

Chapter 9

“9 1 1 & the FaLLen”



“Hit the dirt!” His voice was so loud it vibrated off the cliff sides.

No one had to be told twice. They all dove downward.

Dirt filled his nostrils. The taste of earth brought up childhood memories of when he used to help his sister make mud pies. She had a way about her. Her smile made him happy until she gave him those big brown eyes that said, ‘eat

the pie.’ She always added ‘a please’. She always had his attention. He missed her and her honest, fun-loving ways. She died too young.

He lifted his head when a foot pushed it back into the dirt.

“Don’t get up.”

It was the soft voice of an American woman.

He tried to turn his neck to see, but she had her heel right on his neck, perfectly positioned to prevent him from moving.

He barely spat out. “I am eating dirt. Can’t we talk?”

“Well maybe, if you’re nice.”

It seems like a British accent. “Charlie?”

The American woman eased up on his neck and he sat up.

Everyone else began brushing off their now dirty clothes, except for the kid.



“Charlie!” He flew into her arms like they hadn’t seen each other in years.

To his surprise, she returned the favor. “Oh, I worried about you, Gorilla. I knew you needed help,” she said sarcastically in a ditsy valley girl’s voice.

Sarantos sat up and looked around the camp. Alvaro was still groggy, and his hands were still tied.

“Can someone untie me? Where did those thugs go?”

The American woman was tall, slender, with wavy blonde hair that was pulled back from her forehead and hung down

her back in a braid. Dressed in a white shirt, trousers, high black boots, with a black hat to match, her tan skin glistened. Her steel-blue eyes and long dark lashes penetrated his as she leaned down and untied his feet. As if on cue, her buttoned shirt bulged with a pair of fully endowed breasts that begged to be touched. A strange, shaped medallion hung in-between her crease.

She then moved gracefully behind him and bent down to untie his hands. She smelled of sweet chamomile and a hint of mint.

“Professor, it’s good to see you,” said Charlie, who threw herself into his arms as he stood up.

“What the hell are you doing here, Charlie?”

She stood back and glared at him, placing her right hand on her hip. “Saving you of course, Professor.”

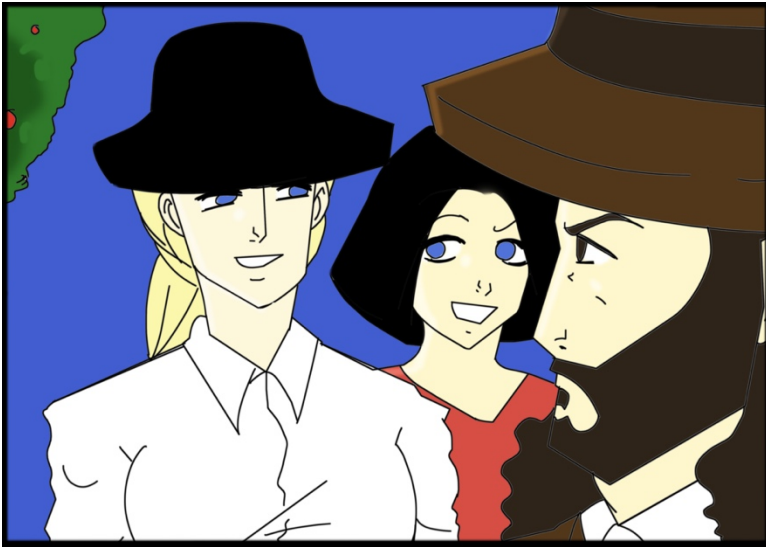
“Oh, that makes sense. We needed rescue from a group of men who were about to release us.”

She snapped back. “Oh, sorry for the inconvenience. Let me just go get them back here and hand you over to them. It sounded like they were going to use you both as a couple of

jackasses to lighten their load and help them find the artifact.”

“Easy, does it Charlie. We are all under strain. If we don’t hurry, they might find it before us. They took the map, but thankfully, I have it memorized,” said Gorilla. Gorilla was always the guy that’s always thinking that somebody’s out to take advantage of him.

“Great job, kid. There are confusing markings on it they may or may not understand. I do, though, so that should give us the advantage.”



Charlie smiled. “I would like you boys to meet my new friend, Madeline Strong. She was in search of a mystery book she’d heard about from an old stranger in town. One

day he was there and then poof. Gone like magic, but not before she could learn about a strange book hidden away for at least 200 years.”

“Nice to meet you both. I’ve heard about you Professor, it’s an honor and a pleasure.”

Her voice was soft and true. They connected in a way that he really needed. Her eyes studied him closely.

