally run into one or both of the pirate vessels in the dark. To this end the crew had been armed and stood ready to sell their lives dearly should the need occur. The ship had continued through the night with all sails spread. When the moon had eventually risen, they found themselves many leagues from their pursuers. Now all hands were called to be alert, in the event that just over the horizon, the pirates might be following. Extra watches were placed to keep a sharp lookout to the rear to see if any vessel was following in their wake.

By sun rise the ship was still moving in the direction of Europe. The Southern peninsula of Spain was sighted at mid day and the men began to relax, little knowing they were

approaching home waters. During the beginning of the voyage south to Africa a number of passengers and crew had been taken ill due to some unknown malady. They would fall into sleeps, shivering at times, and then throwing off the blankets as their fever rose. A number had died but those who did recover were not in the best of health. It seemed to Samuel that this strange illness had first occurred when they had put in for provisions at Delgoa Bay. Here they had replenished their stores and water supply and done some trading with the friendly Portuguese who governed the place. Samuel had found the place abhorrent knowing that from this place many Africa people had been sold into slavery and sent to the far off corners of the world. Samuel had known slavery through out the ages but the difference was the current age of slavery treated people like nothing more then possessions to be used up. If a slave died what was to be done? Why buy another, after all the crops of cotton and sugar had to be planted. During the first thousand years of his life Samuel had seen slaves taken from their homeland and sold into nations from which their children eventually rose to become citizens. But there was little chance of that happening to these poor ignorant frightened black people who were loaded like so much cargo into the slaver ships and moved half a world away, to work out their days perpetually at the mercy of hard task masters. Why some of the slaves might even for a time believe they would be able to return one day. In the ancient world if a slave saved enough he might be able to buy his freedom but these poor fellows it seemed did not have this opportunity.

1632 AD Samuel and his Rembrandt

It was the 400th anniversary of the great painter's birth. Samuel had been waiting for the right opportunity to display the painting. Thus far the opportunity had not presented itself, thus he decided that this was the perfect opportunity. Later when the painting was hanging in the lounge Samuel was entertaining a friend who happened to notice the marked similarity between the person in the portrait and Samuel. "Ah a distant ancestor" said Samuel before the conversation passed on to other matters. That evening Samuel went back and looked at the painting. He liked the new frame which he had bought for the painting. It complemented the fine brush work and added a classical touch. He remembered that when he had first thought of displaying the painting he had gone to the attic

and found the painting which was packed away in several sheets inside a water proof bag. The dust of centuries fell to the floor as he removed the outer sheets. He worried that the painting might have been damaged by its long hiatus in the dark. Had the changing climatic conditions and age destroyed the painting? Had the paint begun to peel and pull away from the canvas? These were all questions he asked himself but he had nothing to fear, when the last layer of sheeting had been stripped away and the painting exposed to the light after almost two centuries it was clear that the long rest in the dark had done nothing to destroy the painting. The colors were as bright as the day that the master painter had first applied the brush. Now as he looked at the painting sipping his brandy he was drawn once more into the past.

It was the year 1632 and he had recently arrived in Amsterdam, after spending some time in the Far East. As a wealthy merchant and publican he wished his portrait to be painted and had sought advice from a senior merchant Mnr Van Groundling. "Well Samuel I can tell you there is a young painter who is making quite a name for himself here right now that you might try" said the fat man. "Oh and who might that be?" said Samuel to the merchant. "The man in question is young master Rembrandt. He has turned out a number of good works".

Thus Samuel had found himself making his way to the home and studio of the painter. On being admitted he was surprised to see that although the house was large and quite new that the master himself admitted him. "You will excuse the mess" said Rembrandt as he led his prospective client into the sun lit studio. "Quite in order Master Rembrandt" said Samuel. "May I ask if it is possible to see some of your work before I decide?" asked Samuel. "Certainly" said the painter, pulling a cover from a stand on which stood a canvas. The subject of the painting was from the Old Testament. The color and the natural light were quite striking. Samuel gasped, never had he seen work quite like it. Never, not even the work of the Italian masters, of which had a good knowledge of, were quite so life like. The light was so natural one could be forgiven for thinking that the scene was real.

"What would you want for doing a portrait of me in a Turkish costume within a room and some accouterments?" asked Samuel. "Ah that is a good idea, well let me see now?" said Rembrandt who quickly started scribbling on a piece of paper with a piece of chalk. After a few moments he stopped and said "Pray forgive me mynheer. I have quite forgotten to offer you some wine. Jacobus!" shouted the artist through an open door. "Bring some wine" returning to the table on which the instruments of his trade lay, he picked up a piece of paper and said "I think that 16 guilders would about cover the costs". For a moment Samuel was about to say no but then his eye caught the reflection of the light on the painting and he decided that for a portrait of that quality he would pay a far greater price. "Done" said Samuel and the deal was struck over a glass of fine red Tuscan wine.

"So" master Rembrandt said. "When would you like to sit for the first time?"

"So mynheer Ferreira you have been in the east?" asked Rembrandt. "Yes for a number of years" said Samuel. The chamber in which they sat was filled with light from a large bay window. Rembrandt had insisted that the painting be done in this room because as he said the natural light would make a better portrait than the artificial light of a room filled with candles. Samuel had to agree the artist knew best when it came to these matters.

"Did you manage to make your fortune working for Jan Company?" asked Rembrandt. "I must admit I did rather well from the company." answered Samuel. "I have always longed to travel" said the painter who was busy mixing colors on his pallet, "but alas commitments and the life of a company man is not suited for my temperament" said Rembrandt. "Then Holland is my home. I should feel quite out of place in foreign parts I imagine" he continued. "How did you find the east mynheer?" He asked.

"Well to be frank sometimes it was a little strange. The customs and the ways of the people who live there are so much different from here in Holland" said Samuel. "Turkey is an interesting place. There is so much to see and the court of the Grand Turk, well that is a whole other world, so formal

and so many bribes to be paid even to minor officials. Nothing is done with out a little money changing hand."

"Oh I did not realize that it was so much like a robbers market" said Rembrandt "tell me mynheer, did you ever have trouble on your travels with the Barbary pirates?" asked Rembrandt. "Once we were pursued for a whole day at sea before we were able to give them the slip. You know life at sea is so dangerous. When you are the only merchant ship within a thousand miles every pirate and minor chieftain takes it upon himself to try and capture the vessel. But we had a good ship and a wise captain who knew how to slip away from the pirates in the dark." Said Samuel

"Tell me mynheer, what is Batavia like?" asked Rembrandt. "Well I must tell you that Batavia is at once a wonderful yet at the same time a terrible place. The air is filled with spices, the warehouse filled with peppercorns and other spices. Yet our people there are not use to the climate. They die from ailments, which do not seem to affect the locals. It is as if there is something in the water that causes a man to be healthy in the morning yet deadly sick at night. I have known strong men to retire soundly to bed at night and to awaken in the morning sweating with fever and to be dead at mid day. The orient though brings Holland much wealth."

"Indeed I have heard tales of the east which I can hardly credit" said Rembrandt. "I do not know weather to believe them or not. The men I have spoken with say a man's fortune could be made on one voyage to Batavia but also a fortune can be lost he ended." "Believe me master Rembrandt the tales you have been told are all true. Unfortunately the majority of those who go never return wealthy. There are far too many distractions and when a man gets distracted from making his fortune it is but a short road to destruction" said Samuel. "I was lucky that I made a good bargain and was able to rise in the company when I started. I had but a small amount of capital, but slowly I amassed a fortune in the east. The food there I must tell you is like nothing you will ever taste in Holland" said Samuel.

"So in general Jan Company has been a good thing for you" said Rembrandt. "Yes I have to admit that it has" said Samuel.

"The painting progresses well?" asked Samuel of the artist.
"Yes mynheer, if you would step this way I am sure you will be pleasantly surprised" said Rembrandt.

The painting showed Samuel standing under the window with one hand on a globe of the world while the other hand was clasping a scroll, also to be seen in the painting was a number of bags of spices. Although the bags did not contain spice any more, they now contained a goodly amount of good Dutch soil and pebbles. Samuel approached the painting and looked while the artist cleaned his hands "I think it is time for some wine" said Rembrandt who crossed the room to a cabinet, which had a very large lock. Sorting through his bunch of keys they continued to talk until he had found the key. Once he had opened the cabinet, he produced a bottle of wine from which he poured two large glasses of wine, one he offered to Samuel who was busy lighting his pipe with a coal from the fire. "Thank you master Rembrandt" said Samuel "this wine seems to travel well I have seldom tasted such good wine in all my travels" said Samuel. "Ah that is indeed a great compliment from a man who has traveled to distant shores".

"You are too kind master Rembrandt. I am interested to know by what method you would suggest for preserving my painting for a long time and in different climates. As I think I will be away from Holland for many years and I would like to think that I am not just wasting money" said Samuel. "Ah well I would suggest that at all times you keep the painting dry and covered with a sheet as to prevent the colors from fading I will also mix a varnish which will preserve it for many years" said Rembrandt. "Good, that is indeed good news" said Samuel.

Once they had finished their wine Samuel returned to his position under the window and placed the Turkish headband once more on his head. In the mean time Rembrandt returned to the painting and began to add paint to the image on the canvas.

1632 Invitation to dinner with Rembrandt

The painting was almost finished and Rembrandt and Samuel were standing looking at the painting "Well Mynheer Ferreira, what do you think of your portrait?" asked the artist. "Very impressive, I shall treasure it always" said Samuel with a

smile. "I am glad to say that it indeed shows a true reflection of the man" said the artist "Indeed it does" said Samuel. "So, Mynheer Ferreira where will you be off to next?" asked Rembrandt. "I have heard that there is much to be said of Ceylon" said Samuel "A fortune to be made they say. I have invested the bulk of my money with the Amsterdam bankers. With what I have left I should be able to live comfortably for a few years and still make some money. If I invest again in the Tea plantations in Ceylon" said Samuel. "An excellent idea" said Rembrandt, who was wishing he had some money to invest in some similar project.

"Yes tea is the new thing. A number of tea shops have opened in The Hague. They seem to be quite popular with the subjects of the realm" said Samuel. "Ah yes I have been to one of those shops I was very impressed with the tea drinking experience. I liked the taste. There is much to be said for taking tea. But I do not like all of the methods of drinking it. I liked mine with a little milk and sugar but I saw some people drinking theirs black and with chili powder, a very unusual and strong brew indeed" said Rembrandt, wiping his hands before taking up a brush to begin applying varnish to the painting.

"I have heard that Formosa was the place to find many strange and wonderful things" said Rembrandt as he worked. "I was there for a while it is an interesting place. The local rulers are very stringent on what one is allowed to buy and sell there. I find that opium is quite popular there but the use is restricted due to the fact that it makes people very lazy and slothful".

"How is it that a man as busy as you, have been able to travel to so many places in your short life? asked Rembrandt. "Ah well if I had to tell you my secret I think I do not think you would believe me" said Samuel with a smile as he took an apple from a bowl which lay on the table. "I think you might be right Mynheer" said Rembrandt who in his own life had already undergone a number of events.

"I can say this though, if you work hard for Jan company you do find ways to get around and if your service is noticed they do tend to promote you and to send you to the most interesting places" said Samuel. "I have been on some of the most deserted places in the world and some of the most populous

place in the service of the Dutch East India Company. I have stood in a market in Batavia surrounded by thousands of people all speaking different languages I have also spent the night on the beach on the southern tip of Africa, a most desolate place, thousands of Leagues from the nearest habitation of civilized man" said Samuel.

"Now I am in one of the most modern cities of the world enjoying a conversation with a most remarkable man who will one day be remembered for the great commissions he has yet to undertake a master craftsman. A man who I am proud to call friend" said Samuel "Ah Mynheer, you are too kind. I paint because I love it and it also brings me a pretty nice income but mainly because I love it" said the great artist.

"But come Mynheer Ferreira the hour grows late you must join me and my family for dinner. We have lately had a new addition to the family, a boy. Little Titus who is but a few weeks old you must see him and give me your opinion on what he should become. I am all for him becoming an artist but Saskia says we must wait and see."

"I should be delighted Master Rembrandt, to eat at your table to share a little wine to enjoy good Dutch company" said Samuel.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
LONDON ENGLAND 1666

The vessels in the Thames river rood were easy at anchor, the tide pulling at the ships gently. Samuel came on to the deck “Give you good day captain” he said to the bearded man in a red coat. “Morning master Ferreira, I trust you slept well?” replied the master of the vessel. “I see that we have arrived, how soon before I will be able to go ashore asked Samuel?” “As soon as the sun rises we will make for the docks” said the captain. “The boatmen are a little thin since the plague has cleaned their ranks.” “Ah yes I have heard in Holland of the plague. Were you here when it happened?” asked Samuel.

“I was here for a short time” replied the man. “London is much changed since then there are so few people on the streets. Many shops closed because the merchants left or died. Ah well that is the way of life in the midst of life there is death” said the master of the vessel quoting from a well remembered section of the scripture.

Samuel had come to London from continental Europe. The last time he had been in England was more then a hundred years earlier. He saw much had changed but London seemed not to have changed. The stench of rotting garbage drifted across the river to where the ship lay anchored. Taking a hanky from his coat pocket he held it to his nose. “One should always take care not to sniff the morning air too deeply. There is still a chance of plague” said the captain noting Samuel’s discomfort. It was not that London was anymore dirty than any other large European city at that time, it was just that all the filth usually found its way to the river. Some attempt had been made in European cities to clean up the streets, but in London the streets were still filled with the results of night soil being dropped from the high gables of the house to the streets bellow. The sun almost never reached the street because of the way the city had grown higher and higher.

To this city, the capital of England, Samuel had now come to find a small inn to run to turn a pretty profit. Unable to escape the eternal curse under which he lived, he had for some time slipped into doing what he had done for so many centuries and that been seeing to the comforts of his fellow human beings. He had been living in France for about fifty years and it was

time to move on. The choice of London had been made in the light of the possibility that many people had died of the plague and as a result property was bought and sold cheaply.

As Samuel was being rowed towards the shore shortly after seven in the morning he chanced to see a short stocky man engaged in a heated conversation with another waterman at the dock to which the boat in which he was traveling was making. As the boat got closer Samuel could hear the raised voices. "I must ask you again to take me across to the man of war this instant! I am not interested in what the captain said, I am Pepys of the navy board and I have urgent business on board that vessel. The captain of that vessel does not command me I command him now take me across this moment!" said the little man.

"I will not. Captain Blood will skin me alive if I should bring you out. He has threatened to turn his guns on any one who brings out any one from the Navy office I am most sorry Master Pepys but it is not worth my while to do this." said the waterman.

"What shall I do" asked Pepys to no one in particular. Samuel in the mean time had reached the dock and was hoisting his chest to his shoulder. As he turned he looked full into the face of the little man with a big opinion of himself. "I will pay double the fee" said the little man to the gathered watermen. The man who had just brought Samuel ashore said "I will do it sir if you can guarantee that if Captain Blood blows my skip out of the water the navy will replace it." "Done" said Master Pepys hurriedly climbing into the boat. Samuel stood for a while watching as the boat made its way towards the Man of War waiting to see if indeed the captain would fire upon the small boat. The gathered watermen spoke and joked about the fact that if the waterman and Pepys survived the broadside from the ship, Mr. Pepys would be so indebted to the waterman that he would have to give him a yacht. The boat reached the ship and soon the figure master Pepys was seen climbing through the entry port of the ship. Samuel turned and headed to the city, up fish market street with its fish mongers stalls getting ready to sell the catch of last night.

It had been about a month since a great fire had torn through

the heart of the city of London. During the great fire of September 1666 the population had rallied round their King the merry monarch Charles II. He was to be seen everywhere with the Duke of York, so also was Master Samuel Pepys. Of the Lord Mayor there had been various stories told, not very complimentary; his dilly-dallying had cost many their homes. Many were penniless, having lost all their worldly goods. St Paul's had burned brightly, the flames reaching two hundred feet. When the great ancient roof collapsed a mighty flame had shot up into the sky which was seen for miles. The issuing navy stores to the homeless and destitute who gathered at Smithfield after the fire with the meager possessions that they had managed to save was done by Mr. Pepys of the navy helped by sailors from Woollitch.

For the foreign-born residents and visitors, London had become a very unsafe place. After the fire rumors of papist plots were abroad, even the Spanish ambassador's house had been attacked by mobs with bat bricks. Samuel had taken to hiding his foreign origin by going to live for a time at Lincoln inn a district just out side of the boundaries of greater London; however one could not help but hear of incidents, where mobs attacked and in some cases even killed foreigners who it was believed had started the fire.

One of the earliest rumors began during the course of the fire when a Portuguese man had stooped to pick up a piece of bread and had then placed it on a windowsill. According to the Portuguese it was a very bad thing to pass by a piece of bread lying in the road and not pick it up and place it in a better place. The mob of angry superstitious residents of the city had attacked him and they were in the process of fetching a rope to hang him, when the King and the Duke of York happened upon the scene. If it had not been for the royal intervention the poor man might have lost his life.

Thus Samuel left the city and went into the country for a while till tempers had cooled and some reason had been restored to the troubled city. However a month after the fire, Samuel had reason to go up to London to do some business. He was in need of the aid of a lawyer in the purchase of a small inn in a section of the city that had not been burned. This was to prove very difficult as the temple court where the lawyers met had

been burned in the fire. The lawyers were now scattered round the city operating from whatever place could be found. The Brass Bell was an old inn that had been build about two hundred and fifty years earlier during the War of the Roses. Samuel had first seen the inn back in the year 1536 when he had visited the city of London. Back then the inn had been run by one William Smallman now a little more then a hundred and thirty years. He found that the inn was still run by a descendent of William Smallman, one James Smallman. At the end of a long and tiring day Samuel had retired to the inn to sleep and eat and to take a flagon of Ale. Nursing the flagon, sitting in a small alcove, Samuel was lamenting that he had been unable to make much headway in finding a lawyer who would draw up the legal documents in regard to the purchase of the inn. James Smallman joined him at the table. "Well what progress friend Samuel?" asked the Londoner "I fear none, master Smallman the lawyers have gone to ground. But I have hopes of ferreting out one on the morrow" continued Samuel. "Mayhap one of my regulars might be able to find a lawyer" said James nodding his head in the direction of a short man in a frock coat who had just entered the inn. Molly, his daughter had gone to take the man's order as he seated himself.

"I believe I have seen the man before" said Samuel. "Of a certainty thou hast" said James "every one knows Mr. Pepys of the Navy board but tarry a while for I will have speech with him about our matter" continued James as he rose from the table. He made his way over to the table at which Samuel Pepys sat and engaged him in an animated discussion gesturing and laughing as a friendly innkeeper does with a familiar guest.

Samuel in the meantime sat and pondered what had drawn him to this inn so long ago in the first place. He had liked it at that time. The street in which the inn had stood had not been crowded; it was a sunny place in summer and back in 1536, there had been an orange tree growing not far from the front door. Now a century and a bit later the inn was part of a buildup area in greater London. Now the orange tree was long gone. At that time Samuel had first seen the inn, he had been very impressed with it. He offered to buy the inn but William Smallman would not even hear of it. "Where would I go? My

family has owned this inn for time out of memory" the old man had said shaking his head. Now a century later James Smallman was tired of the inn he and his wife had lost many relatives in the late plague even some of there children had died of the plague this had broken their hearts. Now all they wanted to do was move away from the place that had brought them so much sorrow.

Samuel was joined at the table in the alcove by James Smallman and Samuel Pepys. "Master Ferreira please meet one of my regulars, Mr. Samuel Pepys of the navy board" "I Give you good evening" said Samuel to the man as he sat down. "Give you good day said Mr. Pepys I believe that you have need of a notary public?" said Sam Pepys. "You seem to have the problem by the head" said Samuel. "Mayhap I can be of service to you" said Pepys "for a small consideration of course. I believe that friend Smallman wants to dispose of the inn and go into the country. I shall miss him and the good wife Molly said Pepys in his country accent. Ah no matter" said Pepys.

"Yes I will be buying the inn and running it as a profit venture" said Samuel "but as to the business at hand you say you might be able to help with a public notary? May one inquire as to where one will be able to find such a person? I have been searching the whole of the day with out much fortune of finding one yet you seem to have one at your fingertips?"

"Why sir I am the very man. I read law at Oxford and am able to draw up any document or writ that you might need" said Samuel Pepys, rubbing his hands as if had just delivered a great surprise to his companions and it must be said that it was indeed a surprise to Samuel Ferreira who suddenly realized that he had previously seen Pepys in an argument with Thames waterman. "Yes indeed this little man was full of surprises" Samuel noted that he would have to keep a sharp weather eye on this man of many talents.

The conversation continued and fell to the business of drawing up the deed of sale for the inn known as "The Brass Bell" to Master Samuel Ferreira formally owned by James Smallman. Once the matter of the inn was settled James Smallman got up and went off to refill the tankards of ale for the thirsty

gentlemen with whom he had spent the best part of the previous hour, stopping to speak to a fellow with a fiddle who had come into the inn. The fellow began to play a lively tune to which a number of guests began to tap. The sound of laughter and talk grew louder.

It was in little inns like this that over the next two hundred years lively minds would meet and discuss life and reason. The age of reason had begun. In fact one of the guests at that very table was one day to become a member of the Royal Society who would donate a whole lot of very interesting books to the university to which he went, in his will but that lay far into the future, right now he felt content with the world and with his new friend, his name sake Samuel as they sat talking and drinking Samuel found Pepys an interesting person. Pepys had a lively mind, always inquiring, laughing uproariously at whatever jokes Samuel had just made.

The coffee shop 1667

“Just like you” said Mr. Pepys “I did that wall in the Roman style the bits of broken tile to make the picture I think it looks wonderful, portrays the life of Rome as it was” said Samuel to Pepys. “Yes indeed it looks like a picture of the Roman life” agreed Pepys. “Although you might want to add to it by placing an ancient jar of some type in the corner to off set the painting” he continued.

“A wonderful idea” said Samuel “Mayhap a little Grecian urn will do the trick” said Samuel. They were in a room on the ground floor of the inn which had formally been an old storage space which Samuel had converted into a coffee shop. It was now decorated with benches tables and chairs in little alcoves. The sound of a busy industrious inn traveled through the open door it was an early evening in the year of our Lord 1667.

Much of the city of London which had been destroyed by the late fire was now once more in the busy hands of the builders as they struggled to keep abreast of the new building codes which parliament had enacted under instruction from the King.

Samuel Pepys now a well-known guest at the inn and had been giving Samuel advice on how to expand his business, which seemed to be growing since Samuel had bought the inn from James Smallman. He had done very well for himself; the improvements which he had done had drawn even more guests

than anything which he could previously have imagined. Samuel wondered that the stocky little man had time to advise him, seeing that he already had much to contend with at the Navy office, yet Mr. Pepys could be found of an evening at the Brass Bell advising his new friend and namesake in the decoration and the improvement of the inn of which he was so fond.

Indeed Mr. Pepys viewed the inn almost as a second home, to which he would on occasion bring his friends and acquaintances for a tankard of good English ale. Here Mr. Pepys and his fellows from the navy office could be found toasting the King 'God bless Him' and the Duke of York, from whom their good fortune flowed. On occasion, Mr. Pepys would be accompanied by his patron the Earl of Sandwich, who took a great interest in any improvement to the inn. Samuel would show Mr. Pepys and his noble guest to the best table in the house where they would sit for hours drinking and eating. Many a night Samuel would burn the midnight oil as he waited for their table to depart after an evening of well spent fun.

