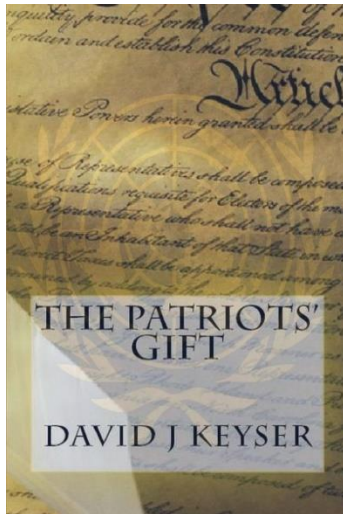


# The Patriots' Gift: A Novel

David J. Keyser PhD



2050 A.D.



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## The Chapters

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## Prelude

Millions in the American nations mourned the removal of the Statue of Liberty to make room for The World Peace Monument. The U.S. press strongly touted the “new great lady, the Goddess of Peace, Eirene” or Irene, an ancient Greek goddess holding in one arm the infant Plutus, the god of wealth, and in the other arm an olive branch with a cornucopia at her feet full of the good fruits of Mother Earth.

The new statue was a gift from the European Union to the United States. However, the French objected because the Statue of Liberty was historically a gift from France and some in France did not want their gift supplanted. The U.N. declared the new statue as magnificent and representative of all that is desired by modern mankind. New lighting pilings were created in New York harbor to hold powerful new lights to illuminate, to bathe, the new statue in a golden glow throughout the night in spite of the constant power shortage in the Northeast of the United States.

The Texican liberty broadcasts had been ranting against the “pagan monstrosity” for months when they began to raise money for a duplicate Statue of Liberty to be constructed in Galveston harbor. The broadcasts were quick to point out such inconsistencies between the god Plutus, the god of wealth, held by the goddess of peace and the horrifying poverty in the wasted cities of the United States which came about after that country rejected the free market system of a true republic. They also pointed out the difference between the cornucopia at her feet full of the good fruits of mother earth and the vast acres of farmland which produced nothing but weeds as a result of the federal government’s control of agriculture. There was also the comparison of the false cornucopia at Eirene’s feet full of the good fruits of mother earth as contrasted to the broken chains of tyranny at the feet of the Statue of Liberty which the statue of Eirene replaced.

Amazingly money poured in from around the Texican Republic and from the Southern Confederation, the Central Alliance even sent some, but there were donations big and small from around the world. It was obvious that the children of American liberty in other lands were stronger than liberty in the old U.S. itself. The Texican liberty broadcasts touted this as universal support for the historical American concept of liberty.

The only debate concerning the duplicate in Galveston was how big to make it. The original Statue of Liberty in America was immensely larger than the two copies in France. From the base of the statue itself, not counting the foundation under it, was over 151 feet to the top of the torch. It was over 111 feet from the actual heel of the statue to the top of the head. The entire height including the foundation was over 305 feet. Which made the pedestal about 154 feet high.

The new “pagan monstrosity” at New York was exactly 3 feet higher than the old Statue of Liberty had been. The decision of the Republic on the replacement in Galveston harbor was not to play the height game with the United States. The new Statue of Liberty would be 240 feet high, pedestal included, which was still twenty stories high. It would be constructed of aluminum and painted light green to match the copper patina of the original. The dedication in Galveston Harbor included a magnificent fireworks display and extensive media coverage. It was the party of the decade, the new Fourth of July.

This one act represented what they had come to. Now to begin the long road back.

\*\*\*

Stephen Hampton had just closed the door behind him.

“I’ve got everything ready for a quick bite, honey...” she began.

“Why?” he asked. He was unusually tired.

“Here, I fixed you a pick me up,” she said handing him a strong cup of coffee. He took the first sip.

“There was a call from the Governor's office. He’s coming here to see us with “two other gentlemen” in, uh, 20 minutes. Just said it was important. I told him it would be convenient.”

“Why didn’t you call me?” he asked.