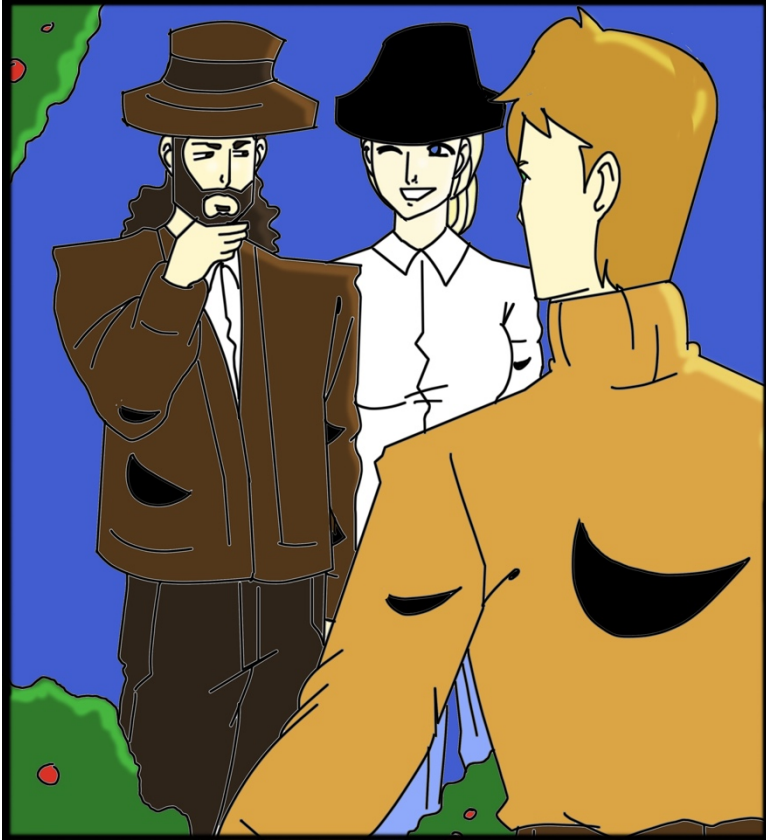
His feelings surprised him. Her being from America meant her behavior should be expected.

She reached out and shook his hand. “I’m excited to be here in your presence and hope that you’d consider coming with Charlie and I on this adventure. I think it might prove more valuable and much more interesting than the one you are on.”

Charlie said, “Yes, that’s one reason we followed you. We would like your help.”

Was this a glass cliff or rare opportunity? The Professor dropped his head into his chest. Horsefeathers. Why couldn’t he just have a normal journey without the drama? He didn’t want to shift modes.

“I don’t think so. We set my heart on this one, and if we don’t hurry, those gentlemen will certainly gain my desire.”



“Hey, ya Doc, that’s not totally true. The map isn’t well done. I did some more research on the plane, hotel, and on this trek to decipher the symbols and see through the distractions meant to throw people off track.”

“Balderdash. I just want to complete one mission. Is that so hard to ask?”

“Well, if you insist, Doc. Keep in mind, the gangsters were after the same artifact. If they recover it, they might run into opposition. When they’re done playing games, we can jump on in and swipe it out from under their noses.”

The Professor rubbed his chin slowly. He hated it when the kid made sense. He was indeed interested in this captivating woman and her book. She appeared to be in her late thirties and might be very appreciative.

Madeline’s eyes were intense, watching his mind work, like she would put it in his head to take on the book. It’s important to her. She smiled gently and winked at him. Okay, that pushed him over the edge.

“Okay, yes, let’s do it.”

Madeline flashed a pleasant set of teeth. “Thank you so much, Professor Sarantos. You won’t regret it. I’ll tell you more about it on our walk, and you’ll be happy to know it’s only a half day’s walk from here.”

He threw his pack over his shoulder and helped the dazed Alvaro to his feet.

“Alvaro, we are on a new mission. You in or out?”

“What is it?” The handsome local brushed himself off and threw on his pack, but didn’t miss the new women in the group. “Charlie.”

“Alvaro, good to see you. This is Madeline.”

“I’m in. A mission is a mission. Where are we headed?”

Madeline showed him the map.

“It shouldn’t take us long, Alvaro. Nice to meet you,” said Madeline.

“You, too.” The dark-haired native studied the map and smirked. “We are close to that location. I can lead us there rather quickly.”

“Good. Then we can continue on our other mission with no more delays.” Sarantos jumped in behind Alvaro, as the fit man moved to the south of their camp and away from their prior destination.



Madeline walked beside him and said, “Professor, you will enjoy this. This book is a vision of the future. Something so horrific that it will lead to more destruction and distrust for many centuries.”

His head jerked around and stared at those gorgeous eyes. “What? I’m wasting my time on a book about the future that may or may not be true? Who wrote it?”

He walked faster. Good lord, these people had no clue. Once the adrenaline pumps, we’ll see how ready she is.

“I don’t remember his name.” Her uncomfortableness showed. Her face reddened.

Oh, great, now he embarrassed a fan.

“I didn’t mean any disrespect. What made you interested in this so-called book, anyway?”

She moved faster to keep up, never faltering. “I’m a Professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago.”

Now it was his turn to blush.

He looked at her and grinned.



“Fair enough. Your interest on hearing about history of any sort must have got you crazy, but a history that hasn’t happened yet, now that’s something an anthropologist could sink her teeth into.”

As her bottom lip sucked in, she nodded. “That about sums it up Professor.”