The guests that Mr. Pepys brought into the inn did not always please Samuel. On the rare occasion that Mr. Pepys brought his fellow naval man Sir William Penn, Samuel's face would grow dark with apprehension. Sir William was a glutton and always had a complaint about some thing. "Really, Samuel I don't know why you bring us to this pig sty" said Sir William to Mr. Pepys on one occasion. To which Mr. Pepys, it must be admitted did take some exception. "Sty? Sir William I see no sty here." replied Pepys. If rumor was to be believed, when the two gentlemen's wives got together, things grew much hotter. Samuel for one was glad he had not yet made the acquaintance of the two ladies.

It was said that Mr. Pepys was a rising star in the navy and many more senior men now sought him out for answers to the difficult questions, which faced them as they tried to work out various projects. Others sought him out to try and obtain a commission or a place on the navy lists; all of these things brought him a pretty penny. It was said that Mr. Pepys owned a great number of fine things, gifts from far off places brought by grateful sea captains, to the more mundane things. Mr.

Pepys kept a fine eye on his household and its economy.

It was a stormy night when Mr. Pepys brought his wife Elizabeth to the Brass Bell inn for the first time. The small bell over the door rung as the door was pushed open by Mr. Pepys. "Come Elizabeth, step inside quickly or you will be quite frozen" he said as he held the door open for his lady. Stepping through the door the petite Elizabeth Pepys surveyed for the first time where her husband had spent many a happy hour.

Rubbing his hands together to warm them Samuel Pepys smiled across the room as Samuel Ferreira came closer "I give you good evening" said Samuel to his guests. "Greetings friend Samuel" said Pepys as he helped Elizabeth out of her wet cloak. "Come sit a while by the fire" said Samuel showing them to two comfortable chairs near the large fireplace. "Should I bring you brandy?" he asked of Pepys. "Indeed that would be most welcome said Pepys."

Samuel hurried off to pour the brandy while the lady Elizabeth looked around in surprise at how clean the inn was. She was not used to an inn which was so clean. The reason for this was through his long history Samuel had seen many an inn go to ruin due to slovenly treatment and he had no intention of helping the grim reaper take any more victims through his negligence. "Why Sam this is quite a nice inn" she said in her heavily accented English. She was of French extraction. "Indeed my dear this is one of the reasons why I frequent the place, besides the innkeeper is a very unusual man. Did you know he has been to Istanbul?" said Pepys. "He has seen the Grand Turk. Why he is positively the most traveled man I have ever yet met" said Mr. Pepys.

"Sam I would like you to meet my wife. This is Elizabeth of whom you have heard me speak" said Mr. Pepys. "The pleasure is mine" said Samuel bowing from the waist. "Oh a gentleman" said Elizabeth with laughter in her voice. Her smile was infectious. Samuel found himself smiling back at the young woman. It had been some time since he had felt so happy. "May I say Mr. Pepys that you have a wonderful wife. I am sure that you must keep her under lock and key lest a villain come to steal her away." as he said this Samuel realized from the expression on Mr. Pepys face that he had committed

some grievous social mistake. Pepys face had indeed hardened and he was no longer smiling. "Not that a villain would find it easy to capture the lady" said Samuel, trying to repair the damage. Pepys smile returned "Ah yes my wife would surely see that the villain would not surmount the fortress of her heart" said Pepys as he kissed his wife's hand.

It had belatedly come to Samuel's remembrance that he had once heard Sir William say that Mr. Pepys should not be so jealous of his young wife. If he continued he would have an attack of Apoplectics. Now Samuel understood what Sir William had meant when he had said those words. "And to think" Samuel thought "I could have lost a good customer because of some stupid remark. Well I will just have to be more careful with our Mr. Pepys." The Pepys' ordered dinner. Samuel took their order, a pheasant for Mr. Pepys and a half a duck for his lady with some claret. While Samuel instructed the kitchen as to the meal his mind turned to the wine, maybe claret to start with. To be followed by a Madera port. Yes he knew his customer well. Mr. Pepys would have forgotten by the end of the evening of his little lapse, in the mellowness of a good meal and a few good glasses of wine and port why Mr. Pepys was already positively beaming when he saw the tray on which his Pheasant was roasted coming towards him. Samuel decanted the bottle of claret.

It had been some days since Mr. Pepys had been to the Brass Bell. London was full of rumors that the Dutch had taken the fort at Sheerness; the whole city was in a panic. Many packed up their possessions and fled the city. In the streets one occasionally heard that those devils the Dutchmen would rape every woman in the city. There were reports of the Dutch landing. Later the Dutch fleet was in the river at Chatham. Ships had been burned, others taken with out a shot being fired. London had watched as one of the mighty men of war the H.M.S. Royal Charles had been taken. The Dutch had once more set out to sea with their prize in tow.

Tonight Samuel Pepys was in a dismal mood having watched the destruction of so many fine ships which he had helped to build. He sat in an alcove bitter and angry. "And where had watermen been?" he said to the group who gathered round him to hear the latest. "Why gone of to save their own property

after I ordered them to tow the ships further up river.”

“Damn your eyes De Ruyter! Damn you to hell!” he shouted as he nursed the ever-present tankard of ale. “Samuel bring me something to eat. I am quite finished.” he said to the innkeeper. Samuel had known many men in his life. He had never felt sorrier for any one then the little man before him now.

“There have been reports that the Dutch have landed. I had some of my navies stand guard at the Navy board office these three nights” he said. Samuel the innkeeper returned to the table with a dish of stew which Mr. Pepys began to devour hungrily. “A moment if you please Samuel” said Pepys breaking of a piece of bread from a loaf. “Can you provide a meal for about ten men with a barrel of your ale for my poor navies? It is a cold night to be a broad and even worse for those poor men who now stand guard at the navy office.”

“Indeed Mr. Pepys it would be a pleasure to do it for you” said Samuel, as he hurried off to make the necessary arrangements. In the meanwhile Pepys continued talking to the small group who had gathered round him. “I saw his Grace the Duke of York at court today, the poor man was in tears when he spoke to me he said”. “Have a care Mr. Pepys we have had a run of very bad luck with the loss of our vessels, tend well those that are left sir”. “What did you say to His Grace” asked Will Hewer, a long time servant of Mr. Pepys. “Why I told him if it was not for the damned parliament being so slow to forward the money for the building of the ships we might not have come to this.” said Pepys. “Aye it is a sad thing to see so much work destroyed in the space of such a short season” said Sir William Wright. “Oh Sir William I fear that we will both weep for the loss of your beloved ships” said Pepys. “Aye sir I believe had the money been found in time we might soundly have trounced Jan Dutchman” replied Sir William. “I will say nothing of my fellow office bearers who found it convenient to hire carts to have their goods taken to relatives in the country, while their efforts were needed at the office. I have been busy the whole day with poor sailors come to change their tickets but the two, Sir Williams, of the Navy office never to be found” said Pepys.

As they spoke, a fiddler made his fiddle sing a lively tune. People at the tables and in the alcoves were tapping out the rhythm on the floor. Some one was smoking a stinking clay pipe. Smoking had become a practice which most now partook of. It was said that the drivers of the death carts of the plague in the previous year had smoked clay pipes continuously. Even grandmother smoked to keep the plague away. Mr. Pepys had his own opinion about the use of pipes to scare the plague away. Quite frankly he did not believe it worked, although the Duke of Albermare, old general Monk who had spent the entire plague in the cockpit, smoking day and night and nothing but an irritating cough plagued him. At a table nearby, some young bloods were drinking and jesting much to the disgust of the other occupants of the inn. Samuel watched them with a weary eye knowing that behind the bar counter was a pike and a cudgel which could be quickly retrieved in the event of a fight.

The smell of beer and smoke filled the main room of the inn Samuel knew that tonight he was going to have trouble. Mr. Pepys, his good friend was in a bad mood. The young bloods were smoking and laughing making outrageous jokes at the expense of one of their number. Samuel wondered when their unwanted attention would be turned on to one of his other guests. Samuel would wait for that moment before he intervened. He knew that if he interfered before that moment he could very well find himself on the wrong end of the short stick. Samuel had seen hundreds of fights in inns in his years on earth so much so that he could sense the fight a long time before it started. The young bloods finished their ale and rose to leave. One of them tossed a few coins on the table in payment for their drinks.

Samuel breathed a sigh of relief, "at least there would be no fight tonight" he began to relax; it was a while before the stench of the untreated tobacco left the inn. In the meantime the aroma of a roasting hog began to permeate from the kitchen, this mixed in with the smell of coffee which occasionally filtered through from the coffee room when the door was opened. It reminded Samuel that he would need to check on the coffee room soon. The servant who worked in the room as a supervisor had been stealing from Samuel. It was nothing that Samuel could put his finger on just a feeling,

but Samuel knew from experience that once he got that suspicion he was usually right. He sighed “and things were going so well.” Mr. Pepys was looking in his direction. Samuel smiled and walked towards Mr. Pepys “What can I get you Mr. Pepys?” asked Samuel. “Ah yes friend Sam, please bring me a glass of your best French brandy for Sir William” said Mr. Pepys, indicating the large man sitting across the table from him. Sir William Penn of the Navy was known to Samuel. Samuel did not like Sir William he was rumored to be self seeking and dangerous passing on much of the actual work on to Mr. Pepys to do. However Mr. Pepys knew that if he were to make any advancement he would have to remain on friendly terms with Sir William.

Earlier in the week Mr. Pepys had come to the inn to ask a favor of Samuel. He was planning a dinner and had need of some silver and pewter dishes for the occasion. Mr. Pepys was very fond of “occasions” as his young wife Elizabeth called them; she too had on occasion visited the inn with her husband.

“Now that was a beauty” thought Samuel as he heated the glasses and then poured the brandy for his guests. Elizabeth Pepys was petite but with a lively mind. Samuel had heard Mr. Pepys bemoan the fact that she had no sense of economy in the home and did not treat his peri wig with the necessary respect. Mr. Pepys on the other hand was always taking the greatest care of his clothing even going so far on occasion as to pluck at real or imagined threads. Samuel had no problem lending the dishes to Mr. Pepys if Mr. Pepys could guarantee their safe return on completion of the evening’s affair.

London town was all a flutter. James, Duke of Monmouth had been involved in a duel with a young blood by the name of Ashby. Ashby had lost his life and his father, Colonel Ashby had sworn vengeance. It mattered not a farthing that James Duke of Monmouth was an illegitimate son of the merry monarch.

The two young men had met in a street in the strand. James, Duke of Monmouth had taken advantage of a lady of whom James Ashby was quite fond. An argument had quickly developed over some trifle and very soon swords had been

drawn and young James Ashby lay dead in the street, in front of a theater. Knowing the colonel's pertinacity for violence James, Duke of Monmouth had lost himself on one of his country estates. "Better to lose a season in London than to lose one's life over a lady" reasoned the young Duke.

Dueling had been forbidden unless under strict rules of engagement by a proclamation of Charles II but a short time before the penalties for illegal dueling were quite stringent thus to escape the wrath of the authorities the young duke had left the city in haste. Soon after Charles, King of England hearing of the matter flew into an almighty rage. Walking back and forth across the blue room at Windsor he stormed at his brother James Duke of York and the other gathered members of the Privy Council.

"Damned these young bloods he shouted spitting foam from his mouth" the merry monarch was not very pleasant on this day his ruff and shirt showing evidence of a rather large breakfast of Goose liver and pheasant. "How dare he sirs? How dare he?" he shouted at the gathered men who were trembling in their boots. Seldom had they seen the king in such a rage. James, Duke of York was a man who loved his brother, he tried to say something. "But Your Grace." "Enough, enough" shouted Charles waving his hand dismissively. For a moment James and the other men were not sure they were being dismissed. "My lord of Clarendon" said Charles "you will draw up an order which protects the young fool from punishment legal and personal" said Charles. "It concerns me that colonel Ashby who has been a faithful servant to the crown would swear vengeance but no matter, he was most probably put out at losing an heir. Well it cannot be helped. My Lord of Clarendon you will send to colonel Ashby a missive informing him to come forth in to my presence. I have in mind to make him Sir Ashby. Mayhap this will sooth his ruffled feathers" said the merry monarch.

"Yes Sire" said the father-in-law of James, Duke of York as he crossed the room to a writing desk. "Now James," said the king "when are you going to provide us with a nephew?" "Indeed Sire I am hard at work on the task" replied the blushing Duke. Lord Clarendon hearing this jest at the expense of his son in law chuckled...

In the inn Samuel was cleaning tables after a rather good night's work. The sun shone through the windows, the sounds of the street carried in to the building. At this time of the morning the sound of a coach going past attracted his attention for a moment. The coach stopped. The sound of a door opening was followed by the sound of voices in the street bidding the coach to wait. Samuel recognized the voice of his friend Mr. Samuel Pepys. He wondered what could bring the little man to the inn so early in the day..

"Shall we step inside?" asked the duke of York. "Indeed we shall" said his brother the King. They stood in the street outside the Brass bell Inn. Hurriedly Samuel Pepys pushed open the door and called "Sam, Sam come attend your guests" Samuel Ferreira hurried forward noticing the excited look on his friend's face. Samuel immediately became alert. Stepping through his door was Charles, King of England by the grace of God! His majesty had grown thirsty while returning from Windsor, and requiring a drink Samuel Pepys had suggested the inn of his friend Samuel Ferreira, late of the Low counties. Bowing at the waist Samuel welcomed the King to his little establishment. Hurriedly and with much courtesy, Samuel showed the king and his brother to the best table in the inn.

"I will be but a moment Sire" said Samuel hurrying off to the cellar to retrieve the best chilled wine which he had. Returning, Samuel found that the Duchess of York had joined her husband and brother in law and they were talking on the subject of the races at new market, which would be run later in the day. Mr. Pepys had in the meanwhile picked up the fiddle which some one had left laying on one of the tables. Softly at first but growing as he played he began to play a well known country air. The conversation continued King Charles hearing the tune began tapping his foot on the floor in time to the melody. When he finished playing, the merry monarch said to Samuel Pepys "Well played sir. Pray would you play the duke of Norfolk's round?" "Indeed I know it" said Pepys as he began once more to play, James, Duke of York in the mean time had been in conversation with his wife who seemed a little put out; being pregnant she had earlier begged to be excused from attending the races. The request had been denied by the King. Now as she grew more and more uneasy in her

condition she once more asked the king to excuse her. Seeing that she really was indisposed, Charles granted her permission to return home. James Duke of York made for the door to call for the carriage which came quickly. Depositing his lady in the carriage the Duchess set out for their home. James in the mean time returned to the table at which the king was sitting. Charles, King of England in the mean time was being entertained by a lady of the court, who was telling him a very witty story. When the lady finished the story Charles roared with laughter.

“Why Lady Anne, that is the best tale I have heard in a while” he said wiping a tear from his eye. “Innkeeper, bring more wine” called Charles, as he drained his goblet. Samuel wanting to please his noble guests hurried off to retrieve the desired item. Pepys in the meanwhile had stopped playing and had come to stand by the side of the monarch. “By Jove sir that was a good air” said the king but I fear that this time well spent will soon be at an end. The horses await us” said the king. Samuel returned and began to pour the chilled wine into the Kings goblet.

“Your grace I hope that you will find favor with the horses today” said James, Duke of York to his elder brother. “Indeed I will” said the king laughing. “But I was hoping for more favors from the pretty ladies” said the King to which the gathered nobles laughed politely. The king for all the good he did was a known philanderer.

James, Duke of York was of a more serious nature. It was said that behind closed doors that he was a secret Papist but he still loved his brother. On occasion, if one watched closely, one would see that James Duke of York’s eyes would grow soft when looking upon his elder brother like a devoted puppy dog. It was rumored that when the two brothers were alone, James would often urge his brother to swear off his philandering, however the King would make light of it and make a jest, which would distract the Duke’s attention from the matter on which he had come to urge his brother to stop doing.

London 1667 Wine woman and song

It had been a long and tiresome day for Samuel. He had risen before dawn, shaved and dressed in his best suit, his velvet

green waist coat in stark contrast to the white shirt and orange coat he wore. The coach had come just after eight in the morning. After a hurried conversation, he had accompanied Mr. Pepys, his long time customer and friend to the court of common pleas. Here he had made a sworn deposition as to what he had seen no more than a fortnight previously. It had been one of those hot sweltering summer evenings when the sun had set late. John Pieque, a minor clerk in the navy office working under Mr. Pepys who had a problem with ladies and drink, had come into the inn shortly before six o'clock PM, with him had been two well known London Bellas and a renowned sea captain. They had drunk and made merry until very late in the evening before retiring to a room on the upper floor of the inn.

They had departed the following morning at about 9 o'clock AM John Pieque had been a little worse for the amount of drink he had imbibed the previous night, but nothing more than the usual for a Saturday night. On the following Monday a hue and cry had gone up for the apprehension of the same John Pieque, who it was claimed by one Titus Oates, had been involved in a plot to kill the King and the Duke of York, on their return from New market the previous Saturday night.

Mr. Pepys, being out of town only came to hear of the arrest of John Pieque on the following Tuesday evening. Hurrying to the inn Mr. Pepys had inquired as to the events of the night of Saturday the 18th of June 1677. Samuel had made known to him all that he knew of the evening. Mr. Pepys took many notes in short hand of what Samuel had to tell him of the events of the evening in question. It was well that he did so for the following day questions were asked in the house of parliament as to the activities of the young man, whom it was claimed was under Mr. Pepys' patronage. Indeed angry words were heard in the house as various speakers rose to both defend and abuse Mr. Pepys reputation. "Was the honorable member saying that Mr. Pepys was the ring leader of the plot or was he but mentioning that the young man accused was an employee of the navy board?" inquired the member for Roundbotomsly in Yorkshire.

Indeed the debate grew quite heated. The King in the meantime sat and listened with half an ear. Mr. Pepys observed the

merry monarch and wondered if in fact he was really listening; for the king seemed half asleep a very strange attitude for some one who's life was the apparent cause of the current debate. The Duke of York on the other hand, sat somber, listening intently to the debate, occasionally making a note in a day book.

“Well then let us hear from this master Oates if you do not believe me stormed the man's benefactor.” “Summon Master Titus Oates” went the cry through the house. Titus Oates a man with a head too large for his small frame was duly sworn in, presenting himself in the robes of a poor country squire. He proceeded to tell the assembled commons that he had come by information from a certain source that the Papists were about to commit a crime most dastardly in the history of England. The crime was the murder of the King and thereafter to place upon the throne the Duke of York. Implicated in this plot was a certain John Piteque who all be it was acting on the instructions of his mentor and benefactor Mr. Samuel Pepys, a known Papist.

Now as Samuel returned to the inn he wondered what would become of his friend Mr. Pepys if he was impeached.

London 1668 Mr. Pepys makes a discovery

Mr. Pepys was busy in his office dictating a missive to the master wood cutter in the king's forest. He paused in his diction to observe his friend Samuel Ferreira hurrying along the street towards the office, the sun light filled the room in which Mr. Pepys was standing, the reflection of the river filling the room with reflective light. Mr. Pepys watched as Samuel stopped and waved before entering the building.

After a short while Samuel was shown into the room where Pepys was busily working “I give you good day Master Pepys” said Samuel. “Good morrow Samuel I hope this day finds you well” said Mr. Pepys. “I am much over excited, Mr. Pepys much over excited” said Samuel.

“I take it that this has to do with your visit on my account to the master vintners at Winchester” said Pepys. “Indeed sir it has every thing to do with that occasion” said Samuel. “I think that I can guess at what you are going to tell me” said Pepys.

“I think you might know some of the matter but I fear the full existent would make your blood boil” said Samuel.

“Pray continue” said Pepys. “To start with there is massive fraud when it comes to the vintner supplying the navy with wine” said Samuel. Pepys waited for Samuel to continue, when Samuel hesitated, Pepys waved his hand to show Samuel to continue. “Well to start with the wine is watered down; every barrel is water by half” Said Samuel. “I indeed had my concerns about this” said Pepys “What else is our master vintner doing?” inquired Pepys.

“They are selling off wine meant for the king’s service to private interested peoples who have already been paid for by the king’s service” said Samuel... Mr. Pepys growing red in the face said “God’s teeth sir we have them by neck! Sir I trust that you were able to procure a barrel or two as proof of this iniquity?”

Indeed I did sir replied Samuel even as we speak some of my servants are bringing the barrels round for your inspection.” As he said this a cart drew up out side the building. Mr. Pepys now in great agitation pulled on his coat and hurriedly showed Samuel to the door. “Come sir I must inspect these barrels myself before taking this matter to the sheriff.” Leaving the chamber the two men and Mr. Pepys’ senior clerk following disappeared only to re-emerge in the street. Quickly Samuel pulled the cover from the back of the cart to reveal two barrels. Mr. Pepys climbed into the cart and began to inspect the barrels.

“See here sir this barrel bears the Kings mark on the side and this one too” said the senior clerk, pointing to the second barrel. Turning to the clerk Samuel said “Go summon a notary quickly. We have to get this declared so that we might further proceed in this matter”

Turning once more to Samuel, Pepys said “I owe you a great service Samuel. Indeed you have done a great service to me and the King. Pray recover the barrels, we will later attend to them. In the mean time join me within for a glass of brandy-wine” “Thank you Mr. Pepys that would be most welcome” said Samuel.

They re-entered the chamber. Mr. Pepys hurried across to a cabinet which had a large and prodigious lock. Producing a bunch of keys from his coat pocket, he sorted through the bunch and found the correct key and unlocked the cabinet. On a tray within the cabinet stood some bottles and a big decanter from which Mr. Pepys poured two glasses of brandy-wine. Offering Samuel one they partook of the strong drink while waiting for the arrival of the lawyer. "Indeed a great service" mumbled Mr. Pepys excitedly; all the while Samuel stood observing his surroundings. It was the first time that he had been to the office of Mr. Pepys and he was astonished to see on the walls charts of various parts of the known world. "May I say a fine collection of charts you have here" said Samuel at length. "Indeed sir I have been collecting them for some time now" Mr. Pepys said with great pleasure. "I see here you have a chart of the empire of the Grand Turk. What a wonderful place Istanbul is! I lived there for a while, in the queen of cities" said Samuel. "Wonderful you must tell me of it" replied Pepys refilling Samuel's glass.

Just then they were interrupted by the arrival of the lawyer, a certain Gibson. "Good day, good day. How might I be of service to you this fine day?" he asked entering the chamber. "Good day to you sir" said Mr. Pepys "please be so good as to take a deposition from my friend Mr. Ferreira. Take down all he says and once done please notarize it for me and file it in chambers."

London 1669 a continental holiday and a death of a wife Samuel had seen Mr. Pepys many times over the few years he had known him. A jovial, self important little man was Mr. Pepys. Samuel remembered when Mr. Pepys had come into the inn with his wife on his arm and a new peri Wig upon his head. "Samuel we are going off on a continental holiday" said Mr. Pepys as Samuel served them some beer and cold goose liver pâté. "That is indeed wonderful" said Samuel. "If you are going by way of Rome you should see the fountains and the works of art done by the esteemed Master Michelangelo. I saw his statue of David, one of the finest in all the world." said Samuel.

We are going to see the wonders of the continent in all their splendor” said Elizabeth Pepys in her pretty French accent. Mr. Pepys smiled, well content with the world. “I do believe that we shall be gone more than three months” said Mr. Samuel Pepys “I wish you every success in your travels” replied Samuel. They had left the inn arm in arm, a happy couple going on a continental holiday. It was also to be the last happy occasion they would spend together.

About four months later Samuel was busy cleaning the bar late one night when all the world had gone to bed. Only the guards were about calling the hour, when there came a hammering at the door. Samuel hurriedly took from behind the bar an ancient blunder buster and cautiously opened the door. There in the rain stood Mr. Pepys. Putting aside the old weapon, Samuel flung wide the door to admit his friend and patron.