“It just happened, well, almost just. I’m glad you got home. No sooner had his assistant hung up, Annalaurie called.”

Stephen had never seen Alicia this excited.

“Calm down, sweetheart,” he said as he gave her a quick hug and turned to go to put on a fresh shirt and tie.

“Don’t you want to know why they’re coming?” she asked.

“Yes, yes, what did Annalaurie say?”

“The Governor is going to appoint you to complete the term of Representative Cummings, he’s been sick you know.”

“The Governor’s been sick?”

“Now, don’t tease me, Stephen. Cummings has been sick and has asked to be relieved which you know quite well. You told me about him just a few days ago. Say, did you maybe expect this?” she asked poking him in the ribs as he tried to tuck in his shirt.

“No, not really. I was hoping a little, but nothing had been said,” Stephen said. “Nate had made just a slight mention.”

“Ah Hah! So that’s why Annalaurie knows. So she tipped us off.”

“Annalaurie knows more than Nate, She always does. She probably knows more than anyone with the possible exception of God Himself,” Stephen said.

“There’s a limo. I’ll greet them. You hurry on out. Do I look O.K.?” she asked.

“You look positively edible,” Stephen said as she scurried to the door and answered as the pretty serene wife everybody expected.

The meeting didn’t last long. Stephen accepted and began his duties the next Tuesday in the Texican Congress. There were 19 months left on Cummings term. Stephen would run for the seat at the next election and win.

## Chapter 2 Reactions

On February 10, 2035 with an absolute unwillingness to be a part of the U.N. takeover the state of Texas with Oklahoma, Arkansas, New Mexico, and Arizona declared the Independent Texas Republic and declared war on the drug cartels. The U.N. Security Council met and condemned their action. These former states of the United States had amassed a significant arsenal to stand against not only the United States but the cartels and even U.N. intervention. In addition to their well-armed land forces which included thousands of heavily armed high tech helicopters, troop transports, light tanks and artillery there were countless land-to-land and land-to-air missile batteries.

The Texas Republic had also secretly brokered a deal through Brazil to purchase one of their two recently purchased air craft carriers which had been bought from the United States. These were fully functional recently refueled nuclear carriers with a full complement of 70 fighters plus other aircraft. It was soon suspected by every nation in the hemisphere and the U.N. that Brazil had bought one of the carriers for the Texans. The Texas Republic renamed their carrier the “Dallas” and promptly moved it from the Brazilian harbor of Rio de Janeiro to the Gulf of Mexico where it patrolled between Florida and Texas in good range of all five of the Texas Republic’s states.

Although there had been considerable unrest for two decades, the actual separation movement began as a reaction to the drug cartels. Texas and Arizona were the most effected by the cartels. The cartels had acted like free agents promoting their own agendas at will. Texas and her neighboring states on both sides of the border were fed up.

The Republic of Texas had divided into three separate states in 2031 in order to fulfill the right that they had reserved when Texas joined the United States union on December 29, 1845. Actually they contended that they had the right to split into five states, but by 2031 for internal reasons they only desired to split into three states. The purpose of this split was primarily to triple the number of Senators from Texas in the United States Congress and by some maneuvering to slightly increase the total number of Representatives in Congress as well. It was not long before this strategy

proved unsuccessful in changing the direction of the U.S. Congress and the three states of Texas began acting even more in concert with each other on every issue.

In early 2035 the three Texas states reunited into one Texas state again. Then the new Texas Republic declared all-out war on drug trafficking which was a logical escalation of their developed 'no tolerance' policy against the drug trade. The congress of the Republic declared that a state of war existed between their republic and all persons or nations that promoted the drug trade which effected their Republic directly or indirectly. They had amassed a large enough militia under the command of the Texas Rangers to enforce their demands.

The effect of this force was to dominate the four contiguous Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nueva-Leon and Tamaulipas bordering the Republic. The citizens of these states were relieved to be free of the drug cartels and considering the favor shown the Spanish language by the new Republic readily agreed in a public referendum to join in the formation of the Texican Republic.