“Well, Madeline, I’m suddenly more interested in this mission than I was before. The honor would be mine to help you discover said documents. Prosperity and all.” She kept offering him a healthy helping of different. Different had to be better than a steady diet of the same.

Her laughter filled the glen they'd just entered. Alvaro could move faster. That put them at a slow run's pace.

Charlie and the kid were giggling and holding hands behind the group. It made him blissfully content that they were able to be together again.

“Kid, you two need to be alert. This is still a mission and with gangsters roaming about, we don't know what can happen. Sorry to put a damper on love, but we're behind the eight ball. Get out your bean shooter and stay alert. It's no match for a machine gun, but it's better than nothing.”

He hated to come down on them, but they were in a tight predicament.

“Aw, thanks Doc for taking the sails out of my day, but sure.”

The kid turned serious in a heartbeat. Even Charlie pulled out a small pistol he didn't know she had. She nodded approvingly at Gorilla. The kid held up his own gun and gave her a sheepish grin. Their heads alternated left and right, looking for anyone that might follow them. The kid slowed his pace until he was at the end of the group, searching behind them as he crept forward.



“Just keep up kid.”

He didn't want to leave him too far behind, because Alvaro was on the move and making the most of the easy terrain.

The heat still didn't quit, and he took off his hat and wiped his forehead with a small red rag he carried in his pocket. The cute Professor next to him smiled and did the same with his rag.

“It shouldn’t be long now,” said Alvaro as he slowed his movements and seemed to be searching for something in the forest in front of them. “I search for a small path that’s covered over by brush, but I need to look closely because it is not as untouched as the rest of the area.”

Alvaro bent down and moved forward at a snail’s pace.

The sun was like a death ray that took advantage of their exposed bodies. He sipped his water. Not that it helped in this heat, but better to have it than be without it.

He wondered what he was doing in such a foolish pursuit, but then Madeline took off her white shirt. Her skin glistened in the sun as sweat dripped down her smooth, pale skin. She wasn’t shy. Her lacy bra barely held in her endowments. He stared. He couldn’t help himself. She paid no attention to him or anyone else.



She leaned down, exposing a nipple, as she retrieved what looked like a man's tee-shirt and pulled that on over her head. Oh, that wasn't good. The shirt was so thin he could see everything under it. Distractions! Sometimes dreams will get you nowhere, but a good kick in the pants will take you a long way. That's exactly what he needed right now.

He just got out of a relationship and was apparently ready to jump into another one. If he felt like a hamster on a wheel, that's because he was. Really, Professor, the other one was a

night in the sack. Get a grip, you're not a big cheese yet. He laughed in the quiet of his own mind.

Seriously, this woman was a luxury. She was gorgeous, uninhibited, a Professor, and an adventurer. Madeline was the bee's knees. He could sink his teeth into her, as a matter of speaking, if she let him.

"Wait here," said Alvaro and disappeared into the cool of the dark jungle.

"Great, Doc. It's scorching out here in the sun."

"Yeah, kid. Let's get to the edge of the jungle so we're at least shielded from the blistering rays of the sun."

They all nodded and moved to the outer parts of the jungle. The temperature changed immediately. Relief filled them with a coolness that dried the sweat promptly.

It only took a few minutes before Alvaro returned. "I found the rock, at least I think it's the right one, but I need help to move it."

They all followed him over brush and prickles, careful not to get burrs in their boots.

Alvaro stopped in front of a large boulder.

“That’s not a rock, that’s a piece of mountain.”

“True, Doc,” said Gorilla, circling the stone, as though willing it to move itself. He got out a thick rope and looped it around the stone, tied a knot, and stood back.

“We’ll push and you pull with the rope, kid.”



They all joined in. After about ten minutes, the stone finally budged. They got it out far enough where someone could put their hand inside the opening. Sarantos hated spiders and

would not volunteer, but he didn't have to - Alvaro did and pulled out a small book.

The cover was leather and there were no markings on it. Alvaro handed it to Madeline. She waited for everyone to gather around and opened it up.

Surprisingly enough, it was in English.

It read, Back from the Future 2016, and signed John Mailer.

It was horrific.

September 11, 2001, the Twin Towers in New York were destroyed. The day turned black. No one could make sense of the senseless mess. Firefighters and cops trusted their instincts to save many lives by putting their lives on the line.

They are heroes and never question whether they should go into the flaming cloudy mess. Years later, distrust still gripped the world in a cloud of heavy aftermath the world will never be forget. Time cannot heal the wound.

There was hysteria, four hijacked airplanes, and pain. So much pain. We couldn't close our eyes and wish away what we witnessed as they drove the planes into the buildings,

bringing them down onto the busy streets. Trapped innocents and smoke choking the air. We should never forget the innocence lost on that day.

If someone reads this. Stop it if you can. This is the future, a horrible human mistake. We are still recovering, and never will find our way out of the deadly morning of 9/11. The dead must be remembered. Do what you can to stop it. I've left you more information if you keep reading.

“My God, can this be real?”

The small group looked into each other's eyes and saw fear and sadness that moved through a window in time to send a message for help.

They prepared for the worst but hoped for the best.