“Come warm your self by the fire sir” said Samuel leading Mr. Pepys to the fire side seat. Samuel gathered from the smell on Mr. Pepys breath that he was already very drunk. “Oh friend Samuel you see before you the most wretched of creatures” said Mr. Pepys in a very emotional state, tears running freely down his face. “I am lost. Never more will I know happiness” said Pepys in between sobs.

“What ails you sir? May I call a physician? Calm yourself Mr. Pepys you will surely take a fit of morbidity if you continue” said Samuel. “Oh Sam my dear Elizabeth is no more. She died earlier this night and I am totally at a loss without her. What shall I do?” said Mr. Pepys. Hurriedly Samuel poured a glass of brandy for Pepys “Pray drink this sir, it will restore your composure then maybe you can tell me what caused this” said Samuel.

Taking the glass Pepys drained it then began to speak “We went on our European holiday. We had much fun, did all the things that Englishmen do when visiting the continent. Returning but a fortnight ago Elizabeth took ill, complaining of a tiredness and a shortness of breath. I tended her, we got the doctor in but none of the cures worked. Earlier tonight I was at her bed side when she expired. Oh poor sweet Elizabeth” cried Pepys “Why could it not have been me? Why was my sweet one taken from me?” he sobbed.

Samuel poured another drink for Mr. Pepys and sat down beside him "Sir I have known much sorrow in life" said Samuel every time something has happened I have thought that I could not live another day yet here I am. This sorrow will pass sir. Right now your heart feels as if it has been torn asunder but tomorrow the pain will become a little more bearable" said the innkeeper. "Oh Sam if you only knew the pain which I now feel you would not say such a thing. My heart feels like it will burst from sorrow" said Pepys.

"Come sir I am putting you to bed. This night you will spend under my roof" replied the publican. So saying he led Mr. Pepys to an upstairs room where he helped the poor man to remove his wet coat and wig...

1685 The King is dead long live the King

It had occurred to Samuel that it had been some days since he had seen his friend Mr. Pepys. London town was not a happy place to be of late. The king had died and Samuel had last seen Mr. Pepys a few days before the King had been taken ill. It had been a Friday evening; Mr. Pepys had come to the inn, as was his custom, to drink a small jug of beer. Samuel had been very busy that evening and had not much time to stop and chat with Mr. Pepys. Mr. Pepys had been somewhat preoccupied on that evening with a wench, who had seemed comely enough. Thus Samuel had not worried over much, knowing that Mr. Pepys was enjoying himself. Mr. Pepys since the death of his wife some years earlier had on occasion spent a fair amount of time with various wenches enjoying the pleasures there to related.

On Sunday evening the word had spread that the merry monarch had been struck with apoplexy. A royal request was made that all citizens of the city pray for the recovery of their beloved Sovereign Charles II. Many people of this, one of the largest cities in Europe, had made their way to their parish churches to pray. The newly rebuilt St Paul's cathedral had been filled to capacity as the archbishop had led the nation in prayers and services for the recovery of the king. On the

following Wednesday it was made known that Charles Stewart II, beloved King and monarch had died.

It was rumored that on his deathbed he had called for a priest and had been given extreme unction. This was shocking news to the people who gathered in the local watering holes around the city. Charles having made a promise to his royal cousin of France had kept his word that he would become a catholic. However the sly king had stated that he would convert but only when it was in the best interests and occasion for England, thus he had continued to receive a pension from his cousin of France while maintaining the status quo. It was said that on the Sunday in question he had been enjoying scallops and wine with peers and to ladies of the court, when he had a very bad attack of apoplexy. He had been struck senseless and had remained this way for some time, recovering some what on Monday, his speech returned later in the day. On the Wednesday he called for a priest who had come quickly to give the beloved monarch extreme unction, thereafter the king had expired.

Now James, Duke of York no more, but now by the grace of God James II king of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and all dominions, territories thereto belonging, was planning the funeral of the late king and brother. For him it seemed strange having been so long standing in the wings under the shadow of his royal brother. Now the subjects of the realm wondered once more what type of King he would make, he was a known Catholic and people wondered what new laws would be passed what new indulgences this Stewart king would attempt to bring before the house.

Samuel was wiping the counter top in the bar when the door was pushed open by Mr. Pepys. Samuel moved to serve his long time customer and friend. "Good day Sir" said Samuel "Aye good day" said Mr. Pepys. "A sad day indeed" said Samuel Pepys. "Ah yes said Samuel "A sad time for the whole nation." "I had occasion to see the King earlier this day" said Pepys. "Poor man, he was very upset preparing the funeral for his late majesty. He was quite sad at the whole matter. The queen, God bless her, was with him giving him comfort". "Ah well at least there will be no more talk of papist plots thank God," said Pepys. "I had to see him on some matters which

will be brought before the house by the end of the month, but upon seeing him in such a state, I decided to forego the subject on which I needed to talk with him, until such a time is more suitable for these mundane matters” continued Pepys, as Samuel laid before him a jug of small beer and a plate of oysters. “How do you find life these days old friend?” asked Mr. Pepys “Much the same” said Samuel “the inn is busy and my chest box is in a reasonable condition and I am contented” said Samuel. “That is indeed good news” said Pepys, “now I shall have to return to the navy office to prepare some tickets for some sailors who are been paid off.”

“What news of the young Duke of Monmouth?” inquired Samuel “I have heard stories that he is unhappy and is gathering men to march on London” said Pepys. “But that is all rumor, nothing definite at this time. No doubt I shall shortly get orders from Whitehall to ready the fleet in preparation of another invasion on his behalf. Mayhap he will get help from the Low countries” said Pepys. “Although I doubt it would come from his cousin Mary who might very well try and mount an invasion on her own account” continued Pepys. “Yes William of Holland I would not be surprised if he cast his greedy little eyes towards this fair Island” Said Samuel. “Indeed he might. You know the Dutch quite well, having lived there for a season, so you would know how industrious they are. Their East India Company has its finger in every trade in the East. It returns high profits to its stock holders” said Pepys. “Yes it is true they were granted a license to trade in the east almost a hundred years ago. Ever since they have been growing every year, they even have a thriving station at the Cape at the Southern end of Africa which is showing some promise” said Samuel. Mr. Pepys wondered how Samuel came by such a wealth of information as he seldom left the inn. He was unaware that as a Jew, Samuel had contacts in almost all the nations of the world and that information was regularly exchanged between communities. The latest bit of information Samuel had gained off of a wandering member of the international Jewish community who had passed through London but one week before on his way to the new American colonies. It was not that Samuel was actively involved in the Jewish community he had learned a long time ago that to live and profit he needed some times to hide his Jewish origins. At other times in the past, he had

interacted with the Jewish community but he had always kept these contacts to a bare minimum. Jewish communities had very long memories and they tended to keep things in mind that others had long forgotten. Now as he shared the latest news he had of Dutch affairs he wondered how long it would be before word got back to the Jewish community that there was a Jew by the name of Samuel Ferreira running an inn in London.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

England July 1685

The troops were formed up on Sedgemoor, the battle lines drawn. It was the morning of 6th July 1685. The young duke of Monmouth mounted on a white charger began by leading his mixed troops forward, the cannons roared, cutting great gaps in the rows of marching men. For a moment it looked like they would hold. The Duke addressed his faithful Protestants and the men continued their march. The cannons roared once more, more men fell, the line faltered then broke. Men began fleeing the battlefield. The Duke turned trying to rally his men, but it was in vain. The royal forces charged after the fleeing men; it was a massacre.

London town was seething. Many had placed their hopes in the young Duke's abilities but had done nothing to support him. The rebellion led by James Duke of Monmouth had ended in disaster. The battlefield of Sedgemoor had been littered with the corpses of the defeated. The King's soldiers had gone on to the field after the battle and had killed any remaining wounded. A cruel mercy, better to kill the badly wounded than to let them lay in the mud and suffer.

The young Duke been captured and had been brought before the angry James II. The King, immaculately dressed in a morning coat in remembrance of his brother Charles the father of the miscreant Duke. The Duke was himself in disheveled shirt and breeches. "Well sir what have you to say for yourself?" inquired the angry monarch. "Your grace I beg your forgiveness" said the younger James.

"Forgiveness buys God's teeth young man. You raised an army against me." "I beg your pardon sire I was foolish," said the duke. "Foolish by great Jove, sir you would have taken the kingdom from me and shown me no mercy." shouted the king, "and now you beg for mercy." "No I say sir you have done me a great wrong. You will find no mercy at my hand and you shall be executed for your crime." "Sire, Uncle I have young children, please have mercy" cried the younger James dropping to his knees. "You dare to call me uncle after your acts of treason sir?" shouted the king. "You are no nephew of mine," shouted the king, red with rage. James Duke of Monmouth fell down before the king and grasped at the feet of

the king. "Your majesty I beg you" sobbed the young man. "Guards remove this man to the tower" said the king to the two guards who stood near by. Turning to his secretary, the king began to dictate to my Lord Lieutenants of the tower receive into your custody James Scott Duke of Monmouth who is guilty of treason...

15th July 1685

Mr. Pepys entered the inn, hung his hat upon a hook and retired to his usual spot near the fire. Samuel had brought him a jug of small beer. Hovering Mr. Pepys sensed that Samuel wished to talk. "Ah friend Samuel what a day so sad to see the young duke beheaded now there will be other intrigues I fear," said Pepys. "Others will be punished. I hear that the king has given an order in council to judge Jeffreys to act most rigorously with the followers of the Duke. Poor man he met his end bravely" continued Mr. Pepys. "I have heard that some have already been executed," said Samuel. "Indeed some have. Pray God our nation will find peace soon" said Pepys. "Amen to that" said Samuel who had been busy polishing a glass thinking back on the few occasions when the young duke had stopped at the inn to drink a glass of brandy or a flagon of wine. Now no more would those noble lips taste the cool chilled wine nor the embrace of a loving child nor the tender lips of his wife. The young duke cold in the grave, a thing, a person no longer, he was no more. Then a memory soon the memory would fade, those who loved the young duke would live with an emptiness in their heart until one day they went to their own cold hard bed. Then there would be no more memory of the life of a promising young man who wanted to do well for England. All that would remain would be the dry and dusty tombs in which men wrote of this period.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Scotland 1702 a spy for the Stuart's

The old King's word rang clearly in Samuel's ears "You are to go into Scotland and sound out the hearts and minds of the clansmen. Speak with their chiefs; hear if they are willing to be led by my son. England must be taken back once more from the heretics. I charge you Samuel Ferreira friend of old to do this last service for your king." "Majesty I will do as you bid but we must have a clear plan of action if we are to succeed. What am I to promise the clansmen for their loyalty?" asked Samuel.

"Promise them my personal gratitude and lands and honors once my son is on the throne and the usurpers banished from the realm. Promise them fine country estates in England, any thing but one thing get them on our side" said the king.

Thus Samuel had found himself landing in the far north of Scotland on a spring morning in the year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and two. The French ship which was fast disappearing over the horizon, had not spent long in its task, the captain a small angry man, seemed almost upset at his task of dropping a spy on foreign soil.

Samuel began to walk the few miles to the nearest hamlet, there he would find lodgings and a base from which to operate. His first task was to find one Duncan Mac Douglas who would put him in touch with the various chieftains of the highlands. Mac Douglas had spent a number of years at the court of St Germans before returning to his native Scotland to act as the King across the water spy. When word had reached the highlands that James II was ailing and not likely to survive another winter, Mac Douglas had sent a message that the time was fast approaching for the King to strike at the heart of the enemy. George I of Hanover had not been on the throne long and although proclaimed the rightful king of Britain, he was not well liked but he was the man on the throne. The trick now was to dethrone him and send him scurrying back to Hanover with his tail between his fat legs.

As Samuel walked the last few yards to the only inn in the district, he wondered what sort of reception he would get. He had tried his best to blend in but the great sea cloak which he

was wearing was sure to raise more than a few eyebrows. Pushing open the door, he was met by the sound of men talking and the familiar smell of alcohol and smoke. As he stepped into the inn, all conversation stopped. It was not surprising as the Scottish nature tended toward suspicion, as the government had been sending spies to the highlands for the last number of years, to gather information on the comings and goings of various highland chieftains and with whom they had been meeting. Taking a place at the bar, Samuel ordered a glass of whiskey and lit his pipe. The sound of soft voices speaking was once again heard in the inn. Now that he had his drink Samuel was to wait until approached by one of the locals to whom he would give the secret watchword, that would alert Mac Douglas that a visitor from across the water was here to see him.

Close to his body Samuel carried a number of letters addressed to a number of highland clan chieftains, this he worried about, for should he be taken these missives would place the chieftains in great danger as it would prove what the government of George I had long suspected, that a number of chieftains were in collusion with the King over the water. Thus Samuel carried them with the greatest of care ready at any moment to cast them into a fire should it become apparent to him that he was to be taken by George's soldiers.

He had not been long at his place at the bar when a giant of a man with red hair and a dirty kilt accosted him "Be yea for the King over the water or be yea for the German?" asked the man. "I am assuming you are asking if I am a supporter of his majesty James II, if that is the question then I should wear a Stuart bonnet" replied Samuel giving the watchword which would alert anyone listening out for it that he was here to see Mac Douglas. "Ah hear you sir and I call you a lying dog" said the man. "No one would be that honest as to admit being for the king over the water in these times" said the giant who now stood towering over Samuel. "Indeed sir and how do you propose to resolve this if I might ask" said Samuel without a hint of fear. He had been warned that he would be tested before he was trusted and was to show no fear as his cause was true and just. "Why I'll take yew out side and give you a hiding if you like" said the man. "Are you sure the wee laddies might not be upset jock if I gave you a beating?" asked

Samuel. The big man made as if to grab Samuel by the throat but was interrupted by another man. Who said quietly "That will be enough big Jack, he has proved himself" stepping forward another man in a Gordon kilt smiled and introduced himself "I am at your service sir. My name is William Mac Douglas you will forgive me appearing in the kilt of another clan but one can never be to sure of who you are dealing with in these troubled times" "I am Samuel Ferreira late of the court of St Germans on the king over the water's business. I believe that we have something in common of which we need to talk" said Samuel.

1703 Thuringia Germany

Samuel meets J.S Bach at the creation of Jesus joy of mans desiring

Samuel had been some months on a visit to the home of Count Gunther Von Bremen whose ancestor he had met in the 12th century. It was while he was on this visit that Samuel chanced one day to enter the St Boniface's Church in Arnstadt. He had been drawn to the church by the sound of an organ been played. It was the sweetest music he had ever heard; there was some thing vibrant and new about the music. He sat a while listening as the young man at the organ played, stopping occasionally, the young man would add a few notations to the score which lay before him.

"Himmel" said the young man "I just cannot get it right there is a certain melody, a counter point which does not fit." Throwing down the pen which he had been using he stood up and walked down between the rows of pews. Noticing Samuel, he stopped. "May one inquire as to what you thought of the piece?" asked the young man of Samuel. "I thought it was wonderful. I have not heard an organ played so sweetly in a long time. Did you write it?" asked Samuel.

"Indeed sir I did, but it is not right. Did you hear the start? That is right, but the rest is rubbish. I was hoping to get it finished by the end of the week. ah well I will just have to start afresh" he said. "Duke Johann Ernst is not going to like me taking so much time to compose the pieces. It must be ready by Christmas and that is not too far off now" said the young man worriedly.

Samuel recalling an ancient tune from the days of his youth asked, "may I suggest some thing that might help?" "Why certainly. I am stumped right now so suggest away" replied the young man. Samuel began to hum a tune which had last been heard many centuries earlier in the land of his birth by priests at the temple. The young man cocked his head to one side and listened for a few moments suddenly he began to grow excited "yes, yes continue" he said as Samuel stopped. Samuel continued as the young Johann S Bach ran back to the organ taking up the score of the organ piece on which he had been working, he returned to Samuel's side. "No pray continue please sir" he said. Samuel once more began to hum and beat the time with his foot the young Bach began to write furiously listening all the while. When Samuel had ended the hymn, for it was an ancient hymn of Israel which he had been humming, he turned to the young composer. A tear drop fell from the young man's face. "Indeed sir you have been a great help you have given me a counter point on which to hang the whole work. May I beg of you one more favor sir?" said the young Bach.

"You may" said Samuel as he rose from the seat he had now grown weary of the church and wished to leave before a priest came along and started asking questions. "Will you share a jug of good German beer with a poor court composer before you leave?" asked the young Bach

"Indeed young man I would be most privileged to share a little beer with the man who plays the most beautiful organ music I have ever heard" said Samuel.

It had been some weeks that Edward Duke of Albany had been in Germany. His father, the second Duke had insisted that his son spend some time in Europe doing the grand tour. Edward had set out with a light step and a heavy purse for the continent. He had spent some time in the salons of Paris; he had even been to St Germans to pay his respects to the King across the water. James II had grown even more religious if that was possible, as he grew older. Leaving France behind, Edward Duke of Albany had grown thoroughly bored with the European tour, the visits to the shrines, the churches and the castles. Spain had been different, he had enjoyed the running of the bulls and the food was excellent. However once he

began his visits to the low country a certain despondency and boredom set in. Edward was not use to the cold dark color of the villages of Europe he much preferred the English countryside. The poor in England at least made an attempt to dress up in bright colors their clothing clean, but in the Low Countries the peasants and even the townspeople were dull. When he entered German it was the same cold simple folks, engaged in their religion unwilling to experiment.

One evening he chanced to stop at one of those German towns of a fair size, passing the cathedral. He happened to hear some music which arrested his fancy, being of a some what distracted nature he stopped the coach and told the driver that he would follow directly and that his bags were to be left at the inn. When the coach had left he climbed the broad steps to the entrance of the cathedral entering he was astonished at the sound of the organ. A young man sat at the organ with his hands flying over the keys. A slightly older man stood behind the chair on which the organist sat, listening, tapping the rhythm as the younger man played. Momentarily the young man stopped, taking up a quill he began to write upon the score. Edward Duke of Albany now approached his footsteps echoing loudly upon the cold cobbled stone of the church. Samuel turned and looked at the man who had entered wondering who it might be, was it the pastor of the great church? But no he saw before him a stranger. "Good evening gentlemen" said the Duke in "Good German" "Well met" replied Samuel. "I was wondering good sirs if the music I heard from the street might be a new composition," said the Duke. "Indeed you see the composer before you sir," said Samuel. Johann S Bach rose to his feet and bowed slightly in the German fashion. "I am very glad to make your acquaintance" said the duke. "For when I passed by I happened to hear your playing and found it quite enchanting" he continued. "I am much pleased sir that you found it of interest to you. May I inquire as to who you are sir?" asked the young composer. "Forgive me for my bad manners, I am Edward Duke of Albany at your service sir." said the young man "May I know with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" asked the Duke. "Johann Bach in the service of Duke Ernest" replied the young composer. "Samuel Ferreria late of London England at your service your grace" said Samuel. "Ah a fellow Englishman I see," said the young duke

assuming that Samuel was an Englishman “Wonderful how did you find this wonderful composer of music?” asked the young duke in English. “Like yourself, your grace, I happened to hear the music while walking and found master Bach busy composing here when I entered” said Samuel in German.

“May I invite you both to sup with me this night? I believe there are a set of rooms at the inn, which are reserved for me.” said the Duke. Samuel and Master Bach agreed somewhat hesitantly, as the duke was one of those Englishmen who were of a spoilt disposition, in that he believed that everything in the world was there for his pleasure. In time he would grow weary of both Samuel and Master Bach and discard them like yesterdays broadsheet.

Reflections on landing on a Scottish island 1745

They had landed on the small island having lost contact with their escort and the pursuing man of war. Their consort had turned and fought a running battle with the English ship while the frigate had run. It was a valiant effort but one which was to cost them in the coming days. They had lost all their armaments and over eight hundred men who had been transported on the French man of war.

Samuel stood warming his hands over a peat fire. He swore softly, “Damn the English navy. It had put pay to all the princes carefully laid plans.” Now the small group of eight men would have to fend for themselves. The young prince stood with his back to the fire warming his backside.

Samuel thought back many years to a night when his friend Mr. Pepys of the navy office had explained to him how difficult it was for him to keep the navy and its ships in good order yet under his guiding hand the English navy had prospered. Now for a moment Samuel had a few bad thoughts about the efficiency of his old friend. He soon forgot about them as a young boy had been found who brought them eggs bread and butter to eat.

"God I could do with a drink" said the prince in French Samuel looked at the young man and wondered how long this would continue. He had been drinking steadily on the trip from the continent celebrating the coming battle. There comes a time when one must stop drinking and take stock and this the

young prince of the house of Stuart had failed to do. Samuel had been serving the house of Stuart for many years now through all its fortunes, good years had been followed by bad years. Samuel had watched as the Stuart kings had won and lost their kingdom Charles had of course been a Master and charmed everybody. There was a bit of Charles in his great grand nephew the young prince, James II. Charles had known how to play people off against each other and used this to his benefit. James II his brother had been far too wrapped up in his religion to see that he was throwing the kingdom away, driving the loyal subjects into the hands of his enemies. Slowly at first voices had been raised then later as James totally engrossed in his religion had taken a number of steps which had driven home to the subjects he ruled that he would have to be replaced with a protestant. Thus William of Holland and James own daughter Mary had come over and taken the throne from him.

The son of James and Mary of Modena, well he lacked the natural charm of the Stuart's and had made a botched attempt back in the 15 to raise his standard in Scotland. It had been made things worse but superstition when the gold ball had fallen from the standard when it was raised in the old town.

Now Samuel was once more following in the wake of another Stuart. This young man promised to be a good leader. He had charm and grace and was schooled in the best ways. He was a natural leader with an education in Europe that had helped to fashion the man he was. The fates would no doubt show him favors and he would one-day rule from the throne of his ancestors.

The sun was beginning to rise. Soon they would have to move again, maybe to the nearby village while they waited for the arrival of the clan chieftains. Then of course there would be debates and arguments as each chieftain jostled for a place of power and guarantees from the prince. Samuel knew that the prince could not offer much other than the hope of French aid when the war had started and progressed. Then the old king in France would rouse himself and dispatch a few thousand men to land on the English coast in support of the prince's efforts.

Somewhere a piper had started playing a Ballad. The tune was a lively tune which was meant to raise the spirits while the men waited. Soon the clans would be coming through the glens and over the lochs. They would come to pay homage to the prince of the house of Stuart. But in the mean time they would wait. There was still a chance that the French man of war would appear but as the day passed hope began to fade and by nightfall Samuel realized that the ship with promised resources was not coming.

Now it would all depend on the young prince's ability to negotiate with the wild clansmen. Samuel was sure that the prince would do alright but a nagging fear began to grow in his belly. He began to ask himself "What if they had reservations? What if they refused?" The young prince would be left with no alternative then to once more leave these shores and return to Rome." He had seen it all before when the bonny prince's father had landed. He too had hesitated and had lost. Now the young prince would raise his standard and the clans would flock to his banner. What would the future hold? It all depended on the fates. Samuel was a great believer in the fates but he knew how the fates had a way of snatching the sought after prize away just when it seemed almost in your grasp.

Some one had found a keg of whiskey. The men were sitting around with mugs warming themselves by the fire, enjoying the strong drink. The piper was playing a mournful lament. "Aye Jimmy would ye not play us a lively Ballad?" said one of the clans men who had arrived but a short time before. "This is not the sound we should be hearing before the great enterprise" continued the man of clan Mac Donald. The piper taking heed of the words began to play a lively piece meant for a march.

Out side the wind began to blow a mournful sound on this cold Hebrides night. It did not bode well for the great Scottish uprising of 1745.

