

The Dark Eagle

BOOK 1

RUIN & RESTORATION SERIES

BY

SIMON

DRISCOLL

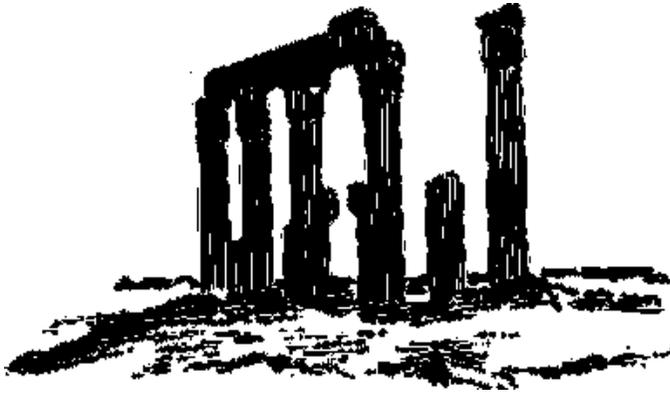
AND

JAMES T.

PROUT



GRENDERMEN PUBLISHING
MESA, ARIZONA, USA



The Recent Past The Muslim Messiah

August 20th, 2017 - Damascus, Syria

Mohammad Arsalan Malik nudged the rocket launcher into place while his men checked the dials. Sweat trickled down his face as he aligned the feet of the launcher with three marked points in the middle of an empty cotton field. Every second wasted decreased the chances of success and they all needed this attack to go well. He was running out of time.

The summer heat beat down on them, making Arsalan wish they'd stuck to their original timetable of early morning. Why the market would be more crowded in the heat of the day, he couldn't understand.

Karim started to load the mortar round.

"N-no!" Arsalan shouted, the stress making his stutter worse. "Check the I-level first!"

"Sorry, Mahdi," Karim said as he pulled the ammunition back out.

Arsalan was known to his followers as Mohammad Al-Mahdi, though some were starting to doubt. While he was tall enough, fair complexioned, was the son of Abdullah and Aamina, and even stuttered, his fortieth birthday had already come and gone without an official pronouncement.¹ One of the many prophecies said the 12th Imam would be forty years old when he revealed himself to the world. If he turned forty-one before that happened, it was too late. There were too many signs² which hadn't been fulfilled and even Arsalan was doubting whether he could accomplish all that was required of him before his next birthday.

They got the launcher leveled and dialed in. If their practice sessions and measurements were accurate, this would land right on the doorstep of the fairgrounds. Today the government was reopening the fair as a sign that the fighting had died down. His forces may be diminished, but they weren't entirely defeated.³

“We are ready, Mahdi,” Karim said.

Arsalan quickly checked the settings and said, “Do it,” as he backed away.

Karim dropped the mortar shell into the tube and Hamoud pressed the launch button. The rocket-propelled grenade soared into the air, leaving behind an acrid smell.

Ten seconds later Arsalan's radio buzzed. “Get out of there! The military is on their way!” the spotter shouted.

No one needed to be told twice. They threw the rocket launcher into the back of the van and piled in. The driver gunned it and they were on the road in less than a minute.

“Mission accomplished,” the spotter said. “Direct hit.” The only round they'd been able to fire had hit the market in the fairgrounds.

It was a tight squeeze, but the driver managed to get to regularly trafficked roads before the troops arrived. Three

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minutes after that, they were on the 110, heading south. It wasn't much, but it just might be enough for the Shadow Council to let him live.



The Great American Eclipse

August 21st, 2017 - Sublimity, Oregon

“**R**ise and shine, sleepy-head,” Tonya said. “We’ve got to get to the meadow early to pick out our spot.” Her blonde hair tickled Scott’s face as she leaned over and kissed him.

“Alright, I’m up,” Scott said as he rolled out of bed. He stretched and tried in vain to reach the ceiling. For the first time in more than a week, he’d gotten to sleep before midnight and he almost felt fully rested. Despite being deep in the forests of Oregon, they had nearly all the comforts of home, including hot showers.