These four Mexican states seceded from the nation of Mexico and with the addition of Missouri united with the Texas Republic to form the Texican Republic in June of 2036. The southern border of these four Spanish states, and therefore of the Texican Republic, were an absolute barrier to drug traffickers.

In the Texican Republic the size of the Texas Rangers had been increased from 99 Rangers to 499 Rangers. All present Rangers who did not speak fluent Spanish were required to become fluent within 3 years and all new Rangers, which was soon the majority, had to be fluent in Spanish before they could be accepted regardless of their other qualifications. The Republic was legally made a two language nation by their congress which put Spanish on an absolute par with English.

A Field Magistrate had been created with special Texican federal judges who could pass death sentences in the field and the Rangers carried out these sentences on the spot. Also, in the absence of a Field Magistrate many drug cartel prisoners were being 'shot while trying to escape'.

The decision to establish the Field Magistrates had been made in haste and desperation. The situation had progressed to the point that action had to be taken. The Republic had to be formed before they could declare war on the drug lords. The United States had become totally ineffectual against the cartels and the United Nations was not going to bless the separation to form the new Republic, at least not the first breakaway. After Texas moved, the other areas were emboldened to separate and the U.N. was not reluctant to give them their blessing since Texas had started the movement by acting unilaterally.

By becoming an independent nation the Republic then had the authority to declare war on the cartels and to proceed against them without legal due process. The Field Magistrates were the only way to put their judges in the field so that the Rangers and the Militia could execute drug dealers on the spot. Of course there was

a great outcry against these executions, but no one including the United States or the United Nations was prepared to do anything except to voice their complaints.

The Texicans had duly executed 937 drug dealers and cremated their bodies in the field. Also, by that time they had crossed their southern border into the four Mexican states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nueva-Leon, and Tamaulipas at the request of their governors and legislatures who were just as desperate to remove the horror show as Texas had been. The Rangers welcomed local militia from these states if they had a warrant signed by their governor. It was all over so quickly that no one including the United States or Mexico or the U.N. ever had the inclination nor the chance to intervene.

Drug traffic between The Texican Republic and the only other contiguous Mexican state of Sonora was also impossible. The Texican California border was fortified to totally resist the enormous amount of drugs in that U.S. state. At the end of the crisis the Field Magistrates were not dissolved. They became less and less active and their total numbers were reduced from the war time strength of 33 to 14. This left a problem which would have to be dealt with at a later time.

This entire process was done without the prior consent of the United Nations General Assembly or the congress and government of the United States of America or Mexico. The people of the Texican Republic stood shoulder to shoulder in their resolve to form this free state and for some reason, unfathomable to most people, no one forced them to back down. Some said that the U.N. and the U.S. lacked the fortitude to go against the determined Texicans. Others cited the significant buildup of the manufacture and storage of arms and munitions that had occurred in Texas over the previous decades. And some simply said that it was an idea whose time had come. No matter what the reason, it was done and there was considerable concern that other parts of the United States would follow suit. This concern was not unfounded.

There was a lot of activity among the old line Southern states in the U.S. about secession but another area moved first as the North Western states of Oregon, Washington and Alaska joined with the two Canadian provinces of the Yukon and British Columbia to form the North West Federation in 2043 with the full prior approval of the United Nations General Assembly. The two Canadian provinces stood between Washington and Alaska and those Canadian provinces had been won over by the American states. The United States congress was so convinced of the claims of the new world government that it offered no objections to the formation of the North West Federation. Even though Canada was one of the Commonwealth Realms of England where the King is still head of state, the loss of Scotland to the European Union thus dissolving the United Kingdom had weakened England's resolve to object to the loss of two of her Canadian dominions. The world was changing.

The religious realm had also undergone quite a change. Muslims pressed the United States from many sides and the U.N. had become the protector of the U.S. in many ways.

The Mormon Church had experienced massive growth when Utah led in the formation of the Central Alliance of North America in 2047 with the full consent of the United Nations after which the Alliance soon severed all associations with the United Nations. They gave the reason that such worldwide alliances were against their religion and it was allowed to pass. Utah was joined by Montana, Idaho, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota and Wyoming as millions of Mormons occupied those states.