The battle of Prestopans 21 September 1745

General Sir John Cope beat his horse with the whip as he rode with an absolute fear of death following him. His forces had just come off second best from an encounter with the forces of

the young Charles Edward Stuart. Now the general rode for his life beating the horse furiously. He continued down the road, a couple of young lads sat on a fence and watched him go. "Did yea see that Jimmy?" asked the younger of the lads "Aye did Johnny diny he even stop to drop a penny in our hat." with a disappointed look on his face.

Some clansmen came over the rise in the road towards the lads "What are you doing here laddie's?" asked one of the clansmen. "We did naught but we did see an English general come flying by scared, he was, as if a devil was chasing him." "Aye that would be general Cope. We heard he ran before the battle was lost" said one of the clansmen. Samuel in the mean time was going over the battlefield with the prince. Now that they had some guns, the battles of the future looked more assured to go in the favor of the Bonny princes army of clansmen. Right now a number of them was going around stripping the dead and finding what they could use from the bodies of the fallen.

A while later the general could see the city of Berwick as he rode. Soon he would be out of danger, returning from the battle he would be the first to reach the city bringing news of his own defeat and going down in the history books as the only general in history to do this, ever immortalized thereafter in song

O, then he flew into Dunbar,
Crying for a man of war;
He thought to have passed for a rustic tar,
And gotten away in the morning.

Sir Johnie into Berwick rade,
Just as the devil had been his guide;
Gien him the warld he would na stay'd
To foughten the boys in the morning.

Says the Berwickers unto Sir John;
'O what's become of all your men?'
'In faith,' says he, 'I dinna ken -
I left them a' this morning.'

Says Lord Mark Car---- 'Ye are na blate

To bring us the news o' your ain defeat,
I think you deserve the back o' the gate!
Get out o' my sight this morning.

He would live out the rest of his days in shame. Whenever this incident was mentioned the general would blush and mumble some thing about dammed Scots.

Samuel Ferreira in the mean time was on the battlefield helping to round up and tend the wounded. There were a lot of Hanoverian wounded but not over a hundred Scots who had fallen. "A mighty victory indeed Highness" said Sir George Murray to the prince "Yes sir a great day for our cause" said the prince. The men were tired but happy they had been on the move most of the night moving under orders without lights to alert the enemy who had drawn up with Preston house on there right during the night. Sir George Murray and the prince gave the order that the clansmen were to move over the ditch and face the government troops from the open field to the left thus when the sun rose Sir John was faced with a mass of fearsome highlanders, screaming war cry and the sound of pipes. The government forces which had not been well trained began to leave the field in droves. Sir John tried for a while to encourage his troops but to no avail. Leavening the battle field he fled. The battle had lasted all of five minutes. The lads sitting on the fence had watched the English general go by and there by got a tale to tell their grandchildren many years later of the day they saw the English general run with his tail between his legs, from the mighty men of Scotland when they had beat the English George.

1746

Culloden battle field Scotland

The end of the house of Stuart

The prince turned in the saddle and looked back for a moment. A look of absolute shock spread across his young face. For one fleeting moment his eyes fell on Samuel who was limping along badly, blood running from his wounds then turning once more the prince galloped off the battlefield.

A troop of Cumberland's soldiers were closing with a small band of the princes men. Now utterly demoralized they were about to give their lives in the hope of doing some service to

the bonny prince. "Well lads once more lets give it to them" said Samuel as he tied off a bleeding wound in his arm. They charged. It was a brave effort bound to go down in the history books as the last desperate charge of the Scottish forces at Culloden, they fell under the weight of the sheer number they opposed, but not before they had dispatched a number of the enemy. The forces of King George were all over the field now, killing off the wounded. Samuel now close to death once again crawled to the a little dampness in the ground known as the burn to quench his thirst. Drinking he lay a while looking up at the sky. It was a beautiful afternoon and one that he would long remember the hopes of the house of Stuart, now dispersed.

Elsewhere on the field other acts of butchery were been carried out. General Hawley seeing a Frazer chieftain resting a while near the edge of the battlefield asked "For who are you?" The reply came from the wounded man "For the prince" "shoot that dog" said general Hawley to an ADC. The ADC said "sir my commission is at your disposal, I will not shoot that man." said the general "Then a trooper will". A trooper did shoot the chieftain of clan Frazer. The young ADC was later to become famous on the heights of Abraham when mortally wounded he fell, his body supported in the arms of Frazer of Lovat who was he General Wolfe.

For a while Samuel lay he felt his body slowly beginning to recover from the wounds which would have normally killed any other man. He faded in and out of consciousness. Snatches of voices coming and going he began to dream. He remembered the grandfather of the young prince when he himself was a young man nearly 75 years earlier. As a king James II had not inspired great deeds his son acknowledged, as James III by his Jacobite followers had been a weak man. But the bonny prince, well that was another matter he was not cut from the same cloth as his father or grandfather. "What a man" Samuel would follow him anywhere. He had a way of inspiring men to follow where he led. Samuel thought back to the early days of the rising they were halcyon days. Everything seemed to be falling into place. The clans had gathered and had marched south, taking Edinburgh but were unable to take the castle. The forces loyal to the sovereign in London held fast during the long siege. Sterling had been

taken without too much difficulty, then the long march south; the prince had been urged to be decisive in all he did. But the young man had the unfortunate ability to hesitate at the most crucial moments. That had been his major flaw. They had reached Preston, only two hundred and fifty miles from London. There reports had reached them of approaching armies. Again the prince hesitated before with drawing. Oh cruel fates to hold the prize so close then to snatch it away! In the mean time the troops, which were abroad, had been brought home to face the forces of the prince. That was the difference between the battles at the beginning of the rising and the final battle. In the beginning, the clans had faced the home guard troops who had never seen battle and were terrified by the famous charge of the clans which brought great destruction. However the forces that had taken the field this day they were well seasoned troops who had fought in Europe and were skilled in the use of the bayonet and the cannon fire of the dukes gunners which was much improved from their stint in the wars on the continent. Now these guns had been turned on the Scottish clansmen. In short order the clans had flung themselves against the guns in a disjointed order not receiving orders from the prince who once again hesitated, the clans no longer able to abide the fact that they were been cut to pieces, charged.

The two forces had lined up about 400 yards from each other the prince's forces tired out by a long night march. At one stage during the morning, the sound of the pipes been heard from the forces of the duke of Cumberland. This infuriated the clans it was the sound of clan Campbell loyal to London being piped to the rear of the English army. By 1 PM not a shot had been fired. Then the guns of the prince had been fired by the inept volunteers who manned them, the regular gunners having gone to Sterling to find food. The Duke of Cumberland's guns replied it was wholesale slaughter.

Occasionally Samuel heard the sound of the duke's men slaughtering the wounded and dying. Cries for mercy were ignored. The sound of the slice of the sword and bayonet kept coming closer to where he lay. He should have realized that the cause of the house of Stuart had been lost a long time ago but he had hitched his wagon to their cause and had served them for many years. Acting as their go between, a spy

and as paymaster for their forces and meeting with one of their financial supporters. A few years earlier the man had seemed for a moment to look far into the future and see this day when the cause was lost and the last hope of the house of Stuart fleeing over the heather.

Once the battle had been joined the English guns had pelted the clans and then for a while by the hail stones which had added to their discomfort. Now as he lay dying on the battle field of Culloden, Samuel realized that the world was changing. The old clan system would be dismantled and the kilt done away with for nearly fifty years before men grew nostalgic and longed for all things Scottish.

The troops were now in the area where he lay. His strength almost fully recovered Samuel was not looking forward to what must come, another death ending his time with the house of Stuart. He had served both brothers, uncles, Grand uncles, cousins, and now grand sons. Even he had to admit that the age of the Stuart was over.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

1747 AD the clergyman and Samuel

The man stood on the back of a farm cart, his voice carrying to the crowds of folk who stood about the wagon. Samuel, sitting on the back of a horse drew nearer. "Was this some political upheaval?" he wondered but he was not yet close enough to hear what was going on. Some of the people stood bare headed with their heads bowed while others looked up into the face of the man on the cart.

"Did the master not say 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth'?" asked the man on the cart, his long black frock coat giving him the appearance of a churchman. Samuel was about to dismiss this gathering and ride on to Canterbury. It was like so many other informal gatherings which had sprung up over the course of a century. What was different about this one yet this man who stood talking to the crowd seemed to have a quiet dignity which was lacking in so many other religious fanatics.

Samuel tended to stay away from groups, which seemed to run on emotionalism but here he found himself wanting to hear what this man was saying. A number of other men who appeared to be clergymen stood nearby listening and nodding whenever the preacher made a good point.

"Come brethren let us lift up our voices in worship and sing to the Lord" said the preacher "Oh God of Israel who in ages past" he sang the crowd taking up the tune. "Now that was not something one saw every day a preacher who got his audience to sing along."

There seemed to be something sincere about this group of whom most seemed to be worshipers of the same faith as the man on the cart. When the singing had finished the preacher man invited those present who had not yet committed their lives to the care of the Savior to come forth and receive prayer to this end. A number of men and women began to move forward, to stand under the cart. When they had gathered the clergyman began to pray, it was not a long winded prayer much to Samuel's surprise, it was a simple prayer. The body of which was a request of the Almighty to accept these, his wayward sheep and forgive them and bring them once again

into the fold. As Samuel watched he could see in his minds eye this preacher as a shepherd tending his flock, a smile crossed his lips. "Maybe I am being too cynical" he thought having seen scenes like this all before. Soon the officials of the Church of England would arrive and break up this meeting spreading the flock to the four corners of the earth but in the mean time Samuel decided to watch and listen.

The prayer now ended the preacher invited those present to partake in a light meal, which had been prepared for them. Not wanting to appear the odd man out Samuel dismounted and joined the crowd, who were now been fed by the clergymen who had stood nearby during the service. Bread cheese and milk were all offered by the men and the crowd ate quietly, thanking the good Lord for the bounty of the preacher man.

Standing near by the clergyman Samuel began to listen to the general conversation between the clergyman and those about him. The man seemed serious about what he believed. A strange longing took possession of Samuel he wanted to know more. He had a desire to ask many questions of the clergyman, he had a desire to bear his soul to this man even though it might be dangerous. Was it possible that after all this time the answer he sought was within reach? Maybe this man would be able to help bring peace to his tired soul and release him from the endless cycle of life? Yet at the same time something held him back would the man ridicule him? Would the man even believe him? And yet the words that the clergyman had uttered earlier kept repeating in his mind "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

While he yet pondered, the clergyman passed among the crowd speaking a word of encouragement here, a word there. If Samuel continued to wait the opportunity would pass him by and yet he did not want to become the focus of the crowd's attention.

"Tell me friend" he asked a man who was handing out bread "who is the clergyman who spoke so eloquently?"
"Why Sir that is John Wesley. He is indeed blessed to have been anointed by the Almighty to bring us the word do you not think?" asked the man. "Why indeed sir I have seldom heard such eloquence, such self assurance, such a grace with

words" said Samuel "May I offer you some bread friend" asked the man.

"Indeed I would be grateful" said Samuel accepting some bread from the man "tell me friend where might I have some private speech with clergyman Wesley?" "Why sir he lays this night at the Bull and Bell Inn at Canterbury. If you seek him out I am sure he will have some word for you" said the man.

1747 Canterbury England Samuel

Now it came about that Samuel continued his journey to the city of Canterbury, a city long known for been the city of religious change from the earliest times the Archbishop had sat in the city making decisions which in some or other way had made much impact on the religious life of England. Here the ancient cathedral stood, its hallowed precincts open to all that would study the words of the bible and come to some discovery which would change the church life of the nation. The middle years of the 18th century were no different from the centuries which had passed before. The city was known for the meetings of the holy men who sat here to define the word, making the Church of England the great establishment on which the nation depended.

Thus upon entering the ancient walls of the city Samuel was able to look up at the great tower of the cathedral, he wondered at its great beauty and the fact that it was a city which displayed a quiet dignity set deep in the English countryside. Making his way to an inn, which had previously been suggested to him by the lay brother at the meeting where the group of ministers and lay brothers planned to spend the night. Leaving his horse with the stable hand he entered the inn to be greeted by the proprietor, one Joseph Henderson, a friendly host who paid much attention to the comfort of his guests. Samuel was shown to his room and an order taken for his dinner by this jovial host. "Be at ease sir" said the publican "and rest for shortly dinner will be served. In the mean time I would beg your indulgence as I have some matters to attend" "Thank you Mr. Henderson I appreciate you showing me to this fine room" said Samuel, who stood by the window watching the arrival of the previously mentioned party.

The room was a large one which overlooked the yard and stables. Samuel stood watching the arrival of the group of clergy with some interest. There he was able to observe the way they acted. He had often watched people in his long life in the hope of determining the measure of the man he was dealing with before he approached them or interacted with them. It gave him a sense of power to know the short comings of the people he was dealing with. It was true had watched the clergymen at work in the crowd as they ate but now he watched with a great interest, to see how these same clergymen interacted with the stable hand and other people in the yard. He had hoped to see if the public display of humility and grace was carried over into their everyday life and if so, to what extent. He noted that the preacher was accompanied by an older man who had much in common as regarding countenance and demeanor. Later he was to learn that John Wesley and his brother did in fact bear a striking resemblance to each other however the thing that struck the observer was the way in which they spoke to the simple stable boy and to the master of the public house. Their quiet dignified demeanor seemed to carry over into everything they did. Unlike other church men that he had observed, they did not have a public and a private persona they were simply quite dignified men who seemed to put their whole being into what they were doing.

At dinnertime Samuel entered the dining room of the inn and found a table in a small dark corner where he was served his meal. The smell of good wholesome food made him realize that he was very hungry and thus he ate his food with a relish, which would not have surprised the chef of a grand establishment. The vegetables peas and cauliflower were well done the roasted potatoes with a lump of good country butter and the piece of silverside were done to perfection.

While he ate his meal the clergymen entered the dining room and took seats around a large table. They spoke quietly with each other until their meal arrived. Then as Samuel watched they bowed their heads and began to thank the Almighty for their meal. As the elder Wesley prayed Samuel listened. "We thank thee oh Lord for thy precious bounty. We thank thee oh Father for a day well spent in thy service. We thank thee for the feast that thou hast laid before us" intoned the Clergyman

finally ending the prayer with a resounding "Amen" the dining room had grown quite as the man prayed. Other dinner guests at other tables had ceased their eating. No cutlery was heard as the man had prayed, now once more voices were heard and the usual sounds of life in a busy city inn returned.

Rising Samuel made his way to the taproom where he ordered and received a mug of country ale the thing about Canterbury ale was it was one of the best ales he had ever tasted. As the evening grew on he indulged in more than a mug thus forgetting his reason for coming to the inn. He drank until late in the night. Sitting in front of the fire enjoying the conversation of a farmer with whom he had struck up a conversation shortly after ordering the first mug of ale.

When he awoke in the morning he was surprised to find himself fully dressed and laying atop the great bed in the room. Hurriedly he made his way down stairs to seek out the clergymen to have a conversation with them. He was greeted by his host who wished him "A good morning" and asked "if he had slept well." to which Samuel had replied in the affirmative. Upon inquiring as to the whereabouts of the party of clergymen, he was informed that they had left some two hours previously thus Samuel had missed out on the chance to converse with the founders of the Methodists. It was some thing he would often wonder about in later years when he thought back to this period of his life.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

1776 AD William Longmont in America

William Longmont had been up before dawn milking the cows, now as he laid aside the hoe he wondered how long his idyllic life could continue. He had been farming in the colony of Virginia now for some years. He looked out across the open field on which he had been working since sun up. He enjoyed farming. It had been a long time since had laid aside the sword to pursue the life of a simple farmer. The centuries of fighting in various wars had tired him. Now all he longed for was a little peace but judging from the latest news coming out of the cities this was soon to change. King George was making life very difficult for the colonists of the New World. How he hated the interference of a parliament that sat thousands of miles across the sea.

The sunlight reflected off the blue hills in the distance. “What a beautiful place these Americas were, uncluttered by the big dirty cities of Europe” William thought he could live here forever if others did not intrude.

General Washington had called for the leaders of the colonies to meet and discuss the current problems that they faced, that much William knew. What would come out of the meeting was another thing. He had heard they were calling the meeting of congress, well good luck to them.

The last time that William had fought in any sort of war was against the French a few decades earlier when the Indians and the French in Canada had taken it upon themselves to invade the colonies. This had not been a major war like some of the wars William had fought in through out his long life but it was the most recent. He had been sickened by the slaughter at Culloden back in 1746 on coming upon the body of the Jew Samuel he had decided that he would leave the Kings service and travel to America. Here the world was clean with very little in the way of wars and for a number of decades he had farmed. Building the house had been a hard task; he had cut and planed every piece of timber for the house. He had become quite a craftsman enjoying the feel of the wood as he molded it to the desired shape and size.

“Ah but King George and his cronies, well there would be some thing to be said after General Washington’s continental congress.” In the meantime there was work to be done. William had heard that Mr. Benjamin Franklin would be at the congress. He was a man to be reckoned with; a formidable mind. Mr. Jefferson would also be there, another good man, a man who favored the farmers if the truth be told.

But thinking about all of this was distracting him from his work he had lived alone for a long time and he had no desire to change that but he had a feeling that things were about to change. He had been aware of under currents in the colonial society for some time now. Judging by this he knew changes were coming, he had seen it all before but what could he do as a solitary man. He would once more shoulder a rifle and buckle on his sword and go to war but there was a difference this time. This time he would be fighting for a country. He had made his home his country. That sounded strange, he had no country for a long time. For centuries he had fought as a mercenary first for one side then another. However this time he sincerely believed that he would be fighting on the side of right to establish a new nation somewhere that he might one-day call home. And what of the farm? Well when the war was over he would continue to build and improve the place. Maybe one day he would be a wealthy landowner with hundreds of slaves to do his bidding but in the mean time he would labor on doing things for himself. When the call came to arms he would be ready and who knew, maybe, just maybe when the war was over he might have made such a name for himself that people would flock around asking him what had happened. Maybe he could get a commission in the militia and rise but these thoughts he put aside as he once more took up the hoe and began working. Virginia sure was a pretty place. It was named for the old queen some two hundred years before. He considered it ironic that this place that was so beautiful was named for an old queen who had long since gone to dust. Well that was the thing about naming places once they were named they tended to keep their name.

In the distance he could see one of his fellow farmers riding towards him on an old dray horse. The man seemed to have some thing important to do. He seemed quite agitated. “I

wonder what is so important that Old John Samson would take his old horse and ride out at mid day?"

CHAPTER NINETEEN

FRANCE 1795

It was in the year 1795 when Samuel the Jewish innkeeper found himself in a small village a few miles from the sea on the main road from Paris. It was the height of the terror and everywhere people were trying hard to keep out of the sight of the tribunal Madam Guillotine had already taken many heads but her lust for blood refused to be stanchd.

Samuel had come to France about 20 years earlier and had bought an old run down inn which he had rebuilt offering good food and the best wines he could buy on his limited budget. The inn had slowly grown in popularity until there was a steady flow of customers who frequented the inn. Being on the main road from Paris had helped of course, now travelers would arrive at all times of the day and night despite the curfew placed on all citizens.

So Samuel was not really surprised when one night in the winter of 1795 when there came a hammering on the door long after all lights had been extinguished. He rose from his bed lit a lamp and made his way to the door. He shivered in the cold as he descended the stairs into the main area of the inn.

The hammering at the door became more furious. "Alright I am coming" he shouted as he crossed the room. Upon opening the door he found a group of the most pathetic people he had seen in a long time and he wondered for a moment if they were the mob come to drag him away to the tribunal. But quickly he realized from the appearance of the people that they were a customer of another kind. Quickly he pulled the door open and let them in, urging them to make as little noise as possible. The group consisted of five adults, two woman three men and two children. One of the men crossed to the fireplace and stoked the fire bringing a bright glow from the embers of the fire.

The other man, a tall thin man with a hawk like face turned to him and said "My good man please, wine if you have and some food for the children." Samuel left the room the guests now gathered round the fire and began talking quietly, fear

showing on all the faces in the light of the fire. "Oh Andree" said one of the women "lets hope he will not betray us." The tall man whom she addressed turned to her and scowled. "Marie I have told you I had it on good authority that he will help, now stop your worrying."

Samuel returned carrying a tray with a jug of wine and food, which the guests fell to eating ravenously. Once they had finished eating, Andree Du Preez, asked the inn keeper if he had a place for them for the next 20 hours of which no one else knew. Samuel at first looked on with an astonishment "citizen I am but a humble inn keeper I don't have such a place." Du Preez then asked one of the set questions he had been given in Paris to identify himself to the innkeeper "Is there an inn in Bethlehem?" he said.

"Yes citizen there is" replied the inn keeper "do they serve pigeon to the hawks at the inn?" asked Du Preez? "No citizen" replied Samuel smiling. "Now I know what you are" said Samuel "we can do some thing" he continued. To these words the members of the group gave a combined sigh of relief.

Showing his guests down the stairs into his wine cellar he pressed a concealed button and a whole section of the wall moved aside revealing a comfortable room behind the great vats. "You may stay as long as you need citizens" he said. "But I will need to know a number of things. Did you leave any horses or a coach outside? How far behind you are the lackeys of the tribunal and finally I will need some coinage to make the arrangements for your stay" he said.

"We left Paris earlier this evening. The tribunal is about three hours behind us and now we sent the coach on to the sea side, thus saying he handed over a large bag of coins to the inn keeper." "Very well citizen I will make arrangements for you to be picked up by one of the fishing boats, on the coast about 10 miles from here tomorrow night after 12 o'clock. In the mean time there are beds and some food make yourselves comfortable and leave every thing to me" he said. Once he had seen the guests into the hidden room he closed the disguised door and left the cellar. Before returning to bed he roused one of his servants and told him to go to the fishing village to the house of one Jacques known as 'the ugly', to tell the

fisherman that he had need of 7 cod the following day at noon, five should be quite large and two should be of a smaller size. (This was one of the codes that they had worked out to let the fisherman know that the fleeing nobles would be at the village at midnight the following night awaiting transport to England). Then Samuel returned to bed knowing he had maybe an hour before he would need to rise to meet with the forces of the tribunal who would be looking for the fugitives. He was not wrong when an hour later just as the false dawn was touching the horizon, there was the sound of horses and voices in the court yard below and a hammering at the door, rising once more and feigning announce. He opened the window over looking the courtyard and inquired of the men below that did they not know there was a curfew and what business did they have to worry an honest innkeeper at this hour of the night. "Silence innkeeper" replied the man in charge of the horsemen "and open the door. We want to inspect your inn. We have been following a group of criminals of the state who might be lodged here."

Samuel went down stairs and opened the door the men entered and began questioning Samuel as to how many guests their names and the nature of their business.

Once Samuel had satisfied the leaders of the tribunal's party that all of his guests were bona fide travelers he offered them wine and cheese, which the men set on devouring. The snow had begun falling as the servants of the inn set about their daily tasks in the kitchen and the yard, with fearful looks at the latest arrivals from Paris. It was not the first time that men had come to the inn looking for refugees of the terror which was running rampant in the capital.

Samuel while playing the jovial host cast furtive glances at the door hoping and praying that the servant he had sent out earlier should have enough sense to use the kitchen door on his return. As anyone entering the inn would now automatically be questioned as to their whereabouts at such an early hour of the morning. By seven-o clock the servant had not made an appearance and it looked like the tribune's men would be leaving soon.

Once they had left, continuing to the coast in search of the

refugee nobles, Samuel heaved a sigh of relief, when he saw the servant emerge from the stables stretching as if waking from a good night's sleep. Samuel indicated to the man that he would like to see him and the servant followed off to the side of the courtyard where Samuel stood. "Did you tell the fisherman" he inquired? "Yes and he was not happy to be awakened for such a small order of fish" replied the servant.