Scott and Tonya Knox were on the ninth day of their honeymoon, and the sixth day at Silver Falls Lodge. He had booked the cabin when he was eighteen and learned that The Great American Eclipse⁴ would pass right over the cabins where his parents frequently went on vacation. It had been a bit of a rush getting the wedding planned in time, but when his parents learned he was taking her to the lodge for a week, they insisted it wouldn’t be a problem.

He knew he'd married the right woman not only because they were the same height, but by her enthusiasm for seeing both of the twice-in-a-lifetime events. They were already planning a trip to Missouri in 2024 ⁵ to see the next total solar eclipse on American soil.

As they entered the dining hall half an hour later, Scott almost moaned at how crowded it already was. Most of their week here had been fairly quiet, at least in terms of seeing other people. But today there were people everywhere. Well, that was to be expected for such a spectacular event. It took twice as long as usual to get their food, and there was no way they were going to have a table to themselves this morning.

"Scott! Over here!" Kevin called. He was Scott's best friend all through high school, and easy to spot, still having the build of a linebacker.

"What is *he* doing here?" Tonya asked as she came up beside him.

"Well, right now he's got two seats for us."

Tonya scowled at him.

"Hey, at least we get to sit next to each other," Scott shrugged as he headed for Kevin's table.

"I knew I'd find you two this morning," Kevin said as the couple sat down. "I'll bet you didn't even know I've been here all weekend."

Tonya gaped as she scowled at Scott. "All weekend?"

Scott shrugged. "We originally planned this together, along with Mark and Patrick. They were all bummed when I hijacked the entire cabin for just the two of us."

"Hey," Kevin broke in, "I stayed out of your way, didn't I? You didn't even know we were here."

"We?" Tonya repeated.

As if in reply, Mark and Patrick sat down across from her.

“Morning, lovebirds,” Mark said. He was the shortest one at the table by a couple of inches.

“I told you we couldn’t avoid them today,” Patrick said. His red hair always made him stand out. “Everyone’s going to be in the same place at the same time this morning.”

“Did you know about this?” Tonya asked Scott.

Scott nodded. “Of course.”

“And when were you going to tell me?”

Scott just shrugged and said, “Surprise!”

“You know I hate surprises,” Tonya said.

“Like I said,” Kevin interjected, “we’ve stayed out of your way so far, and after the eclipse, we’ll disappear again.”

“Just like the sun,” Patrick said with a grin. No one laughed.

“You don’t have to sit with us in the meadow if you don’t want to,” Kevin offered.

Tonya sighed. “I guess it’s okay. I just thought I’d have my husband to myself on my honeymoon.”

“Tonya, honey,” Scott pleaded, “we knew we were going to be surrounded by people this morning. I’m sorry I didn’t tell you three of those people would be my best friends. We’ve barely seen each other since high school. All three of these knuckleheads are in college.”

“So how come you didn’t go with them?” Tonya’s eyebrows were raised the way they always were when she asked a question he’d already answered a dozen times.

“He’s still working on that charity app, right Scott?” Kevin said with a smirk. “You know, the one that will change the world.”

Scott scowled. “Do you have to bring that up now?”

“Ouch!” Patrick said. “Sounds like the honeymoon is over.”

Scott set down his fork, leaned over and Tonya obliged him with a passionate kiss. “Definitely not over,” Scott said.

Tonya smiled back at him. “Don’t you ever let it end.” She paused before adding, “And no more surprises, okay?”

An hour later, Scott was sitting in a lounge chair with Tonya at his side staring at the sun through their special flimsy glasses. The moon started to move into place. There were almost a hundred people around them doing exactly the same thing.

“Looks like the show has started!” Patrick shouted.

Whoops and hollers came from the crowd. He’d heard weaker cheers on opening day of *Rouge One*.

Kevin leaned over to Scott and asked, “You’re not superstitious, are you?”

“No, of course not. Why?”

“Well, they say that an eclipse is a bad omen,” Kevin explained. “That it marks the beginning of difficult times for the lands touched by it.”

“I don’t believe any of that stuff,” Scott said.

“Neither do I,” Tonya added.

“Good,” Kevin said as he sat back. “I’d hate to see your marriage ruined by superstition.”

Tonya gasped. “What an awful thing to say! We just got married, and already you’re talking about our marriage being ruined?”