Kansas City, Kansas was quickly made the capital city of the Central Alliance instead of Salt Lake City, Utah in an attempt to show that the Alliance was not merely the political arm of the Mormons. Salt Lake City was, however, the spiritual capital of the Central Alliance and the first President of the Alliance was also the president of the L.D.S. church.

The Central Alliance wasted no time legalizing polygamy in the Alliance. Other states had been calling for the legalization of polygamy so the Central Alliance decided to lead the way as the Mormons believed that their form of polygamy was a long time custom in their religion and that the Mormons would practice it in a manner that was most pleasing to God while other states seemed to have different reasons for promoting it. The Mormon form of polygamy, polygyny, would, however, be one of multiple wives of one man and not the other way around.

With all of these changes having taken place the Old South finally formed The Southern Confederation in 2050 with the approval of the United Nations. The Confederation included Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee. They did this mostly out of their undying loyalty to the old Confederacy which had gained considerable momentum and their absolute distain for the Federal government of the United States. It was a bit of a stretch for them to warm up to the United Nations in order to do it, but when all the options had been weighed they swallowed hard and pushed ahead. At least Richmond was now their federal capitol instead of the District of Columbia.

The contiguous 21 states in The United States are in the Northeast. They are essentially another U.N. subsidized country. Most of the larger cities are bankrupt and many of those are wastelands where gangs rule square miles of territory. This is where the Deputized Retrieval Squads do their work. The four scattered states of the U.S. each have their unique problems. The earthquakes of the 2030's made 70% of California uninhabitable so the population fled, many of them to neighboring Nevada. The corruption in Nevada is legendary. Colorado is isolated between the Central Alliance and the Texican Republic and very crowded. It has a very diverse

population and crime is high. Florida is also isolated below the Southern Confederation. Many from California have made their way to Florida which is now one huge theme park. Any fantasy can be fulfilled in Florida and most of it is classified as “adult” entertainment.

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## Chapter 11 Rescue

When Stephen's home videophone tweeted, he touched the control to find his father waiting. The Judge looked serious so Stephen took his cue from him. It was going to be one of those ‘get right down to it and decide on a solution’ calls.

“Stephen, your mother has just had a rather frantic call from her sister Charlotte in Charlotte,” the Judge began.

This was an old joke within the family, that Suzanne’s sister Charlotte should live in Charlotte, North Carolina, but Stephen had already received the message that this was no time for levity.

“Yes, sir.”

“Here, I’m going to put her on.”

Stephen motioned for Alicia to join him.

“Hello, Darling,” Suzanne began. “Oh, there’s Alicia, Hi!” Suzanne waived. She was one of the few people Stephen knew that waived over the videophone. “Charlotte says that her granddaughter is in a terrible fix, well, probably. You know your cousin Agnes’ daughter.” She waited for a nod or a grunt from Stephen. He nodded. He also knew that this was no occasion to grunt at his mother, to grunt at the Judge would be all right, but not to the great lady.

Suzanne continued, “Well, sweetheart, you may remember I told you that little Kim fell in love with some welder or something in Chicago and they finally got married. Now they have a little boy about four, Clifford of all names, they call him “Little Cliff.” Well, the father, his name’s Bill, got into trouble with some reaaaaly bottom shelf ‘business men,’ if you get my drift...”

Suzanne always blinked very rapidly when she was saying something that she really didn’t approve of saying, then there was a pause. Stephen and Alicia waited patiently. “Well, Stephen, they’re gone, all three of them, just gone.”

“Gone where, Mom?” Stephen asked.

“We don’t know. Charlotte doesn’t know. Agnes lives in Colorado now. A neighbor, God only knows how trustworthy she is,...,” more rapid blinking, “says



two men in a gray van picked them up three days ago and they have never returned. Kim had asked this neighbor to call Charlotte if anything like this ‘evaah’ happened. Well, I’ll tell you, Charlotte is beside herself and Agnes is even acting somewhat concerned. I told Charlotte not to marry that Healey boy. Agnes is just like her father was.” Suzanne paused for a breath.