Later in the morning Samuel made his way across the village square to the village gaol to speak with the provost stationed there. Devall was typical of the new men in power in France, but human nature being what it was; Samuel knew from previous experience that Devall would accept a bribe to look the other way when it came to smuggling. On a previous occasion Samuel had spoken with Devall and had bribed him for allowing Samuel to be out after curfew. Devall had been led to believe that the nature of Samuel's after hour's business was the smuggling of various goods from England and he was quite agreeable to accepting a loaf of Colchester cheese and an amount of money. Thus when Samuel entered the office of the provost, he was fairly certain that he would be successful in his endeavors.

Devall, a fat man greeted Samuel like an old friend. He was an easygoing man who was also the town miller. They chatted for a while on local news before Samuel turned to his business. Drawing a small bag of coins he placed it on the table and said "I need to be out after curfew tonight citizen Devall, and I am hoping that you could make sure the patrols, will not be about on the road to Torsion tonight as I need to do some business after dark." "I should cut myself in for a larger percentage of your business" said the fat man with a smirk. "I will see what I can do" he continued, shifting the large bulk of his body in the flimsy chair. Samuel thought it a miracle that the delicate chair could hold so much weight without disintegrating.

Samuel drew out from his doublet a bottle of fine chateau Roche wine and placed it on the table knowing the fat man enjoyed a fine red wine. Then opening a bag he had brought with him he produced a lump of cheese while the fat man crossed to a cabinet and took out two glasses returning to the table. Devall opened the bottle, savoring the wines aroma before pouring it. In the mean time Samuel began cutting

slices of cheese and they toasted their bargain with the wine and cheese before Samuel excused himself saying he needed to see that all was going well at the inn.

At midday the tribunal's party returned from the coast, not having found their prey and continued on to Paris not with too much enthusiasm and fearing what would happen when they reported the loss of the refugees.

Later in the day Samuel called for the servants to ready his wagon, as he would be going to the fishing village to buy the weeks seafood, also taking some barrels of wine to the coastal village inn run by the next contact in the chain that helped the nobles escape from the terror of the revolution.

Once this was done he descended the stairs to the cellar making sure to lock the cellar door before opening the secret panel behind which the escaping nobles were. They were awake and very worried, as they had now been in the small room quite a number of hours. Quickly he told them to strip off all of their heavy outer garments, and then he told them how he planned to get them to the coast. They listened with mixed looks on their faces. One of the women objected that it was improper for a lady of the court to be trussed up in a barrel like a herring. Du Preez quickly quieted her by telling her then she would have to remain and face the forces of the revolution. After this Samuel led each of them to a barrel and helped them in, telling them above all else not to move or make a sound while the barrels were being loaded or when the wagon was stopped on the road. Once they were in the barrels he sealed them and unlocked the door and called some of the servants down to the cellar and told them to load the barrels onto the waiting wagon. The whole process took about half an hour as a number of legitimate barrels of wine had to be loaded. Finally Samuel called his most trusted servant and told him that once again he was in charge and he expected to be away until the following day and the inn was now in his charge and he would be held accountable should there be any mismanagement. Thus saying Samuel climbed up into the driving seat of the wagon and set off for the coastal village.

It was not the first time he had taken this journey so he knew the countryside quite well and kept a weather eye on the

distant road in front of him, should Devall play him false. While the wagon moved down the road Samuel fell to thinking of how many roads he had traveled in his long life. He remembered another snow-covered road in England that he had traversed about half a century earlier when he had been on his way to see some friends in the city of London. That road had also been quite dangerous as highway men had been very busy at that period of English history so he had taken to that road with much trepidation but he fortunately had not been robbed, nor even come near to. The nearest he had come to seeing a highway man happened a few days later when he had seen some criminals hanged at Highgate.

The snow started falling as the wagon crossed over a low rise, before the sleepy little fishing village came into sight. Samuel sat back and watched from the rise, the moonlit winter night, the village looked quiet and he hoped that the fisherman was ready. As he descended, he met the village constable as he drove into the main street. "What is your business here?" the constable asked lifting his lantern up to see the innkeeper better I have papers from the provost said Samuel handing over a document which Devall had given him just in case it was needed. Scrutinizing the document Samuel wondered if the constable was even able to read. One never knew with the new men in France.

You may proceed said the constable handing back the paper. Samuel drove on toward the village dock where he found the fisherman Jacques. Quickly they loaded the seven barrels onto the fishing boat. Samuel received a few crates of fish and other seafood items, which he had previously ordered, once this was done the fisherman and his crew pushed off into the choppy ocean. Much later that night or early the following morning they would meet with an English warship or frigate who would take the refugees to safety but just now they would remain in their barrels until they had reached a safe distance from the shore, before the barrels would be breached and the poor people allowed to smell the first free air they had for many long months in the terror.

Samuel loaded the fish onto his wagon and set out to the village in where he would spend the rest of the night.

Samuel arrived at the inn. He was warmly received by his friend Pierre “Welcome citizen come warm yourself by the fire, while I attend to your wagon” he said this while leading Samuel to the fireplace and indicating to one of the servants to bring brandy and some food for Samuel. Pierre was a large man who moved with a certain type of grace despite his large size. Once Samuel was seated, the two men chatted for a few minutes. When the food and drink arrived, Pierre excused himself begging urgent business.

The bar was about half full with the general type of persons who frequented the inn, the fisher folk who sat around the fire telling tales and laughing at some of the more hilarious stories of fish that had got away. Samuel listened with half an ear as he considered the business that had brought him to the sea side village. He had become involved in the smuggling of refugee noblemen and women almost by accident but once he was involved he had put his whole heart into the matter. He was one of the links in a chain, which had been smuggling people fleeing the terror of the French revolution soon after the King, and Queen had been captured. Many of the people in the link did it purely for a profit but some like Samuel did it because he genuinely felt that what was happening in France was wrong.

He had seen people killed before in the name of religion. God knew he had lived through the Spanish inquisition a few centuries earlier and he had seen men and women burned at the stake after horrendous torture for been secret Jews or for been heretics of the Christian faith. Men and women had been tortured almost to the point of death having to be carried or dragged to the stake to be burned. He had watched a number of burnings under a hot Spanish sun he had smelt the burning flesh and had been horrified at the cruelty of it all. He had seen death in its many forms but what he had seen of the Christian church in Spain was one of the worst things he had ever lived through. How did he survive all the centuries of death? It was because he looked like exactly what he was a humble innkeeper with no outstanding features just an innkeeper, a publican.

But what he saw of the revolution in France sickened him people were been killed for political ideas of freedom and

liberation and equality, for all this in the name of freedom. Of course the French court had been corrupt but what was new all government that Samuel had ever lived under were corrupt. What he objected to was the fact that the government of France had now fallen into the hands of uncouth men; men who had previously been little more than butchers, shopkeepers and millers. As he sat next to the fire he became drowsy and his mind began to wander over his long and interesting life. He had met many people who had, had ideals and dreams for a better life but never before had there been such a paradigm shift in ideas, that now the common man held sway over his own aspirations. Never before had so many Frenchmen and women had the ability to rise above the position into which they had been born. The regulars began leaving soon, the inn was empty but Samuel still sat deep in thought. At 2 o'clock in the morning Pierre returned accompanied by a tall man in a blue cloak who seated himself next to the fire warming his hands, the steam from the snow which covered his cloak slowly melting. After a few minutes the man said "You are performing well in your task citizen and for this the refugees thank you." "What can a man do when he sees injustice?" replied Samuel.

"The government of Britain has noticed your efforts and wishes to extend their thanks" replied the man "ah the British" said Samuel "ever the thankful. Thanks do not put bread on the table of those poor unfortunate people who come to the English shore from France in this time of trouble." Peter the spy as he was known smiled grimly and said "One does what one can to lighten their burden but already they have lost so much and so many of them have died. Once Louis was executed that really woke the English up to how bad the situation was, they are much more friendly towards the refugees and do what ever they can to make life a little better, but the refugees themselves are so completely lost in this New World they find it difficult to accept that the court of France is gone for ever, that life is consigned to the rubbish dump of the past but you would think by their attitude that they are still part of the court waiting for the return of the King." ended Peter the spy.

Samuel had seen this attitude before in Alexander 1700 years earlier when members of the Jewish community there after the

fall of Jerusalem had thought that they would be allowed to return to build up the ancient capital but the Romans would not permit it. It would be several centuries yet before some would be allowed to return. Samuel wondered how long it would be before the refugees realized that the King would not be returning. Their life in France as a privileged class was a thing of the past. Right now they faced a grim future in England depending on the goodness of the English nobles and to a larger extent on the good grace of the English parliament. The king of England was quite on their side having suffered a personal insult by the rebel colonies of the new world thus he found himself in favor of the refugees and did what he could to make life a little better for them.

Peter the spy was speaking again “We have reports of a rising young officer in the French army by the name of Bonaparte. The British government would welcome any credible information on this young Corsican that can be found. If you should chance on any information please pass it on in the usual channels” said Peter now rising and walking towards the door, stopping he took a hanky from his under his cloak and dusted the lapel of his cloak.

Samuel looked after the man and nodded turning once more to the tumbler of brandy he swiftly swallowed the content of the tumbler. Smiling at Pierre, “Well my friend the English think we can perform miracles” he said. Pierre chuckled “quickly he is quite the dandy” he said, filling their glasses once more. “Relax my friend and enjoy the brandy the night is not yet spent and you need to reflect on this new business. What do the Revolutions broad sheets say of this man Bonaparte?” asked Pierre.

“I am not sure this is the first time I have heard the name” said Samuel “but I will be sure to keep my eyes and ears open in future” he said.

Peter the spy had given Samuel a lot to think about and he was still thinking about these things when he fell asleep in the chair near the fire. When he woke the light of an early winter morning was filtering through the window of the inn. He shivered in the cold as he stoked the fire back to life. Pierre swore softly as he woke from a deep sleep. “You are up early

for a man who has only had a few hours sleep” he said to Samuel. “I have always been an early riser” he said as he remembered that he had been waking early for centuries. It always helped to be about early to see what the new day was bringing he had first started rising early in about 1400 AD. Ah how he remembered the 1400’s when the plague had visited Europe he of course was immune to the illnesses that usually affected other humans due to part of the curse he lived under. Samuel thought about all the inn’s he had owned over the centuries. He shook himself out of his reflections and straightened his jacket. “Have you finished loading my wagon?” he asked Pierre?

”Yes there are some nice cheeses and lots of fish on your wagon I think you will be pleased at your catch” said Pierre. Pierre was the sort of man that Samuel classed as one who was in the business of smuggling. Samuel opened the door bracing himself against the cold of the morning it had stopped snowing a short while earlier. The world looked beautiful in the early morning light. A cock crowed somewhere in the village, soon the locals would be about. He did not want to be about when they woke it might cause some unnecessary questions. He readied his wagon hitching his two horses to the wagon.

On the road back to his village he began to think about what Peter the spy had said. He began to wonder just how he would get any information on Colonel Bonaparte. He had not lived this long by becoming overtly involved in other people’s business. Yes there had been times when he had asked questions but always very carefully, never anxious to draw attention to himself. He did not really know anyone in the army. The only contact he had with the local military was through the provost Devall and he was not too sure DeVall would be happy to see him soon. Samuel was also aware that DeVall had made it painfully obvious that he expected a bigger cut of Samuel’s smuggling business. Better to stay out of sight for a while he thought until DeVall changed his mind. Of course if DeVall wanted to get nasty he could always accuse Samuel of treason against the revolution and thereby come into Samuel’s business, this he did not want.

He pulled his coat closer about him as the cold winter wind

began to blow; he rubbed his hands to get the warmth back into his hands. He arrived just after midday at his home and gave instructions for the wagons unloading of the goods. The fish were quickly taken to the kitchen. While he went to his room to check that his strong box was still secured "one could never tell with your servants these days" he thought, finding every thing in order he descended the stairs to find his most trusted servant. The servant gave him a report of all that had been going on in his absence. There had been another visit by the militia in his absence, fortunately this time the men had been interested in nothing more than filling their bellies and drinking themselves into a drunken stupor. The servant mentioned there had been trouble in the kitchen between one of the serving maids and the chef. Samuel noted this and thought if this continues he would have to find a new chef the current chef had a habit of upsetting the maids. Samuel did not want to draw gossip to the inn by the behavior of his servants. It was very bad for the business if people talked about the goings on at the inn. It would draw dangerous attention from the authorities and Samuel knew how the citizens of the revolution enjoyed a good scandal. Brother betraying brother, something that had never happened before in the world, now in the name of freedom and liberty people were dying, so freedom came at an expensive price as far as he was concerned.

Later in the afternoon DeVall arrived at the inn seating himself at a corner table. He waited until Samuel had a chance to come over and seat himself. Pulling up a chair he sat down and waited for the Provost to start talking. "Well I trust that your little business was a success last night." I have been thinking I should cut my self in for about thirty percent of your little business DeVall said.

The army had been called in to quell the mobs in Paris, even the towns and villages on the road from Paris now had a number of troops billeted in them. Everybody was being very careful not to say or do any thing that would cast suspicion on them.

Devall pushed open the door and entered followed by a short, well built man dressed in the uniform of a Colonel of the

guards. He had a dark and ugly expression on his face. "Innkeeper a couple of bottles of your best brandy" said Devall seating his vast bulk on one of the chairs at a table near the fireplace. The colonel chose his seat with care making sure that he was facing the door of the inn.

Samuel hurried over with the bottles of brandy and some glasses, "Good day to you citizen Devall, citizen colonel. I hope you will partake in some of our freshly roasted duck" he said. "Yes" said the colonel with a bad Corsican accent, "bring the duck." Samuel hurried off to the kitchen to arrange the food. Finding a serving maid in the kitchen he quietly told her to bring the food and to serve the guests with utmost care. Samuel did not like the looks of the colonel. He looked like a cruel man; his face gave one the idea that he was not one to be disturbed.

It had now been a week since the troops had arrived at the village. The colonel had been debilitated at the inn, a tiresome task for Samuel and the servants as nothing seemed to please the Corsican. At first Samuel had tried to be friendly but the colonel had rebuffed all his approaches. Bonaparte seemed to have other things on his mind and speaking with a lowly innkeeper was not one of them, however Samuel had noticed that the man's eyes followed you observing you, and taking great care not to be noticed observing you. "We will have to be careful with this one" Samuel had thought "he is likely to bring trouble on us if he becomes suspicious."

Thus all the smuggling activity had ceased. Not that there were many nobles leaving France now, those who could get out had already done so. The others, poor unfortunates, had met with madam guillotine.

It had long been Samuel's practice to observe, listen and take note, thus he returned to the bar and began polishing glasses, listening as Devall and Napoleon spoke. "We will know within the next few hours citizen Devall if you were correct in your assumption that there are people helping the aristocracy in this district" said Napoleon. "I am sure that there must be Colonel" said Devall always anxious to please the short man, ever mindful that a bad report in Paris could have him removed from his position of provost. How Samuel hated

Devall! "Fat pig!" he thought "It would be quite a sight to see you meeting Madam Guillotine."

"Have you questioned the fishermen of the coastal village?" asked Devall as he poured himself another glass of brandy. "Yes my men have reported that they have found nothing but a small group of smugglers who have been plying the channel serving the English with our good brandy and wines but nothing more. Right now they are searching some of the farm houses and chateaus in the area for secret rooms."

"God that man has a terrible accent! It is a wonder the tribunal has not executed him for the murder of the French language. If he only knew how close he is to our secret room he would be enraged" thought Samuel. Napoleon said "If we don't find any thing in the next few hours we will be leaving your fine village. I have pressing business in the capital" he said.

The servants brought in the trays of food. Devall smiled at the thought of filling his vast belly. Napoleon looked up at the serving maid and smiled, Sam noticed that although he smiled there was a certain tightness around his lips and his eyes were cold with cruelty. The two men ate in silence. Samuel watched from the bar. Since the arrival of the troops, business at the inn had dropped off now customers only came to eat there mid-day meal eating in silence and leaving in a hurry not wishing to draw attention to themselves. It had been worse since men like Robespierre had fallen, no one was safe.

Once they had finished eating the colonel stood up and looked at Devall who had pushed his chair back but made no move to rise. Realizing that he had committed some error the fat man sprang to his feet as if his behind had been burned with hot coals. Turning to the door they left without looking back, leaving the door open.

"I will have to visit our friends on the coast once the Colonel leaves" thought Samuel fortunately he knew the smugglers that had been caught were not part of the ring in which Samuel was involved. The locals began to drift in for lunch not really speaking. It was hard work working in the fields around the village even more so if you were the blacksmith or his assistant, who had just walked through the door since the

troops had arrived they had been kept busy re shoeing horses.

The blacksmith seated himself at the bar and called for a jug of cold ale. One thing Samuel could depend on, be it a hot summer day or mid winter, the blacksmith drank cold ale every meal time.

It was three-o clock on Christmas morning. Samuel woke from a deep sleep. He had been dreaming of a day on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. It had been a hot day but the people had crowded round to hear Jesus speak “any what many among you a father when asked by his child for bread do you give him a stone” the carpenter turned preacher had been saying.

Samuel lay in bed and listened to the sounds outside. Not that there was much to listen to, the night was cold, snow had fallen earlier and everything had been covered with snow. The drab courtyard had been turned into a wonderland with snow and icicles hanging off the awnings. Christmas would not be celebrated in France this year, all religious festivals had been outlawed by the tribunal.

The soldiers were still billeted in the village, Napoleon had gone to bed late. This was some thing that Samuel had grown accustomed to since the officer had been staying at the inn he had hardly ever retired to bed before one in the morning.

Samuel stretched and thought of the days when he had been a young. That had been so, so long ago, growing up in the town of Bethlehem in the years before the new age. He reflected on the lessons he had learned at his mother knee. They seemed so immaterial at the time and now 18 centuries later and what had 18 centuries of wandering across the world under a curse brought him? He still retained the look of a man of about 40 years of age he was still healthy, another part of the curse. He thought back over his life of the people he had known now long gone to their earthly beds. He thought of Count Gunther Von Bremen, the first Christian who he had encountered who had shown him that not all Christians were barbarians and killers of that which they did not understand. He also thought of the time he had spent in Spain two centuries earlier how the church and its priests had tortured and killed thousands in the

name of the carpenter who had so long ago preached on the shores of the Galilee. Samuel was sure in his own mind that what had happened in Spain would not have pleased the Carpenter. Jesus would have turned away and wept to see what those who followed his creed had done to people who disagreed with them or believed differently from them, intolerance was some thing he had never understood.

Now in the year 1795 people were killing each other again, but this time it was not religion which was being used as an excuse, it was the idea that all men were born equal that all men were born free. He remembered a few years earlier when he had been in Paris. On a certain day in July when the anger of the mob had boiled over into action they had taken it into their collective mind to free those imprisoned in the old Bastille. What a day that had been and what horrors he had seen when the Bastille had been stormed and the mob had broken into the lower dungeons. What cruelty he had seen! Men chained to walls without water or food yet in a few inches from them lay food and water, how many had died in the Bastille he was unable to say. Samuel knew there was something which he was missing, something which was eluding his grasp yet he was unable to fathom exactly what that elusive something was. For a number of years, maybe a little more then a century he had been trying to find this ideal which was escaping him and thus he had applied his mind to solving this problem. He was sick of death, sick of the cruelty, which men did to men. He had seen centuries of it and he had, had his fill of the killing. Now he would try to help the children of mankind in his search for the elusive principal that had eluded him for so long.

1796 January a Paris Execution

The cart rumbled on through the street of Paris. One of the members of the mob threw a rotten egg, the missile found its mark splattering over Samuel's face. The filth ran down his face and over his beard. Samuel knew the unpleasantness could not last much longer. The pain he felt was not only physical but also mental he had suffered much at the hands of the tribunal; if only he had been able to escape he might not have found himself here. Now in the streets of Paris, he was on his way to a meeting with Madam Guillotine. He had deemed it better to allow the last of the refuges to escape by

boat to the waiting arms of the English war ships, which patrolled continuously off the coast. It had been shortly after the last boat load of refugees had made good their escape when he had been caught. "Ah well it had been good while it lasted." If he tried he would not be able to remember how many people he had helped to escape the terror. He only hoped that he would be brave enough now when his time came to face the demanding steel of madam Guillotine.

They had found him as he returned to the inn. The group of soldiers had approached him while he was on the road from the coastal village with a load of fine English goods. At the head of the group was Devall. Instantly Samuel had expected trouble, their last meeting had not been pleasant. The fat Frenchman had demanded more money than Samuel had available and Samuel had told him the truth, that he could no longer pay the fat man's high price. "If that is your answer we will have to see what we can do" the fat man had said. Quickly the soldiers under DeVall's instruction searched the cart and found the goods Samuel had also been searched and his purse removed. Thereafter he had been placed in custody while further investigation was done. The secret room had been found with evidence, which pointed to Samuel's complicity in the crime of helping others to escape the long arm of the French republic.

Immediately thereafter Samuel had been taken to the hotel De Villiers in the capital, here he had been questioned by the tribunal. This had been another experience that Samuel would not be quick to forget the ferocity with which these men set about questioning, the rough way in which they shouted their questions at him, seldom allowing him to answer fully. Samuel's main concern was that he not implicate others in the alleged crime for which he had been taken into custody. When the questioning was over he had been returned to his cell to await the outcome of the trial, it was not long in coming. One of the members of the tribunal had come to the cell with an escort. Making a show of it the man had unrolled an official document and began to read "Citizen Ferreria you have been found guilty of crimes against the Republic. It is the considered opinion of the tribunal of the city of Paris that you are guilty. Therefore I am here to inform you that two days

hence you are to be taken from this cell and committed to the care of the executioners to pay the price for your crime."

So there it was; he had spent the last few days waiting for the inevitable. The day before the execution he had his hair cut and his beard cut short in preparation for the meeting with the dreaded lady of steel. Now as the cart turned into the square, he could see the platform on which the machine of death stood, a basket standing below the fall trap. The executioner drove through the crowd who were in a holiday mood. An execution was always what the crowd appreciated; that and the fact that some people lost their composure just before their execution and had to be carried and placed on the machine. Others met their death with a boldness which the Paris crowd could appreciate and applaud but mostly they just loved the sight of blood and the fact that some of the victim's bodies would kick their feet as the last vestige of life left their bodies. Samuel was roughly helped from the cart. The cry of "traitor" and "Viva Le France" rang out as he was marched up the stairs to the guillotine. The executioner helped to lay his head in place. Now the moment was at hand. A member of the tribunal was standing nearby and asked "Do you have any thing to say before you are put to death". To which Samuel replied "No I have nothing to say" he lay his head down in place and waited, a few moments later the blade fell. As it fell, there was the sound of a sharp edged blade flying through the air then the sickening sound of the blade meeting resistance. The head of the condemned man fell into the basket. A few member of the crowd who were standing too close received a showering of rich red blood for their trouble. The crowd waited; the executioner reached into the basket and lifted the head of the dead man "So die all traitors to the Republic! Viva Le France!" he shouted. The cry was answered by a thousand voices from the crowd "Viva Le France."

Prelude to war

It was a frosty morning in the year 1804 on the French coast. Samuel pulled the cloak he was wearing closer round his body. For the last week he had been on the move gathering intelligence for the forces of the Duke of Albany and the British war office. He was not exactly sure to what purpose his intelligence gathering would be used but he knew that he had just stumbled upon a major piece of information. The port of Calises which at most times was a busy merchant port, was, he

discovered being used to assemble a major fleet of ocean going men of war. It had been some years since old Bonny as the English called him had lost his battle fleet in Egypt. The English believed that the French had been soundly beaten and it would be some time before they were able to put together a fleet that would be able to withstand the onslaught of Lord Nelson's fleet.