“Well, no,” Kevin said. “Not if you don’t believe in that stuff.”

“Well, I don’t!” Tonya said.

“Good,” Kevin shot back.



Gideon is Waiting for Something Bigger

August 21st, 2017 - Marion, Illinois

Gideon Shumway studied the star chart on his laptop in awe after reading the latest blog post about the upcoming alignment of the planets. He had skipped the first day of classes at Notre Dame and gone on a mini-vacation, staying in a tiny hotel room so he would be close enough to witness a total solar eclipse. Yet it was a blog post which now had him in total awe.

“Come on, Gid!” Duane said. “I want to get out of the city before the eclipse starts!”

Gideon was a foot taller with red hair and freckles, almost the opposite of Duane’s black hair and brown eyes. They had only one class together the previous year; Introduction to Comparative Religion. Yet they had become great friends.

“I’m coming,” Gideon replied. He pulled on his shoes, picked up his laptop, and followed Duane out of their hotel room. “Don’t forget those silly glasses you bought.”

“They’re not silly!” Duane protested. He dug the glasses out of his backpack. They looked like cheap 3D glasses from ten

years ago with stars and stripes on the side behind the words *American Eclipse* August 21, 2017. “These things allow us to look directly at the eclipse without burning out our eyes.”

“Okay, ‘Mom,’” Gideon chuckled as he climbed into the passenger seat.

Duane got behind the wheel and put the glasses on the dash. “Hey, I’m not kidding. You’re a football player. If you damage your eyes you could lose your scholarship.”

Gideon rolled his eyes, even though he knew Duane was right. Staring at the sun, even with most of it covered by the moon, would damage his precious eyesight. How could he throw the ball down the field with pinpoint accuracy without his perfect eyesight?

“By the way, what were you reading about?” Duane asked as they pulled onto Highway 13 and headed east.

“It was a blog post about the alignment of planets and stars next month.”

“Oh, yeah? ‘Cause right now we’re about to witness the most spectacular alignment of this planet with the moon and our favorite star. Yet you seem more engrossed by whatever you were reading.”

Gideon chuckled. “That’s because next month the stars could be fulfilling a prophecy straight out of the Bible.”

“You don’t think ‘The Great American Eclipse’ qualifies as that?”⁶ Duane asked as he passed another car.

Despite the many signs telling them not to, some people were already pulling off to the side of the highway and setting up their observational equipment.

“Eclipses happen all the time,” Gideon replied. “There’s going to be another one in America in less than seven years. It’s even going to hit this same town. How could we possibly identify

this particular eclipse as the fulfillment of prophecy when there's nothing extraordinary about it?"

"You mean besides being the first total eclipse in centuries to only cast its shadow on American soil?"

Gideon shook his head. "That's not enough to fulfill biblical prophecy."

"But this alignment of stars next month is?"

"Revelation 12 says, 'And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.'" ⁷

"How does a group of stars give birth?" Duane asked as he pulled off the highway onto a rural road.

"Well, according to this blog, Jupiter has been inside the 'womb' of the constellation Virgo since December of last year. It won't exit that area until September 23rd, 2017."

"That doesn't sound too unusual," Duane said. "Jupiter goes into retrograde motion about every thirteen months. I'm sure it's been in that region of the sky for nine months before."

"And how, exactly, do you know that?"

"My dad. He took me camping almost every month to show me the stars through his telescope. He taught me all about planetary motions."

"Then I guess you would know," Gideon conceded, "but according to this blog, it's never happened with the moon at the feet of Virgo and the Sun on her shoulder with three of the planets in the constellation of Leo."

"What does Leo have to do with it?"

"It's right over her head, acting as a sort of crown."