When some one had suggested to Lord Nelson that he might want to rest a while on his laurels, he had flown into a rage and told the incompetent commander who had suggested this that he did not believe that Napoleon had been as badly beaten in Egypt as the British public liked to believe. Thus Samuel had once more been summoned to the war office and told by the Duke of Albany, "Once more sir your services are needed in France to observe gather intelligence and return with all the information on shipping, building and transports" and all of this had to be done with in a month. For the first part of the month Samuel had found nothing which remotely resembled a fleet. However stumbling upon the shipyard and harbor last evening had changed his mind. He had managed to avoid the pickets and had got quite close to the center of the French fleet provisioning center before gathering enough intelligence to make it worthwhile.

Samuel was aware, as was most of the British public that the French ports were blockaded and for good reason. Although the work of blockading the ports was monotonous and boring it was a necessary evil to keep Bonny in port to protect the sea from the French war machine. It made everything he did that much more difficult. Because he would have to use roads and those roads throughout Europe were not in a good state. The war had been going on almost fifteen years with no end in sight. The admiralty routinely told the captains who commanded their ships of war that if they could not take as prize a vessel then they should do their utmost to sink or scuttle her. Any loss of ships to the enemy was an advantage to the British while the King roundly applauded any battle in which his English came out tops. It was a sore point if an English ship surrendered to any of Napoleon's ships.

Thus the British navy worked to keep the French forces landlocked thus helping in the overall war effort the short

piece of but a year before was all but forgotten. No one really believed it would last, neither the English nor the French, it was but a temporary respite from battle.

It remained now for Samuel to make his way to a small fishing village up the coast from where he would bribe a fisherman to take him out to the patrolling English ships. Failing which he would steal a boat and sail out himself but he much preferred to go out under the legitimate guise of fishing. It was not unknown for the hungry guns of the French batteries to open up on fishing boats who had broken the curfew to be bombarded with grape shot or to be sunk.

Thus as he set out once more, he stopped at a small shop in the town to buy some bread and wine for his breakfast. It was fortuitous that he did for had he been on the street moments later he would surely have been arrested by the guards. For this morning Albere, the guard captain was in a particularly foul mood. He had been awakened by one of his underlings, informing him that a stranger had been seen near the shipyard asking questions. It had also been observed that the stranger bore a startling resemblance to a known spy, who had been executed a few years earlier in Paris for his part in helping refugees escape to Britain. Maybe this man was a brother or a cousin of the spy who had been executed.

Had the angry guard captain known that he was dealing with the same man he would have been even more upset. Why he may even have lost his breakfast of brandy and thick stew, had he known that the very spy who had been executed, had avoided his pickets, spent the whole night gathering intelligence on the ships strengths and the number of men employed there. All of this intelligence would soon be used to bring to battle the very fleet which was being prepared and this all because Samuel the spy had once more proved the worth of his intelligence.

In the mean time Samuel hitched a ride with a farmer who was going up the coast to the small village of St Jun from where he would once more make his escape to the misty islands of Britain. Thus Samuel played a part which no one except a select few knew in the mighty machinery of the war office in bringing France once more to battle. The result was to be one

in which the French were finally defeated at sea and in which the heroic Lord Nelson would lose his life.

CHAPTER TWENTY
Boston United States of America
Christmas 1870

On a cold and wintry afternoon in 1870 two gentlemen met outside the Bell & Lanthorn inn in the fine city of Boston. One was from New York and the other was from the deep south, from Charleston West Virginia. Both of these men had come to the city of Boston in the hope of starting a new venture in industry. A few years earlier these men had faced each other as enemies on the battlefields. Now old animosity set aside they were about to embark on a venture that would bring them riches or so they hoped.

“Ah Charles I see you are here have you been waiting long?” asked a rather stout middle aged man with graying temples and thick sideburns of the rather tall Southern gentleman who stood outside the door of the inn. “Why no sir I expected you momentarily and stepped outside to see you alight from the buggy. Shall we step inside and partake of some of this establishment’s fine Brandy-wine?” asked Charles Richardson. “Indeed that would warm the heart and cold hands of a sinner” said Arthur Fitz-Patrick of New York.

Stepping inside and removing their top hats and heavy coats they were greeted by our old friend Samuel Ben Ezra AKA Samuel Ferreira. “Ah Sam my good man, be so good and bring us two glasses of your best Brandy wyn directly” said Charles as he led Arthur to a table near the roaring fire. After seating themselves they discussed general issues what each had been up to and how their individual trips to Boston had been. Once Samuel had brought the brandy wyn the two men became more serious, reflecting on the fact that it was but one day before Christmas and both of them were away on business far from their families. “I must remember to send a Christmas telegraph tomorrow morning to my father and Mary said Richardson” (Mary being his long-suffering wife back in Charleston). Since the end of the war the Richardson family’s financial position had grown precarious. The current venture in Boston was one of Charles’s hopes of reviving the dwindling fortune, a large part of which had shrunk with the emancipation of the slaves a few years previously.

As the men talked people entered the inn and were shown to their various rooms and tables. Samuel had bought the inn in the early 1860s and it had grown under his constant care and attention. He was a good host. He had been in the hospitality business for a very long time now and attention to detail was making his inn a local landmark frequented by locals and travelers from afar. Samuel was standing at the bar with a notebook in his hand making notes of things to do, while occasionally listening in to the conversations of his guests. The two gentlemen, one from the south and the other from the north he found interesting. It seemed that they were on to a good thing. For Christmas Eve this year Samuel had decided to pull out all the stops and have a grand bash. Decorations had to be put up and large chunks of meat to be roasted and various puddings had to be made. Later today the tree would arrive, which his staff of ten would decorate in traditional German fashion, with balls and bells and tinsel. He sniffed and thought of the grand affair it would be. It had been a long time since he had attended a feast of any size. He had left Ireland in the early 1850's during the great potato famine and had come to America disguised as a poor Irish refugees. Landing in New York, he had found a job at one of the new hotels that were springing up in the big cities. But he did not like working for any man thus when the opportunity had presented itself he had first gone to California, to seek his fortune as a gold digger. There he had made a fortune, and returning to the east he had settled in Boston. Finding an inn had been a priority, the previous owner had heard there was easy money to be made in the west and had not argued the reasonable price that Samuel had offered for the inn.

One of the men at the table had just mentioned that the new electricity would be a great money spinner and could make a man rich if he applied himself. Samuel was a bit confused as these men spoke of various industries around the city, never clearly stating what their major purpose in these industries were. Taking a bottle of his finest brandy he approached the table and offered to pour them each a drink to which they pleasantly agreed. "To what do we Bostonians owe your visit to our fine town?" Samuel asked Arthur replied "Industry good sir. We are investors who have come to start a new industry in this fine city of yours." Charles looked at Arthur with a warning eye as if to say "Sir do not say too much for

you will give away our intention and our idea.” Charles said to Samuel “So sir what good fare will you put on the tables this fine Christmas Eve? Shall it be food like our Mother made or is it some thing typically Bostonian?”

“This year we will be having quiet a Christmas Eve celebration with smoked gammon turkey and sides of beef and many puddings for the desert. Gentlemen and I trust you will join us when we all have a glass of eggnog Christmas morning. Later one of the men will bring in the tree and we will decorate it so that this old inn will be quite like home for those who are far from home” said Samuel noticing the Southerner.

The Christmas tree was decorated and it looked wonderful. From the kitchen the sound of pots and pans could be heard. Samuel walked into the kitchen; the smell of roasted lamb filled the air. Old Joel, the former plantation slave was singing softly to himself as he stirred a pot of bubbling mince pie filling. He took pride in what he did; he had learned to cook at his mother’s knee. Now he cooked for the love of cooking. He was a great chef. Whenever Samuel asked him if he could cook a new dish or something out of the ordinary the old man would smile and say “No problem, can do.” and more often than not the dish would be a superb creation. For the Christmas Eve bash Samuel wanted every thing to be perfect. A number of townspeople from Knob hill were expected. Samuel did not take to the rich folks as a rule but business was business and clientele from Knob Hill were a good customer returning if the food and service was good.

The two men who had arrived the previous day worried Samuel; they seemed to be up to some thing not quite right. Samuel found it strange that they would be traveling to Boston over the Christmas holiday on business when it was the time of year that most people would want to be with their families. Of course there were those who could not be with their families but these two men did not fall into that category. Samuel knew he had but to wait before their intent became clear. In the mean time he would keep a weather eye on them.

Joel opened the oven and drew out a great pot that he gently placed on the kitchen table. When one of the other servants

moved forward to open the pot Joel scowled and shushed them away this was the cook's privilege and if the cook wanted the dish to cool he certainly did not want a fellow worker opening the pot before the pudding had cooled.

The railroad had brought great prosperity to Boston and lots of out of town travelers. This had a direct effect on Samuel's inn it bringing in lots of guests. There had been a bit of a boom since the war had ended, lots of war veterans frequented the inn. This some times lead to trouble between groups who had fought for the confederacy and those who had fought for the Union, Samuel tried very hard not to get involved after all war was just another confrontation of which Samuel had seen many in his long life. However Samuel had one simple rule if the inn had a high number of visitors from the union then any potential guest from the confederacy states was politely told that the inn was full, and if the opposite number was high then ex members from the Union were told the same thing. The result was that he did not have situations in which these two groups faced each other with hostility in his establishment.

Joel removed the lid from the large pot and removed a smaller pot which was sealed tightly from within the large pot and placed it on the table. He then carefully broke the seal to expose a beautifully made Christmas fruit pudding, the aroma of this newly exposed delicacy filled the kitchen with its fragrance. The other kitchen staff approached and looked into the pot making comments on how well the dish had turned out. Joel looked at Samuel expectantly. "Wonderful Joel simply wonderful" said Samuel before leaving the kitchen. In the dining room there were a number of guests sitting around talking & drinking coffee at the bar, there were a few people including Arthur Fits-Patrick and Charles Richardson nursing their brandy glasses. It was snowing outside; a guest had just come in and was removing his coat and hat shaking the offending snow from the garments. Rubbing his hands the guest moved towards the fire to warm himself, this was going to be a cold Christmas in Boston. Samuel thought of some of the cold winters he had spent in the past this was going to be the best Christmas Eve bash he had ever had and he was looking forward to it. His mind was taken back to a Christmas morning 75 years earlier when he had owned a small inn in

France. That had to have been one of the worst Christmases ever, supplies were short and it had been a bad time under the revolution. He thought of those who had spent that Christmas at the inn, now very old or long dead. He was glad to be alive to experience once again a Christmas celebration.

The tall guest who had entered and had been standing before the fire for some time turned and approached the bar; there was some thing familiar about the man. Before Samuel was able to recollect who he was, the man said softly "Good day Samuel Ben Ezra. It has been awhile since I last saw you. Life seems to be treating you well. Is this your inn or do you run it for another?" asked the man in a deep southern accent Samuel took a moment to reflect. It had been a long time since he had been called by his proper name. "Why can it be my old friend William Longmont?" asked Samuel "Ah Sam it has been too long since we last saw each other. Do you remember the day in Rome when we got so roaring drunk and spent the night in jail?" he asked. "Why yes I believe it was 1675 or 6 if I remember correctly" said Samuel speaking softly. There had been a daylong celebration over some or other war victory and the whole city had taken a holiday.

"It has been some time William. So what brings you to Boston, business or pleasure?" asked Samuel, knowing in all likelihood the answer would be pleasure. "No not pleasure" said William "a business of a serious nature. I am now a marshal of these United States and I must always be aware of potential problems, like the rise of crime since the late wars fought in this wonderful country" said William. "Oh I see" said Samuel not really understanding what it could be that brought William to the city of Boston. There was no significant crime in the city. Maybe later William would let Samuel in on the secret.

When there was a break later in the day Samuel went to the room that William had taken, knocked and waited for William to open the door. William opened the door and admitted him to the room "I hope that is a bottle of whiskey you are hiding in your coat sleeve" said William setting two glasses on the bedside table while Samuel produced a Kentucky Whiskey from his coat pocket. Once the drinks had been poured and both men had taken long deep sips from the glasses they

settled down to talk. They had a lot of catching up to do; it had been about a hundred and ninety odd years since they had seen each other last. William had taken a ship to the Far East and made a fortune in the China trade. Returning he had settled in the New World and built up a fine plantation which had until the late 1700s brought him quite a fortune. Before having to move on he had spent some time in Europe between 1800 and the 1850s. Growing tired of the Old World he had longed to return to the New World and thus in about 1850 he had returned to the Southern United States.

Being a man of honor by nature he had signed up with the confederacy and had fought in the civil war. After the war, once again having no property left and a dwindling fortune he had offered his services to the United States Marshall services and had been accepted, which brought him to the present. The marshal service had received word on two notorious swindlers and banks robbers who it appeared who had arrived in Boston a few days earlier. William would have been here sooner but he had been delayed by the vast number of people using the railway to get home for Christmas. Now he had arrived and he was pretty sure he would be able to pick up the trail of the two men. The mention of two men brought to Samuel's mind the problem of his two guests. He mentioned their presence and their activities to William who seemed interested, once Samuel had finished telling the story. William said it is most probably nothing but a case of two business men wanting to protect their interests from others but he would keep his eyes open and see if these two were in any way related to his current case. They spoke some more, the level of the bottle of whiskey sinking lower and lower as the afternoon grew on.

Later as Samuel was dressing for the evening's events a smile came to his lips as he tied his bow tie, remembering some of the antics that he and William had got up to in the past. Tonight he was in a very happy mood. Every thing was going well. It was going to be a success. He descended the stairs to the restaurant. The place was already filling up. he moved among his guests, a word here, a joke there. The musicians he had hired for the evening were playing a selection of Christmas carols and other Yule tide songs. A young lady sat at the piano and played a selection of Christmas carols before playing something by Beethoven Samuel thought he

recognized the music but he was not sure. The servants were bringing in the food. There was the aroma of Christmas in the large room. Men sat at the bar drinking and enjoying the festive atmosphere. William joined the crowd moving easily from place to place until he found a table and seated himself facing the front door. "Old habits die hard" thought Samuel when he saw this. William was seated near the table at which Richardson and Fits-Patrick were sitting they seemed to have forgone their regular brandies in favor of more traditional Christmas fare. The first dish which the servants had brought out was roasted cod with a white wine sauce which the guests were eagerly tucking into. Charles Richardson was deeply engrossed by the dish, eating while his companion Arthur Fits-Patrick was in a more talkative mood. If any one had been watching William Longmont they would have seen that his attention was locked on the two men at the table, listening intently to the one sided conversation which Fits-Patrick was having.

As the evening continued, more delicious dishes were brought out for the guests, the tables at which guests from Knob Hill sat getting preference by having their dishes brought out first. At one stage Samuel had to go through to the kitchen. Old Joel the ex slave was cooking up a storm. He stopped what he was doing and came over to where Samuel was checking on the next course. "Master there are a few of those unfortunate people who lost every thing in the fire a ways back at the kitchen door can we give them some thing?" Joel asked. "Sure Joel, give them some of the dishes that have already been served" said Samuel. There had been a fire a few months previously which had decimated a large portion of the city. Many people had been left homeless and battling to find food and a place to sleep. Samuel, like a number of other Bostonians had taken it upon themselves to feed these poor people if the need arose.

Samuel returned to the front of the inn. The party was in full swing, some of the tables had been moved to one side and people were beginning to dance. This was exactly what Samuel wanted. There would be reports in the broad sheets. Samuel had even noticed a reporter in the crowd. This would bring more business to the inn. Samuel was standing at the bar looking at his guests enjoying themselves when he happened

to notice William Longmont standing at the end of the bar drinking whiskey with a cynical smile on his face. Samuel briefly wondered what the smile was about but did not have any time to reflect on it as just then his attention was distracted by a guest asking for a drink at the bar. Once he had served the customer he looked toward the end of the bar but William was nowhere to be found.

The reporter from the Boston Globe came up to him and said "Quite a good turn out for your party Mr. Ferreira!" "Why yes indeed sir, it makes me very happy to see the jewels of Bostonian society having such a good time at my little inn." replied Samuel. "Did you get any good quotes from the people from Knob Hill on the food?" asked Samuel. "Sure did Sir but you will have to wait for Monday morning's edition to hear what they said" replied the reporter, a small man with a flaming red beard and green tweed jacket. "Damn and I did so want to know before I went to bed," said Samuel in half serious jest. "Ah yes sir" replied the reporter "You want to put me on the spot with my editor?" "Forget it" said Samuel placing a glass of whiskey before the reporter. "Ah a bribe" said the reporter continuing in a playful mood. "You won't get any thing out of me" said the reporter swallowing the drink in one gulp.

Samuel moved on to serve other guests. He noticed that the two men who were seated near William's table were no longer there, neither was William anywhere to be seen. The evening's activities were drawing to a close; Samuel ordered nightcaps for all the guests in the room before taking a glass and tapping it lightly bringing the room to a gradual silence. Once the room was silent Samuel began to speak. He spoke of the events of the year in the city of Boston, occasionally getting a laugh for some remark then continuing. He spoke of more serious matters, which had befallen the city in the last few months he reminded the guests that there were poor people who had lost everything in the fire a few months earlier. Samuel said he hoped that they would all give generously when asked to subscribe to local charities to alleviate the suffering of these poor people. In the mean time he wished all his guests a Merry Christmas as it was now twelve O'clock and the city's churches bells began to toll.

The band began to play as the guests wished each other a Merry Christmas before getting their coats and hats. As carriages and buggies were brought to the door, guests began to depart. There was still no sign of the two strange guests or William Longmont. When the last guests had left and the remaining stragglers had gone off to bed Samuel settled down in his office with a glass of brandy and a book of figures working quickly he determined exactly what profit he had made for the evening. At some stage he fell asleep over the book, waking when some one began banging on the front door of the inn; Samuel hurried through to the front room. Opening the door he found William with a bloodied face and outer coat. Quickly he helped William Longmont into the inn settling him on a couch and hurrying off to get some water and a cloth to wipe away the blood.

Samuel helped William across the threshold and over to the bar. Quickly he poured a tumbler of whiskey which William drank greedily. "May I ask why you are in such a state?" inquired Samuel. "Yes you may, and the short answer my friend is those two rogues got the better of me. Shortly after 11 o'clock they left the party with a small hold all. I followed at distance to see what they were up to. It was not long before I found out they broke into the Smithson Industrial Bank on Dewinter Street via a small back window. Waited until they reemerged just after mid-night I confronted them. Fits-Patrick shot me through the arm. See here how it is ruined?" William said as he placed his right hand on the bar. Samuel saw a large hole in the sleeve of William's over coat. There were powder burns. "I did how ever manage to wound him with my swordstick. Ah yes it has done me good service once again so now they are on the run."

"I can only assume that they are well on their way to Canada or somewhere else the 1 o'clock steamer for Alaska left shortly after, I can only assume they were aboard" ended William. "Well my friend I don't think that you will see them again" said Samuel. "What sir do you think I am going to let them get away so easily? I am leaving on the next steamer going north. I have time on my side, they do not. I have not lived this long to let my prey escape. Besides no one shoots me and gets away. I merely came to collect my kit before setting out and to bid you Adieu my friend. I will see you again I am sure. Right now I must be off" said William. Once William had left the

inn and Samuel had retired for the night and the inn had grown silent once more Samuel lay in his large double bed, his mind was taken back to the previous time he had seen William Longmont. It had been in the winter of 1675 it had been a harsh winter in Italy that year; the crops had not been good that year. Buying provisions for the Cantina Santa Maria the inn that Samuel had owned during that period had become increasingly difficult. One day in that year he had made a trip to Rome to buy wine from a merchant who was reputed to be a very difficult man but who supplied a good selection of foreign wines.

On arriving at the wine merchants store house he had been shown into the room which the merchant used as a business office. Here he was confronted by William Longmont who had been in the business for a number of years. On renewing their friendship of nearly a hundred and fifty years earlier they had settled down to sampling some of the wines which William had in his cellar. A servant had brought Cheese and fruit, as the afternoon drew to a close they spoke of old times, of what they had been up to since they had last seen each other. The wine was good and so was the company, the later it grew the drunker they grew. Eventually they were so drunk that they had been singing old songs from the third century which they had both picked up while in the middle east, the language was a mixture of Aramaic, old Latin and Arabic.

Finally they had dropped off to sleep in the office, waking the following day when it was already light Samuel left the wine merchant's shop knowing he had now secured a ready supply of fine wines from France and Spain. This supply would continue for a few more years before Samuel left Italy for the New World.

Samuel fell asleep thinking of the days in Rome. When he woke just before dawn he could hear the servants in the kitchen getting things ready for Christmas Day. He made his way to the kitchen where he found old Joel stoking the fire. "Morning Joel and a Happy Christmas to you" said Samuel. "Morning Master Lord blesses you this fine Christmas morning" replied Joel rubbing the stub of a beard. "Have you heard Master that there has been a bank robbing in De-Winter Street?" said Joel. They say there was a shooting but three

people got away, there was a lot of blood but they will not get far. There were three men their foot prints lay all over the back alley way behind the bank the police were called after someone saw the men running from the alley way.”

The whole city was abuzz with the news of the break-in at the Smithson Bank. The Boston Globe had printed the story on the front page of its Monday morning issue. The owners of the bank, the brothers Alfred and Albert Smithson had offered a ten thousand-dollar reward leading to the arrest and recovery of money and bonds that had been stolen from the bank. The editorial of the Boston Globe had even printed a picture of the alleyway the blood showing quite clearly on the dirty snow near the window. According to the reporter there had been three men involved in the robbery with one or other falling out happening when they left the bank. The sheriff was now looking into the possibility of finding any one who might have seen one or more injured men or any doctor who might have treated anyone on Christmas Day with unexplained gunshot or stab wounds so far no one had come forward.

Samuel lay the broadsheet down, looking at the door it was quite early in the day the street sounds came to him muffled footsteps of horses and the sound of a coach driving past. The inn was quiet, it had been three days since the Christmas bash, Samuel had risen early to buy the paper to see what the society pages of the Boston Globe had said about his establishment. The review had been quite good, the reporter glossing over the descriptions of the Food roast turkey, Slices of silvered beef, and lamb shanks with mint jelly then there was a long interval over which the reporter had spoken about the various sea food dishes. He waxed lyrical about the cod in white wine sauce, the oysters served on a bed of icicles with Tabasco and pepper sauce. The final part of the review was saved for the Salmon and calamari combination in a particular peach jam and red wine sauce, which in the reporters mind was most probably the best dish he had tasted in a long time. The article went on to describe the history of the inn, finally ending by complementing Mr. Sam Ferreira, long time resident of Boston for running a fine establishment.

Samuel was pleased with the review however his carefully

planned bash had been ruined by the robbery and this displeased him. By now he reasoned the steamer carrying the two perpetrators of the crime might already be nearing the Alaskan territory.

It was going to be another busy week for him. He had stock to purchase and things to organize he was planning a new year's celebration the following Saturday there were going to be fireworks over the harbor. For the old years eve celebrations, even now there were men who the city had designated to act as fire marshals during the event in view of the recent fire that had burned part of the city. It was time that he went for a walk, Samuel decided putting on his coat and top hat. The direction he took led him towards the harbor to a dingy side street where the poorest of the poor lived. He knocked at a door of a small house and was admitted by a woman in her late thirties. From the looks of her life had not been kind. "Well Martha how was your Christmas?" asked Samuel "It was better then most people who live in skid row thanks to you" she replied pouring him a cup of coffee. Samuel took the cup noticing that it was chipped but it was most probably the best cup she had in the house. "How are your children?" asked Samuel "Did they enjoy the gifts I sent?" "Yes Linda loved the doll and little Johnny was over the moon about the ball" she said.

Samuel had met Martha earlier in the year when the fire had burned in the city she was a widow of the civil war. Her husband, Jonathan Bradley had fallen at Gettysburg. Since then she had managed to survive scraping together an existence by doing baking and washing for others. On the morning after the fire there had been a knock at the back door of the inn, which Samuel had answered. He had been confronted by Martha and her children standing there with soot covered faces. She had asked for some bread and milk for the children. Samuel had taken pity on her and had helped where he could. The problem was Martha was a very proud woman and would only accept something in reward for having done some work to deserve it. For a while Samuel had tried to get her and the children into better accommodations but she had steadfastly refused all offers. Thus Samuel had resorted to sending her work to do and paying her for it. He always paid a little extra to help the family. Her late husband Jonathan

Bradley was of Jewish extraction, however he had chosen to marry a Christian and thus he had been cut off from his family. Martha neither wanted nor sought aid from the family of her late husband. Jonathan's father was the New York businessman Benjamin Bradley who owned a fishing fleet and a number of fisheries round the city of New York.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

London 1896 Samuel returns to old haunts

It had been a while since Samuel had been in London. The city was much changed and if memory served him right he should have been in the section of the city in which the old Brass bell Inn had once stood. Yet he was confronted by an unknown landscape of terrace houses with flower boxes in the windows. Could the city have changed so much in two hundred years? He tended to take a longer view of change than most people did due to his longevity. When he last lived in London his friend Samuel Pepys had been a very old man and the new Dutch King was on the throne. William the silent had been a difficult man and Pepys had not served him long before Pepys had retired and gone to live in the country. The Brass Bell had continued to get regular customers and guests but for Samuel the joy of running the inn had passed. The new reign was much different from the two previous reigns of the Stuart kings. Now the somber king who did not like much the lightheartedness of the English, enforced a sense of morals very much in line with his Protestant beliefs. It was a time when new religious groups had started to grow and the king made haste to cut the root out at its beginning, urged on by the orthodox Anglican Church leaders both in parliament and in the church.

These events were now long past, the protagonists long in their grave now approaching the twentieth century the world was changing. The advent of electricity and the telephone had done much to change the world. Maybe he should have not been surprised in the change of the city. The whole world was changing why not old London town?

The old had been swept away, replaced with the new at a much faster rate than he could possibly have imagined. He had left England at the beginning of the reign of George I, and had traveled widely, now he had a new plan that he wanted to put into practice. He had established the small hotel in Boston more than thirty years earlier and had in mind to start a chain of small hotels across the world that would bring him enough to live on independently and give him a chance to travel the world as a gentleman of leisure.

If the Brass Bell still existed he had planned to make it the head office of his empire, thus he had found himself traveling to England once more, this time by steam ship. He had taken rooms in East London while he set about trying to find if the old inn might be for sale yet as each day passed his agent, a certain Snodgrass, brought no news other than that he was making inquiries. Thus early this morning he had set out to see for himself if the old inn existed.

He had paid the cabby off and had walked the last few hundred yards to where the inn should have been; he was much surprised to see the terrace houses with small gardens in the place of the inn. The cool trees which grew in the garden seemed to be at least fifty years old. Children played in the gardens under the watchful eyes of their nannies. Samuel watched for a while before turning away. Walking down the street he thought for a while of the good times that he had spent in the old inn; times spent with good friends eating and drinking of the best bounty available, now both the friends and inn were no more.

How very old he felt, how many life times had he lived, how many good friends had he buried through the centuries it was so tiresome. "God, would the curse never be lifted? Would he never find rest for his weary soul?" He wondered. Today was not a good day for him. Even after so many centuries he could still hear the words of the man who had cursed him all those long centuries ago. "You innkeeper, a wanderer you will be. Until the end of days will you search for your salvation. You will serve humanity as an innkeeper until you have worked out your salvation." "Why had he not given up his bed on that fateful night? Why had he not allowed the Holy couple to have their baby in a bed; but no instead he had sent them off to a stable.

Then there was the matter of his recurring dream; century after century he would have the same dream of Ruth standing by the side of the carpenter of Nazareth beckoning him to come to her. At first he had been unable to hear her calls but he could see her hand beckoning him over the centuries, he could at first hear nothing in the dream. As the ages passed the voices began to be faintly heard like as if through a wall of water now when he had the dream the words were almost

audible. When he tried to approach the figures in the dream he always hesitated and looked back, when he turned again they had disappeared and a long road lay before him. Lately he had taken a few tentative steps towards them but something held him back. When he hesitated he would find himself awake and bathed in sweat.

As he walked down the London Street back to Piccadilly Square that morning in 1896 Samuel Ben Ezra was a very unhappy man. It seemed as if the fates had contrived against him to thwart his every plan of success and as for finding salvation he had tried many religions but none had been able to save him. He had tried the faiths of ancient Egypt and been turned back none of the gods would have any thing to do with him. He had tried Islam but had found it to be a religion of contradictions and death; a wide path to destruction. He had tried serve the gods of ancient Greece but they were just as unreceptive to his overtures. He had even tried being a good Jew but that had brought him only more questions.

1901 Alberta Canada

Samuel laced up his boot. It was a cold winter morning and it had snowed in the night; it was not that he did not like snow; he just found that his level of discomfort rose the colder it got. He had been drawn to these northern climes by the fact that there was a lot of money to be made providing the comforts of life to prospectors who still believed there was gold in them thar hills, experience had taught him otherwise. He knew the only gold to be made was by providing the comforts that men so often missed and would do any thing for thus he had loaded up a wagon of whiskey, tobacco and a few other necessities which he knew he would soon sell at an inflated rate.

Alberta was known for the discovery of fossilized bones of creatures which had lived millions of years before the advent of man. For the past fifty years the territory had been explored by a growing number of enthusiasts who found interest in every little speck of fossilized stone they found. A few major finds had put Alberta on the map he found himself in one of those prospecting camps which had sprung up some hundred and fifty miles from the small town of Edmonton.

He had stopped on the outskirts of the mining camp and was making himself comfortable when a big man with a flaming red beard approached him. "Are you selling something?" he asked in a mid western accent. "Why yes I am. I am one of those people who provides the comforts of home for men like yourself who find themselves far from home" replied Samuel. "Well we don't usually buy from outsiders but we find ourselves without a drop of whiskey in the whole camp them damned temperance people have been round protesting. The sheriff had to put a hole in every barrel of beer and smashed up every bottle of whiskey he could lay his hands on. Them people from Edmonton, well they just don't like prospectors. They are hoping to drive us off but it won't work" said the man "Tell you what, I am big Ed Mac Donald I will buy your whole stock of whiskey. If you can guarantee that you can get me another load up here by the end of the week. What do you say? I'll give you a good deal, say \$1000 a wagon load." Samuel thought about this as he chewed on some tobacco the price was good but if one man was going to offer him so much this must mean the camp was in serious trouble. "Let me consider your proposal for a while. In the meantime share a bottle of Kentucky Bourbon with me" said Samuel pulling a bottle from a case at the rear of the wagon.

Big Ed Mac Donald sat down on a log and held out the mug for "another drop of what killed auntie." "I tell you Sam it has been dry going here these last few weeks I had to bring out my private stock of booze from the back of my saloon. If you have considered my proposal I am sure you will see it is a good one" he said between sips of the best of Kentucky bourbon. "It would indeed seem so but I have a counter proposal for you" said Samuel. "Sell me a percentage in your saloon and I will give you the whiskey we could really do some thing here, make a lot of money and when the prospectors move on... we will have a stable business." Big Ed looked at Samuel and swore "I ain't planning on sticking around that long. Hell when they move there will be pretty few people left here. Are you hoping that them dammed temperance people will start another town?" "I do not see why not. After they see what I have in my next wagon load they will be begging us to stay and start a town." said Samuel "You are a shrewd one," said big Ed with a wink. "It is a deal. You can have fifty percent of my saloon and I will take the whiskey off your hands" he said.

Samuel smiled and said "You won't be thinking of cheating me now would you fifty percent of the saloon also means fifty percent of the profits to Ed." said Samuel "Sure" said Ed Mac Donald knowing when he was beat and realizing he better quit while he was ahead.

Thus the little prospecting town of Temperance, Alberta saw a few years of existence before it faded away into history. In the time that it existed, Samuel made a nice profit by opening a haberdashery which imported the finest linens from England and France, which the ladies of the Temperance society loved. At the same time he gleaned a nice profit supplying booze to the prospecting men of the town. They had all the booze they could possibly drink.

When the temperance society approached the sheriff once more to close down the saloon he told them to go to hell because by then he was receiving a nice monthly bribe from Samuel and Ed Mac Donald.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

The battle at Mons 1914

There had hardly been time to dig in before the shooting started. Samuel flung his kit down and dived into the shallow trench as a bullet bit at tin hat. "Blimey mate that was close." said a soldier who lay in the trench next to him. Quickly they began to load and fire their Lee Enfield rifles. It was a bitterly cold morning in August 1914, the fire power of the British expeditionary forces was hot, so hot in fact that later the Germans would claim that the British were using machine guns. A trooper lifted his head a fraction too much and for his pains received a bullet between his eyes, falling back into the trench his blood ran down his smashed face.

The Germans were advancing again. Samuel wondered how long before he became careless and lost his life. He would have to be careful if he wanted to see the end of the war. Things were getting bad by about half past nine the order had come to fall back. Slowly the troops began moving backward. Mons was not a nice place Samuel decided why had he not stayed at the little inn. He did not understand why he had joined up, maybe it was his sense of adventure he could have avoided being here but like most men at the time he believed that he had to do something not just be an observer.

They had fallen back towards a bridge and were coming under heavy fire. The firing continued, little pockets of men fighting for their lives. Samuel lit a cigarette. He had taken a few puffs before he realized that something was going on. A young officer nearby was railing at the men "Come on lads we can take them. Give others a chance to withdraw. Forward on my command. Wait for it. Right, For England and St George" he shouted as the men rose and charged against the advancing Germans. It was strange Samuel found himself running but there were more men then he remembered being there before the charge. He looked to his left and saw a man on a white charger dressed in ancient armor for a moment the thought he was dreaming but yes the man and the horse were still there also there were a number of bow men loosing their bows on the advancing Germans "By God" Samuel thought "This is some thing beyond belief I am seeing it but it cannot be". The advancing forces of the Germans began to fall; back some Germans fell while others fled.

When the charge was over he once more found himself with a small group of men near the bridge they had previously passed. "Someone will have to stay and cover our retreat" said the officer. "I know it is a bad thing to ask but I have to, is any one willing to stay and do this job?" "I will" said Samuel as he took up a position picking up a second rifle from a soldier who would no longer need it. "Thank you private your act of bravery will not be forgotten" said the officer. "Well come on lads lets hoof it out of here" said the officer. The troops began to leave. Samuel began firing when one rifle was empty he picked up the second one and began firing again. As the men retreated Samuel turned to see the last of them disappearing down the road. He reloaded and carried on firing.

Later, much later as a German major stood over his body the major was amazed that one man could have held up over a hundred men killing twenty five before himself being shot.

"Hemmel if all the English fight like this we are going to have a hard time of it." said the major to a captain who stood near by..

It was shortly after this that the story of the Angels of Mons began to appear in the newspapers.

1921 Surry England

"So" asked the marquis of Barbados "what would you recommend from your most excellent menu, innkeeper?" The innkeeper standing nearby smiled and said "Well dear marquis that is a matter of taste. We have excellent escargot or if you are not in the mood for snails in a bath of garlic and oil, there is the duck which I must say would make a most excellent meal if you are hungry. It is done to a turn in an orange juice and white wine sauce and is tender, oh so tender, it simply melts in your mouth."

"Wonderful the duck it is, for the main course and what wine would you recommend from your cellar? I have heard you keep an excellent cellar here" said the noble man. "I would suggest a bottle of Chateau Le feyet, a nice semi sweet dry wine, which would do the duck justice", said Samuel. The noblemen looked up and smiled "Old friend you play the part of jovial host well. One wonders how we ever got out of those

trenches back in 1915 alive, yet here we are today you a happy hotellier and me back on the grand old tour of Europe" said the marquis. "Ah those days I am glad they are over" said Samuel. "You never did tell me how you managed to escape that last shelling unscathed did you?" asked the marquis "Ah the hand of providence, fortune favors those who dare" he said trying very hard not to give a way any thing which might make the young man suspicious. It was a very strange day for Samuel. The little hotel which he owned had been quiet for most of the day then just before lunch, a bright red roadster had come roaring up to the entrance. The driver climbed out, he was dressed in the typical dress of the young racing crowd with gloves goggles and leather coat to go with it. Entering the reception area the young marquis had been confronted by Samuel. For a moment the two stood looking in amazement at each other the last time that they had seen each other was back in 1815 when the battle for Mons had been reaching its peak. The young Lieutenant had asked for volunteers to stay behind and cover the rest of the platoon, retreating, everybody knew it was a suicide mission. Never the less Samuel had stepped forward, the words of the marquis still rang in his ears "you will not be forgotten" he had said as he had led the men in the retreat. Now the two men faced each other again. Six years had passed and the world was much changed. Men had been changed by the war and there was no going back to the way it was. The war and the visit of the Spanish lady in 1918 had changed the world many thousands had gone to there graves through the war. But many more had gone to their final earthly resting-place due to the tender nursing of the Spanish Lady. The flu, which had ripped through the world in the latter part of 1918, had caused great distress to all nations and all peoples had felt the icy hand of the grim reaper. And as they sat around their primitive dwellings they had pulled their clothing a little closer as a shiver of fear ran down their backs.

Now in the bright New World of 1921 a nobleman and a man with no living relatives could meet and discuss the past as if they had been friends all their lives. The social distinctions, which had bound together the English men, lord and the lower classes were gone forever. The noblemen need now to tread warily lest he offend the smaller man for should he do so and the common man feel so inclined, he could summon the me lord before the bar and in all likelihood win a liable action

against the offending me lord, but of such things they did not speak in polite society it would take a second war to really change the outlook of the British aristocracy.

In the meantime the marquis of Barbados would enjoy the duck which Samuel the innkeeper's experienced chef in the kitchen of the small Surrey hotel had prepared for him and the wine which Samuel had suggested was not a bad one it had an excellent vintage. The wine had not yet turned to vinegar, as so many wines do if left too long. Indeed it was true that the Jew kept an outstanding cellar, for was it not true the people of England knew how to dine well and in 1921 they were dining well. Samuel's inn was making an astonishing profit and this was the summer when the flowers came early the harvests in the fields were very rich there was a surplus of just about every thing in the country market and prices of goods were cheap.

TWENTY THREE

Berlin 1938

Samuel was busy making truffles he had come to Germany to learn from a master chef. Now he had almost completed his training, yet he could not bring himself to leave. The political situation in Europe was worrying while others were fleeing Nazi Germany he had willingly come to German.

Now as he prepared the truffles he thought back to the previous day when the manager had received a phone call from the interior ministry. The Minister Herman Gobbles and a few high ranking friends would be coming round for lunch. The minister's propensity for good food being well known in the restaurant circles in Berlin set about the preparations for the visit. Just after three in the morning, Samuel and the other chefs had been busy for many hours now and it had fallen to Samuel to prepare a little sweet for the Minister, after the main courses and after dinner deserts had been served there would be a moment in which coffee and truffles would be served to the hard working Minister.

Samuel did not much like what had happened in Germany but having little option he had continue working in the hotel learning everything he needed to know as he had a long term plan which he wanted to put into place. His fortune which now amounted to several million dollars was safely deposited in a Swiss bank account building up interest how ever the final part of his plan was to arm himself with the latest knowledge on up market continental cooking. This had brought him to Nazi Germany, having no fear of death he was able accumulate all the knowledge on the subject he needed.

He had been told that once he had finished preparing the food he must retire to his room on the floor reserved for hotel staff. While the other hotel staff would be serving the great man and his influential guests he would be excluded for the simple fact that he was a Jew and no Jew was allowed into the presence of the Reich's Minister.

Finishing with the last truffle Samuel placed the tray of truffles on a shelf in the cold room. Leaving the kitchen he climbed the stairs to the 8th floor of the hotel being a Jew he was not permitted to ride the elevator. Opening the door to the

small room he lived in he crossed to the bed and sat down. The room was small and dank, the paint peeling from the walls. In the corner an old crystal radio sat gathering dust. Later tonight he would warm up the set and tune into the BBC overseas broadcast. He could hear in his mind's ear the voice of the announcer saying, "This is London calling, here is the news" wearily he lay down on the bed the sound of the traffic in the street lulling him to sleep, the sound of a modern German city drifting skyward. Samuel drifted off to sleep.

He was woken by a rough hand shaking him "Up Samuel up. Herr Gobbles wants to see you quickly man. Dress yourself and hurry man the Minster is not to be kept waiting." Splashing some water in his face, Samuel shook the tiredness from his eyes, dressing in a clean white hotel chef's uniform combing his hair he closed the door and followed the junior waiter who had been sent to fetch him.

A short while later Samuel entered the main dining room of the hotel all eyes and attention seemed to be focused on one particular table a man of over generous proportions seemed to be the center of the crowd's attention. He was speaking to the gathered staff members in a most animated way. The black Nazi uniform seemed to be having a hard time covering the large expanse of his belly. The conversation faltered as Samuel approached the table, the head chef said "Herr Rieghs Minster may I be allowed to introduce the man responsible for the truffles."

Auschwitz 1944

They had come in the night. Samuel had long thought himself safe from the powers of the Gestapo. His special pass as the chef of Herman Gobbles had saved him on a number of occasions previously.

This time they did not ask for his pass, they simply kicked in the hotel room door and roused him. When he had protested he had received a rifle butt in the face. They had hurried him out into the cold night air to the waiting truck, a number of others were already in the truck all wore the yellow star of David; all except Samuel. Shnell Juden shouted a man smoking a cigarette standing near the back of the truck "You

are Samuel Ferreira Jew?" "Yes I am" said Samuel. "but" "silence Jew said the man striking him with a riding whip. Up you get Jew and hurry you have a journey to make," said the Gestapo officer.

In the truck children wept, their parents trying to comfort them. For a long time now these people had hidden in Berlin until now when they had been betrayed. Samuel could not believe it, he had thought himself safe. Gobbles had assured him that the pass would save him, now he did not know what to believe. The truck made its way to the central station; a train with cattle cars was standing at the siding.

Hurriedly the occupants of the trucks were marched into the waiting cattle cars "Hurry, Hurry, the train must leave on time you are going to your new home in the east you don't want to miss this train" the Gestapo men shouted. When the last person was forced into the car the door was slammed shut. At first the car had been cold but the bodies of the people in the car in close proximity caused the temperature of the car to rise and with the heat came the thirst. Children cried, women tried to quell the children but it was impossible. The train was moving eastward. Occasionally the train would stop and a hosepipe would be passed into the car as people scrambled to get a little water.

The journey seemed as if it would never end ever eastward the train moved passing many railway sidings as it went. Finally it stopped and after a while the doors were opened. Half blind from being in the car for so long, the people stumbled out onto the platform, the sound of German Shepherd dogs barking and the shouted commands of men in uniform warned the people climbing out of the cattle cars that they had better watch out. A youth of about 16 made a break for it and ran, a shot rang out and he fell. "Right the next one who runs will get a taste of the same.," said a man who seemed to be in charge. "Line up now and get ready for your shower" said the man, the Jews from the train stumbled into untidy lines.

Nearby an orchestra began to play some music from the Vienna woods. The camp commander walked down the line of men and woman stopping occasionally as men and woman were picked out from the crowd and separated. Children were

automatically separated. Some parents tried to hide their children they were brutally separated. Men and women were also separated, Samuel found himself with in a group of men who were separated, waiting for what would happen next. "You there what is your name" shouted a man in a white chefs uniform "Samuel Ferreira" said Samuel. "Good you are the man I have been looking for" said the man "Follow me. Quickly man, don't waste time" said the man. Samuel followed the man as they walked away Samuel had a chance to look round. Nearby were a number of chimney stacks from which a foul colored smoke belched. The smell was almost unbearable. Samuel had smelt death before, many times, but this was overpowering, nauseating. Samuel had heard rumors of places like this but he just did not want to believe them.

He was taken to a shed where he was told he would sleep. Issued with one thin blanket, he was told to take care of it as he would be beaten should it disappear or be stolen. There after he was taken to a white kitchen where he was set to work peeling potatoes. After about six hours of peeling potatoes he was told to wash up as he was going to serve the camp commandant his evening meal. Samuel washed up and was issued with a white chef's suit. He was told to follow and learn. The man who had originally called him was named Helmut and it was he who now led the way into the large dining room used for the camp commander and the military staff of the camp. Samuel helped to prepare the food which would be served. He worked quickly and professionally, as he had been taught at the Berlin Hilton. Helmut was a pedantic man who wanted every thing perfectly set for dinner. It was not unknown for him to send a chef to the gas chamber for a fault or an imagined wrong. It was just before eight in the evening when the commander and his staff entered the dining hall to have their meal served to them on hot plates.

Auschwitz 1944 reflections

Samuel woke. It was the middle of the night. It was bitterly cold, he had been dreaming. It was a strange dream; he had been serving Herman Gobbles the truffles of which the fat German interior Minister was so fond, but they had not been in the hotel they had been in the camp kitchen. "Strange" thought Samuel as he stood up and made his way towards the window of the shed. The bars over the window were a stark

reminder of where he was. In the distance he could see a smoke stack belching smoke an unearthly red glow filled the air around the stack.

“How” wondered Samuel “could a great nation like Germany have sunk so low as to murder innocent millions, and indeed he knew it was millions, he was convinced of it.” Jews had been deported to the east from before the war. Occasionally a card from one of those gone to the east would arrive “We have homes and we are happy they would say” Now Samuel knew where the cards originated.

And how did he feel about it? He was inclined at first to believe that countless Jews had been resettled in the east now he knew different. He had wanted to believe the lie but faced with the truth. He knew that all those who had gone before had ended up in the gas chamber. It sickened him. He wished he could die. He felt defiled that he was serving the perpetrators of this crime their hot meals every day.

He wondered if he could use his blanket to hang himself. He thought about this for a while then rejected the plan as cowardice, better to try and run he thought and hope that an alert guard would end his misery. The more he thought about it the better the plan sounded.

He would have to wait for the right opportunity but he was sure that it would not be long before it happened. “Maybe after breakfast” he thought, “When he would have to empty the dustbins, “then he would make a break for it and hope for a shout to halt, and wait for the shot as he ran. “Hope, hope, hope how could any one have hope after seeing this place. Did not the banner over the gate say ‘Abandon all hope those who enter here?’”

Yes who ever had put those words over the gate knew the despondency and terror this place held. But he knew that it would not be long before he died and was away from this living hell. Samuel determined that wherever he awoke he would join the allies and fight until this place had been destroyed for to long he had been blind to what these terrible men had been doing, now he would fight back. When he thought of the time he had spent working in the Berlin Hilton

since 1936 he had thought only of himself. His ability to adapt had saved him many times before it was not that he was scared of dying again although it had been a while since he had died a physical death. He remembered all the good Germans he had known over the centuries. Were all those memories to be wiped out by one generation of evil men? "No" thought Samuel I will not allow the memory of men like J.S. Bach and Count Gunther to be soiled by men like Hitler and Gobbles and Goring.

Returning to bed Samuel thought no more on the subject of his forth coming death, he had decided and that was enough.