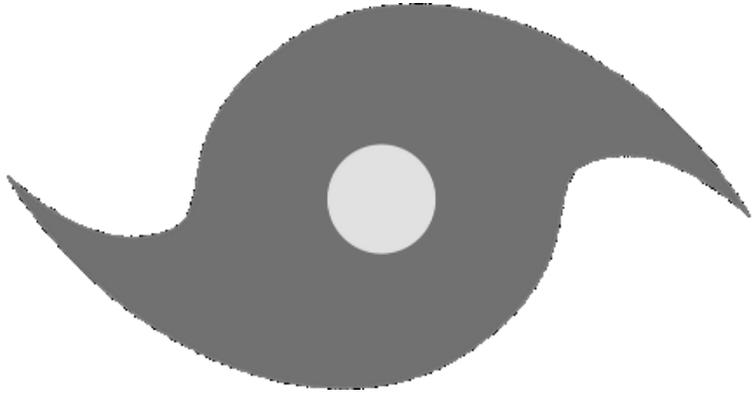
"But only three planets will be there. I thought you said there were supposed to be twelve stars in her crown."

“That’s right,” Gideon said. “Add the three planets to the nine stars of Leo and you get a full dozen.”

Duane chuckled as they pulled onto a dirt road. “You’re more excited about a sign in the future you won’t even see with your eyes than you are for the eclipse which is about to blot out the sun.”

“I came because you invited me,” Gideon said.

“Thanks, man,” Duane said. “Who would have thought a Mormon and a Muslim would become friends while studying comparative religion at a Catholic University?”



Moroni's Helping Hands

September 1st, 2017 - Houston, Texas

Moroni Whitefeather heaved the remains of the last sofa on one shoulder and headed out of another Houston home flooded by Hurricane Harvey. With the black mold growing on it, this couch, like so much else in this city, had become hazardous waste.

“Slow down, big fella,” Thomas Pahona said. “Leave some work for the rest of us.” They’d grown up together on the Hopi Reservation in Arizona, and he was the one who’d asked Moroni to join him on this service project.

Moroni laughed but didn’t slow. He’d already taken the other three sofas out of this house by himself, and it wasn’t the first house they’d emptied that day. Nor was it their first day here. He was covered in sweat from the combination of heat and physical exertion, but he didn’t care. The rank smell of the area had nothing to do with body odor.

Once all the furniture was gone, he went back inside and helped tear out the lower row of drywall. This was the most costly hurricane the world had ever endured, and the costs were still adding up as the black mold spread over and through everything.

He was on vacation, volunteering his time to help during this crisis. Yet as a headhunter for Sanctuary Foods, the fastest growing all-natural food company in the world, he couldn't help but notice the kind of people he was looking for everywhere he went. He'd already found two couples who seemed perfect for leadership training and he couldn't resist offering jobs to them.

It was always sad to see people lose all their worldly possessions, and there were plenty of people here who had lost everything. He hadn't yet spotted the owners of the house he was helping to clear at the moment. They were usually easy to spot as they cried over the water damage to their family heirlooms. Even he sometimes cried at seeing pieces of history being tossed into the trash. Occasionally he spotted people digging through the hazardous waste looking for treasures they thought they could restore. Just the thought of all the irreplaceable history being ruined brought a tear to his eye.

This particular home looked like it belonged to a younger couple, which usually didn't have many heirlooms. He still expected to see someone crying over their photo albums, sofa or television.

"Excuse me."

Moroni turned to see a man in a dark blue polo with the FEMA logo on it holding a clipboard. "Can I help you?"

"Are you the homeowner?"

"No. I'm just a volunteer."

"I'm the homeowner," a woman in her early twenties said.

Moroni was surprised to hear her speak up as she'd been working alongside him during the last four homes they'd cleared. She acted more like an out-of-state volunteer than a neighbor. Although, now that he thought about it, she did seem to know several people here.

"Your name?" the FEMA worker asked.

"Patricia Redd."

The man wrote on his clipboard. "How do you spell Red?"

"R-E-D-D."

"And who else lived here with you?"

"Just my husband."

"And, where is he?"

"Staying with his parents in Utah," Patricia said. A tear formed on her cheek, the first sign of sadness she'd shown that day. "His flight home from his business trip was canceled."

Moroni pondered this amazing woman as she gave her information to the FEMA worker. Here she was, throwing away nearly all her worldly goods, and the only thing that fazed her was thinking about being separated from her husband.

The FEMA representative handed her a yellow piece of paper with instructions for filing a claim before moving on to the next house. Moroni knew those claims would only pay enough to fix most of the damage to the home, with little, if any, left over to replace everything else.

Moroni couldn't keep his mind off her for the next several hours as they finished clearing her home of damaged items and moved on to the next house. When they took a break for dinner he finally approached her.

"I must say, I'm quite impressed," Moroni said.

"With me?" Patricia asked.

Moroni nodded.

“I can’t imagine why. You’re the one who picks up couches by yourself.”

He chuckled. “I’ve always been strong, physically. But I was impressed by your spiritual strength.”

“How so?”

“Most of these homeowners are devastated to lose all their worldly goods. Even I have a tough time throwing away a treasure from the Civil War or the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, you helped us clear several of your neighbors’ houses before you even entered your own home.”

She shook her head. “It’s not my home anymore. My husband’s job washed away with the flood from Hurricane Harvey. There’s no way we’ll be able to make the payments *and* make repairs. It was a house we lived in. We’ll eventually find another.”

Moroni smiled. “See? That’s what I’m talking about. That kind of eternal perspective is quite impressive. I’m a representative of Sanctuary Foods, and I’d like to invite you and your husband to consider applying for our leadership training program.” He held out his business card.

She looked down at the card for a moment before hesitantly taking it. “You’re a Native American right?”

Moroni nodded.

“Navajo?”

“Hopi,” he corrected.

“And you’re working for a food company that sends you here to recruit people in a disaster zone?”

Moroni shook his head. “No. I’m on vacation and volunteering my time here. But when I see someone who feels right for our program, I can’t keep my mouth shut.”

“What kind of program?”

“We’re expanding our leadership training, and I think you’d be a good fit. I’m hoping your husband will be as well, if he’s anything like you.”

She studied the card, then looked up at him. “How do I know this isn’t a scam?”

“Does it feel like a scam?” he asked.

“No . . .”

“Well, you don’t have to decide right now. Think about it, talk to your husband, and if it feels right, give me a call.”

She pocketed the card while she studied his face. “I’ve never met a man named Moroni before.”

He smiled. “It takes all kinds.”

Endnotes

1. August 20th, 2017 - Damascus, Syria
Mufti A.H. Elias and Mohammad Ali ibn Zubair Ali
<http://www.islam.tc/prophecies/masdaj.html> (As of 2015)
The full text is too long to include here. For further study on this topic, visit <http://www.islam.tc/prophecies/>
Physical description of the Imam Mahdi:
 1. He will be tall;
 2. He will be fair complexioned;
 3. His facial features will be similar to those of Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam);
 4. His character will be exactly like that of Rasulullah;
 5. His father's name will be Abdullah;
 6. His mother's name will be Aamina;
 7. He will speak with a slight stutter and occasionally this stutter will frustrate him causing him to hit his hand upon his thigh.;
 8. His age at the time of his emergence will be forty years;
 9. He will receive Knowledge from Allah.
2. August 20th, 2017 - Damascus, Syria
There are many signs which are to precede the appearance of the 12th Imam. For a brief overview, visit https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signs_of_the_reappearanc_e_of_Muhammad_al-Mahdi
3. August 20th, 2017 - Damascus, Syria
Deadly rocket fire hits near Damascus trade fair
<https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/international/153417->

170820-injuries-reported-after-rocket-strikes-much-
awaited-damascus-business-fair

4. August 21st, 2017 - Sublimity, Oregon
A total solar eclipse from coast to coast. The sight of a
lifetime! <https://www.greatamericaneclipse.com/>
5. August 21st, 2017 - Sublimity, Oregon
Eclipse Map — April 8, 2024 Total Solar Eclipse
[https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/map/2024-april-
8](https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/map/2024-april-8)
6. August 21st, 2017 - Marion, Illinois
Joel 2:31 (KJV)
The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into
blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord
come.
7. August 21st, 2017 - Marion, Illinois
Revelation 12:1-2 (KJV)

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Book 1 Ruin & Restoration Series

First edition copyright

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Imprint Publisher:

Grendelmen Publishing

Mesa, AZ

<http://grendelmen.com>

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Sample Chapters Version 1.06

1. Fiction 2. Mainstream 3. Conspiracy 4. World Religions

Printed in the United States of America