He was working in the kitchen. The breakfast was almost over; the last dishes had been cleared away. Soon it would be time to make a run for it. he was carrying a plate through to the kitchen when Helmut called him. "Samuel you are wanted in the commander's office. Clean up and go to the office before you take out the dust bins." Putting the plate down Samuel straightened his uniform and walked the short distance to the office.

Auschwitz 1944 reflections on walking to the commandant's office

Samuel crossed the road, the icy wind cutting into his thin work clothes; he wondered what the camp commandant wanted with him. He was prepared for any eventuality. He wondered at the fact that so many of his compatriots had meekly submitted to the terror of death without fighting back. Then again he knew that he had been complacent depending on his special pass to help him in times of trouble and on a number of occasions it had. It had certainly paid to be the truffles chef at the Berlin Hilton. He remembered the day when the fat Interior Minister had come marching into the dining room of the hotel. The word had gone out, no Jew to serve the elite only those of pure Aryan blood held that privilege, but once the fat interior Minister had tasted the truffle, he demanded the chef be brought before him. "Herr rieghs Minister, he is a Jew whispered the chief waiter shocked that the puff pastry chef had been singled out for such a privilege. "I do not care, I want to see the man who created such heavenly truffles" shouted the fat man his large fist smashing down on the table. Shaking with fear, Samuel had

come before one of the men who held life and death for so many millions in his hands.

Friedrich the senior waiter said “Here is the man Samuel Ferreira the truffle maker” “You make the truffles?” asked the fat man “Yes Herr Minster I do” Samuel could feel the sweat breaking out on his forehead, a wet sensation of fear running up and down his spine. “Delightful. You will make me two dozen every day until further notice” said Gobbles.

“Herr Minster there is the problem of him been a Jew” said the hotel manager. “That is no problem for me I will have him issued with a special pass. He may come and go as he pleases as long as I get my truffles” said the fat man.

That had been back in the beginning of 1938 now it was 1944 how things had changed. Germany had been powerful back then. It seemed that Samuel had come to Germany in the hope of dying, he unlike every sensible Jew who was fighting to get out of Germany had come to Germany.

The day following Gobbles visit, a Gestapo captain had arrived at the hotel and asked to see him the officer, a tall blond haired blue eyed giant of a man had looked down at Samuel as if he was a piece of filth on his boot a dog’s feces which he had accidentally trodden on. “Here is your pass Jew. Look after it well and keep it with you always.” He had said in an icy cold voice, the hatred dripping off every word. At the time Samuel had thought “This one already imagines that he has me in the interrogation room.” There are many kinds of evil some times when you come into the presence of absolute evil you become aware of it, your body will begin to respond to the presence of it in different ways, sometimes you sweat, other times you stutter and in really bad cases you shake. When taking the pass from the officer Samuel began to shake and sweat. When he tried to thank the man, he found that he was unable to utter more then one letter syllables “III aaa” “Yes Jew I know you are trying to express your thanks and appreciation but really do not it will only embarrass us remember to keep it with you all ways Heil Hitler” said the young man, raising his right hand in the Nazi salute before turning and leaving.

Now as he walked the final few steps towards the office he cleared his head for what must undoubtedly come. He knew that today he would leave this place of terror this hopeless hell on earth... knocking on the door he waited. "Enter" came the reply from within. Stepping into the office Samuel for a moment was taken aback by the fact that the commandant was with another man in the uniform of a Major. When they turned Samuel was shocked to see that the Major was none other than the man who had delivered the pass all those years ago. "Ah the Jew said the camp commander." "The very man" said the major "Your lucky day Jew" said the Major with a sneer on his face life had obviously not been treating him well only to have risen in war time to the rank of Major. An ugly scar ran down the side of his pale face, a memento of the campaign on the Russian front. "Well Jew if you have got any possessions you can gather them, you have been recalled to Berlin. It seems that the Reghs Minster has need of your special services" said the Major.

A car was waiting which would take them from the camp in Poland to the capital of Germany. A driver sat behind the wheel. Samuel stepped out of the office followed by the two officers "Give my regards to the Minster said the camp commandant to the Major. It has been a while since his last visit." "I will convey your regards to Herr Gobbles" said the Major. Opening the door and climbing in Samuel looked around once more at the death camp the black & grey smoke belched continuously day and night from those smoke stacks. On the spur of the moment Samuel asked "Pardon me Major but is that a Lugar pistol you have there?" "Yes what of it?" asked the blond giant "I am some what of a gun collector. May I see it? It looks so well made." "Only if you promise not to shoot yourself with it" replied the giant, half in jest, half seriously. He was already in a world of trouble for having had the Minster of interiors Truffles chef deported to Auschwitz. "Oh I promise that I won't do that right away" said Samuel the German unclipped his holster and handed the weapon to the truffles chef. Samuel admired the weapon, the loving curve the cold hard metal so well made. One day a weapon like this would be worth its weight in gold, but today Samuel had other plans quickly cocking the gun he turned it on the surprised major, firing twice hitting the major in the heart and the head the camp commandant ran seeking shelter. Calmly Samuel

turned the gun in his hand sat down on the stairs and contemplated his cowardice. "No more" he thought. In the distance he could see camp guards running towards him he lifted the gun to his left temple and pulled the trigger.

When the commandant reached him he was shaking like a leaf. God in Hemmel how am I going to explain this to the Minster he said to himself. He had lost of his aid de camp and his truffle chef both on the same day. The Minster was going to be extremely angry with someone the camp commander hoped it would not be him.

The death of a Christian Martyr Germany 1945

The prisoner was praying again. Samuel stood smoking a cigarette in the passage outside the cell door. Samuel was only half listening but as the prisoner prayed he became interested in what the man was saying. "Heavenly Father I pray that thy mercies be this day with those who are on the battle fields. Enlighten their minds to your salvation. Oh Lord cause the scales to fall from the eyes of those who lead. Convict oh Lord the sinful men of their wrong and bring them to the realization that they can yet be saved. I ask no favors for myself oh Lord but I beg you to bring these men who commit these terrible crimes to the full knowledge of thy love and salvation through your son Jesus. Grant oh Lord peace to this war torn world in Jesus name Amen"

Samuel wondered at the man's fortitude. The prisoner was among a number of political prisoners held in this part of the concentration camp away from the general population, because of the extreme nature of their crimes, treason against the Nazi state. The Pastor had first been arrested when funds that had been used to help Jews escape from Germany had been traced back to him. Later when the Abwher plot to assassinate Hitler had been revealed, it was found that the pastor had also been part of it thus he had been shifted from one prison to another. Now in early 1945 he had ended up here at Flossenbürg under the care of the Gestapo.

When Samuel had first awoke after his last death he had thought himself free to join one of the Allied armies to fight for the freedom of those who still suffered in the concentration camps, but the hand of providence had decided otherwise. He

had woken in the barracks of the Flossenbürg concentration camp dressed in a German army corporal's uniform guards division. He had immediately thought that he would have to do away with himself but then he realized that he might be able to do much more damage to the Nazi operation if he worked from within. Thus he had been committing acts of sabotage which, although not devastating, did help to slow down the Nazi's smoothly running machine. Things were not going well for Germany right now. The Allies were making inroads from both the east and the west.

He had been guarding about ten prisoners for the last few months. Now on an early spring morning his long night watch outside the cells was coming to an end. Soon the Gestapo, a number of officers would be arriving shortly to supervise the execution. Samuel had been told that he would be one of those needed to witness the execution of these dangerous criminals. The pastor, his brother Klaus, brother in law Hans von Dohnanyi and a friend Rüdiger Schleicher had all been earmarked for execution this morning. From the cells the sound of these men praying in unison, yet apart could be heard. Through the last few months he had come to know the pastor well, his soft spoken voice echoing in Samuel's ears as he prepared himself to step off this mortal coil. Samuel stubbed out the cigarette. From within the cell the pastor asked, "Guard, is it time yet?" "No pastor it is not yet five. There are still a few minutes left." said Samuel. "Thank you Samuel" said the pastor, "it was a small thing to ask but it meant the world to the condemned man as he returned to the bedside and began to pray, this time his voice rose and fell in a prayer of rejoicing.

Samuel began to wonder if the man had gone mad. He had been severely beaten the previous day, now faced with the prospect of death the man seemed to be happy that he was going to die this day.

In the distance the sound of a prison door being opened could be heard. The sound of footsteps echoed loudly within the confined space of the prison. Samuel could see a number of Gestapo troopers coming towards him. How he despised them. The men in the cells stopped praying. "Rather those poor bastards than me" thought Samuel as he was instructed to

open the door to the first cell. Entering the cell the voice of the Gestapo captain could be heard reading out the order of execution. "Prisoner Dietrich Bonhoeffer by order of the Fuehrer you are to be executed forth with for crimes against the state. Heil Hitler! Undress this instant." In three other cells the same actions and orders were being read out by the other officers. The pastor began to undress slowly, the beard which had grown while he was in prison, shabby and untidy. The Captain not liking the fact that the pastor was taking so long, struck him with a riding crop. "Hurry you scum" he shouted as a welt appeared on the prisoner's bare back.

Once the prisoners had been assembled cold, naked and shivering in the passage, the Gestapo troopers made them kneel and polish their boots. One of the troopers sat on one of the prisoner's rums and smoked a cigarette. Growing bored, the trooper stubbed the cigarette out on the body of the prisoner. The man screamed in pain, his pale skin in stark contrast to the inflamed area of his body. The infuriated guard began kicking Hans von Dohnanyi with their heavy boots. When the beating was over the prisoners were marched out to the gallows. The early spring weather had not cleared away all the snow that had fallen. Now the prisoners shivered, their skin turning blue as they stumbled along the hundred meters to the tall gallows. In the distance the smoke from the furnace could be seen climbing to the sky. "Another camp of death" thought Samuel as the men mounted the gallows naked as the day they were born. They did not hang their heads like the concentration camp expected them to, they held their heads high as proud Germans.

They began to say the Lord prayer once this was completed their hands were quickly tied and the ropes placed around their necks. A tall blond-headed German captain standing on the platform gave the order for the guards to push them off the platform. Samuel standing just below the platform thought he was going to be sick. The men fell, their feet a few meters above the ground, their bodies dancing in violent protest at the supply of oxygen been cut off to their bodies. One of the men's bowels failed and the watching troopers were treated to a display of Samuel being showered with feces. The tongues of the dying men protruded from their mouths as the life passed from them, the blood settling to the lower extremities

of their bodies When about five minutes had passed the captain told Samuel to cut the bodies down, while others made sure that they were dead.

Samuel returned to the barracks what he had just witnessed sickened him. He showered but still felt dirty. Removing a prison uniform that he had stolen a while back he dressed in it. He left the barracks, walking quickly he joined a line of concentration camp prisoners who were bound for the gas chamber....

CHAPTER TWENTY FOUR
22 November 1963 Dallas Texas USA

America was in mourning. Earlier in the day the president had been shot. Samuel stood in the lounge of the hotel and looked at the screen of the TV which had been moved there so the public could watch the unfolding events. Samuel has given up counting how many times the ABC broadcast had replayed the home movie, which had captured the terrible moment on film forever. Right now they were playing a mournful piece of music, the image of Jack Kennedy flashing across the screen.

The mood in the hotel lounge was subdued. People spoke quietly as if stunned by the enormity of what had happened the president had come to Dallas on a routine visit only to be gunned down by a lone gunman. Well that is what they were reporting, but Samuel knew better. For he had seen the glint of the rifle's barrel a moment before the second shot had repeated across the space that separated the presidential motorcade and the man. Things had happened so fast that it was difficult to work out if there had been two or three shots. For the second shot had been fired so rapidly it was possible that the weapon could have been an assault rifle. The first shot had been fired from high overhead that much was clear. Samuel had heard it as he stood just below the school book depository building. The president's body had jerked involuntary as the bullets had found their mark. Jackie had thrown her body across that of her husband as the motorcade speeded away towards Parkland Hospital. Later it would be reported from the hospital that the president had been declared dead. At that moment Samuel had stood mesmerized, as William Longmont whom he had last seen way back in 1870, rose from the knoll dropping the rifle back into its concealed hiding place under his coat turned and began to walk away.

For a moment longer Samuel had stood shocked at what he had just witnessed. Already the police were moving in towards the school book depository building. Others who had witnessed the shooting stood still, not knowing what to do others were weeping openly. Samuel began to follow William Longmont. He crossed the road and walked towards the slight rise, his eyes on the ground searching for the shell from the rifle. Finding it, he picked it up and dropped it into his pocket. In the distance William Longmont was beginning to walk

hurriedly trying to put some distance between himself and the crime he had just committed. As Samuel followed, Longmont looked back and smiled as if satisfied with a job well done. He reached a stop light where he waited for the light to change. Samuel hurried to catch up with him. Just as he arrived at the light it changed and Longmont crossed. A police car pulled to a halt next to Samuel "Stop" shouted an officer. Samuel stopped, turned and looked at the car as two uniformed officers climbed out. In the moments that it took them to climb from the car Samuel dropped the rifle shell into a gutter and waited. "You can't leave. Everyone that was present needs to be questioned" said one of the officers. "I saw what every body else saw" said Samuel "Some one shot the president. What an awful day this has turned out to be" he said. "It sure is" said one of the officers. "Alright give me your name and address" said the officer. Samuel complied with their request and was allowed to go after been warned that he might be needed for further questioning. Turning back to the lights, Samuel crossed now hurriedly seeking the pavement ahead for any sign of William Longmont.

Now on the evening of that fateful day, Samuel watched everything. The late Jack Kennedy had done what was right. No one saw that he had almost brought the nation into great disrepute with the Bay of Pigs debacle, now they only remembered the good. The announcer on ABC was now speaking again. Images of a young Jack Kennedy in his Navel uniform were being flashed across the screen, the tale of his heroic deeds on a certain night in the South Seas during the second world war were being recounted.

There was a brief announcement to say that "A man Lee Harvey Oswald had been charged with the murder of the president. He had previously been questioned in connection with the murder of a policeman." "Darn Commie bastard" said one of the guests "I hope he gets the electric chair" said another. "God what is America coming to when the president can be killed on the streets of Dallas" said another. Samuel reflected "That is not something new, just under a hundred years ago another great president had been assassinated in a theater." Most people back then had asked the same question. Now there would be a state funeral and of course many heads of state would attend and make speeches to the greatness of

the man John F Kennedy. Samuel thought for a moment of the poor dead president's family. How they would be feeling tonight the boys crying their eyes out on pillows, knowing that their father would never again play ball with them. And what of Mrs. Kennedy, what emotions now filled her mind as she spent the first night alone a widow?

CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

2001 AD New York A bad day

Samuel had jetted in from London the previous afternoon booked into the Millennium Arms hotel, taken a quick shower and had gone to sleep. He was feeling a bit jet lagged and as a result he did not sleep well. He woke at three in the morning and ordered up some sandwiches and coffee from the kitchen. While he waited he took another shower and dressed. At 4AM he walked downstairs and bought a copy of the New York Times, nothing much happening in the stock market. At five thirty AM he tossed aside the paper and left the hotel and walked across the street to the World Trade Center.

The meeting began just after six AM the investment bankers Brodhearst and Bulkier were located on the 109th floor of the tower. They had been very accommodating in allowing for the meeting to get started so early in the day, but money talked and the proposal that Samuel had for them was a good one. The plan was to buy up a number of sites worldwide and build a hotel on each of these sites, which would be the pride of the Ferreira hotel group and the envy of many others.

The meeting was basically the first step to putting this plan into operation. Samuel had several million dollars, which he wished to spend on the project. However he did not have enough for the first year's running costs and this was the reason he had come to New York to see the bankers, who had a reputation, which even reached into the third world and was known for helping the businessman who was wishing to expand his empire. Their criteria were strict and each person who approached the bank had to be recommended by someone who had previously been or was currently a client. Samuel had been lucky enough to be referred by a good friend in London. Now he found himself in the presence of these bankers who fired questions at him on every issue which he addressed "Would the local sultan of some backwater country want bribes for the building of the hotel? Would there be problems with the sale of Alcohol in a certain Muslim state where the use of Alcohol was band?" To all these questions he gave the answers.

By seven thirty he was already feeling tired, the results of jet lag began telling on him. He was working hard to convince

these bankers that his project was sound and worthy of investment. He had spent years working towards this goal and no investment banker was going to stop him now. After all he had already lived through; this should be a pushover. Yet he found himself working hard to answer their questions, to set their minds at rest over various things, which they were unclear about. He was looking forward to the weekend, which was still a few days away for he had been invited to the country estate of one of the partners in the firm, which he had heard was out at the Hamptons, but first there was the small matter of convincing the partners of the soundness of the deal from which they would reap a very good return. They broke for a breakfast, which had been laid on just after eight thirty in the morning. Samuel perused the breakfast table. There were English Scones and muffins, some cereals a tray of various cold meats. The company, having taken into account that Samuel was from a different continent, had made every effort to accommodate for his tastes. There was even a bay marine which bubbled away merrily with bacon, eggs, sausage mushrooms and fried onions and tomatoes. Samuel helped himself to a plate of cold meats and some fresh bread. The conversation round the breakfast table was not what one would usually expect of investment bankers. Here instead of money, the men talked about their families, what Mr Brodhearst's young grand son had said about him to a friend "being the richest man in America besides the president." There was general laughter once the story had been told.

Samuel crossed to one of the windows and looked out at the city bellow. A haze was already building up. It was going to be a hot day in New York. As he looked down to the street bellow he watched the people who seemed so small almost like ants scurrying about hurriedly on their way to work. "Ah New York so much had changed since he had last been here. Back when he last passed through the city skyscrapers had not even been thought of and now they dominated the sky line. He crossed back to the breakfast table making small talk with one of the secretaries who was busy dishing up some hot food from the bay marine. "Good legs" he thought "maybe later I can ask her out for drinks" Returning to the window Samuel noticed a plane in the distance.

Samuel sipped some of his coffee and was joined by one of the bankers "So Sam you think you are on to a good thing with your project?" the man asked in a friendly fashion "Sure, I think I have a real winner here and we will all make lots of money out of this deal" the two men laughed. Samuel turned his attention once more to the sky. The plane seemed closer. "Now that was something you did not see everyday, jet planes so close to the business districts of large cities. Surely there were rules about that sort of thing he thought?" The conversation with the banker turned to the upcoming weekends events at the Hamptons "Remember to ask Bill about his roses and do go fishing with him. He has a new boat and it is his pride and joy" said the man next to him.

Samuel was puzzled. He was watching the plane. Surely it was way off course he thought to himself. Turning to his new found friend he said "Sorry I did not catch that" "Oh I was just saying that it looks like it is going to be a hot day thank God for air conditioning." "Sure" said Samuel "Tell me is it usual for jet planes to be so close to the towers said Samuel?" "Not usually. Geezzzz that plane is too close!" said the man. They watched as the plane turned gracefully and now it was now on course towards the tower. The men watched as the plane drew closer unable to tear their eyes from the approaching plane "Shit they are going to cut it very fine" said the man. They watched for a few seconds as it became apparent that the plane was heading straight towards the towers the man next to Samuel ran from the window "Duck!" he shouted. Samuel looked at the plane, which was fast approaching. In the cockpit he saw two faces one of a darker complexion and one slightly lighter. The face of the light skinned man looked familiar. In the thousandth of a second it took Samuel to recognize the man as William Longmont, his face set in a maniacal grin mouthing the words "There is no God but Allah." There was a moment of recognition from the man on the plane then the building was enveloped in flames Samuel felt the blast and knew no more.

Epilogue

Through the centuries Samuel had flirted with various religions in his search for truth. The nearest he had come to making a serious commitment to Christianity was back in 392AD when his friend Demetrius who had spent most of his life serving the Parthenon of Greek god who had in old age converted to Christianity.

However their conversation had been interrupted by the arrival of a serving girl who had lived with Samuel for a time as his common law wife. Samuel had not seen his friend Demetrius again, for shortly after their interrupted conversation, Demetrius had died. Mourned by a large family and many friends it was not long after this that Samuel had deemed it expedient to leave Greece.

Now many centuries later, Samuel began to ponder what might have happened if they had completed their conversation. Would he have converted to the faith founded by the young carpenter of Nazareth who's parents Samuel had offered a stable to for their bed.

At heart Samuel had always believed that he was a Jew and nothing would ever change that. His whole life he had kept the principals of the Jewish faith in one form or another. Now in extreme old age he began to have his doubts.

He attended regularly one of the many cities in which he lived never getting too friendly with the Jewish community, as he knew that one day he would have to break off his contact with them and move on.

Occasionally when there was a Christian crusade in town he might attend a service to see what it was all about but the loud praise and worship was he believed not for him. He could never understand the emotional outbursts that these Christians seemed to relish.

It was not that he was emotionally dead; it was just the fact that it was not in his nature to display outwardly his innermost feelings. Still, he felt drawn by these Christians who in many ways resembled the Christians of the early church of Jesus. They raised their arms in worship; they sang they clapped

their hands; they seemed to have an inner fire which they displayed to the world.

So after a time Samuel stopped attending the synagogue and began to attend the churches of these Christians. It was like being drawn back in time to an earlier age when Christian worship had been a vibrant and new thing. Even some of the songs of praise reminded him of a way of worship, which had been common in an earlier age. He had of course been around when the young Wesley brothers had been around starting their congregations of Methodists. For a time he had thought of joining them but after a while as was his custom, he hesitated and the opportunity passed him by. He remembered the day well. John Wesley had been standing on a wagon preaching to a number of folk who had stood around, he spoke of a feeling of enduring love, a certain peace which accompanied conversion to the faith of the carpenter. Samuel doubted it. He had embraced the Catholic faith many centuries earlier, when it was prudent to do so but had found no joy in the rituals of the Church. Thus for a number of centuries he had begun to explore the realm of the sciences to find the answer which he sought. Many centuries earlier he had sought out a Jewish scholar who he believed might have the answer to his dilemma but the advice of the reverend man was the old maxim to follow the laws of Moses. A few centuries later he had journeyed to Egypt, but had been frightened off from seeking the answer from the ancient gods of that land. For a season he had followed the teachings of Mohamed but therein he had not found the answer to his problem. Thus he had turned to the job of serving humanity in various ways. He had fought in many causes which he hoped would improve the world and bring him some peace however the peace which he sought always eluded him. Over the centuries he had seen much and had met with many people who would have a lasting impact on the world.

Now at the beginning of the 21st century he had given up most of his wealth which he had accumulated over the centuries. He now lived a simple life running his hotel serving humanity until once more fate would intervene and he would be off on another adventure. The pursuit of Science had not fulfilled his longing for peace even though mankind had come a long way from the primeval mud that they had first started out in. Now

at the dawn of an age when science was finding ways to make people live long Samuel found him self longing for a way to peacefully bring his long life to a close. It was as if the time on earth had wearied him. All he now longed for was to sleep, to end it, but of course he knew that was not possible. For each awaking from temporal death brought him no closer to resolving the curse under which he had lived for so, so long.

Then of course there was the question of what had become of the German William Longmont it had been more than five years since the two had met. Samuel wondered how someone could live as long as they had, yet remain unmoved by all that they had experienced, yet the German seemed to do just that. Samuel had been affected by almost every experience that he had lived through. He had mourned the passing of a large number of friends and acquaintances through the ages. It had got to the point when he thought he had cried the last drop of moisture from his tear ducts, then he had cried some more.

Through out the ages he had thought often of the night when he had been cursed but been so busy at the time of the incident he had failed to pay due attention. Thus he found himself trying to remember as much of that night as he could in the hope of finding some clue as to the method of resolving his dilemma..

And here Dear readers we must bid our friend Samuel farewell for the time being.