Judge Hampton appeared back on the screen with his arm around his wife. “Stephen, I’m thinking if we can’t find out anything promising within the next forty eight hours, you and I might have to go up there and find them”

“I think you’re right, Dad,” Stephen responded. He knew that the Judge would have some contacts.

“I’ll call a couple of my friends and get back to you. If we have to go, we can meet at the Memphis airport and go right up to Chicago. Say Son, do you think one of those Deputized Retrieval Squads would be of any help?”

“No, Dad, No, let’s leave them out of it,” Stephen said with a note of alarm in his voice.

“Well, you would know best about that, I just remembered that you went on a mission with them once before.”

“Yes, Sir, and they eliminate much better than they retrieve,” Stephen said.

“All right, then, I’ll call you tomorrow and the next day with updates. You be ready to go.”

“Yes, sir,” Stephen said, “We’ll be praying,” Alicia added.

“Thank you, sweetheart,” Suzanne added.

Twenty four hours yielded nothing. Stephen packed a back pack with several handy articles. As a Congressman of the Texican Republic he would check the bag to Memphis under a diplomatic ticket. As an honorary Under Secretary of State for the Southern Confederation the Judge would do the same. There would be a few surprises in their luggage that might come in handy.

Forty eight hours and still nothing. Stephen used his reservation to Memphis. They connected easily to the Chicago flight and to their surprise they were met at O’Hare Airport by a diplomat from State Department of The United States Of America and two men in black suits. Stephen had to work hard to properly ignore the two men, He kept wanting to smile. The Judge was all business. Stephen whispered in his father’s ear, “If we allow these men to ‘help’ us Bill, Kim and Cliff could end up hurt or worse.”

“We’re just here on some family matters,” the Judge said in his most official voice. “Really nice of you fellows to meet us, but there’s nothing to bother you with.”

The Diplomat smiled and showed them to the waiting limo. It was a long quiet ride to the Drake hotel where the Judge had made reservations. They passed through two police check points and one army checkpoint. At the army checkpoint Stephen

noticed several fires to their left and so did his father. No one said anything. It certainly looked like a dismal 'no man's land' out there and both Stephen and his father knew that was the direction they would have to go to find their three lost relatives.

The next morning they both put on informal clothing with extra coats and lace up hiking boots. It was early March in Chicago and still quite cold. The Judge had reserved the suite for two weeks. They took a cab as far as they dared to a point just outside the worst of it. The cabbie got them past two police check points but balked at attempting the military one. They got out to walk and gradually walked back to what seemed like a war zone a hundred years in the past. Stephen had brought a machine pistol for himself and his dad. He was forced to use his earlier than he wanted to. He fired close but not directly at the gang members who fled right away as they had nothing like it. There was an extreme shortage of firearms in the United States.

When they had finally rooted them all out, it gave away that they had such weapons and they would be marked from then on. Before this was over they might actually kill some people. Since they were in an area where Retrieval Squads were used, that would not matter much. If worse came to worse, the Judge would call the number the diplomat had given them on his satellite phone and request an immediate military rescue and pay the diplomatic price later. One thing was true, this was a family matter.

Starting with Kim's neighbor and moving on, within seven hours they had bribed four people and been led to an 'abandoned' warehouse where Kim and her husband and baby were supposed to be hiding. But they were nowhere to be found.

They decided to 'camp out' on the top floor of an abandoned office building. It was a six story building and with no electricity the elevator was not working. The Judge kept up well with Stephen on the stairs and they chose the room at the top of the stairs and checked that floor to be sure that they were alone there. As humans they were alone, but there was an abundance of scurrying 'varmints and critters' as Suzanne loved to call them. From this vantage point Stephen could guard the stairs and his father could keep an eye on the streets below through the windows. They slept lightly on and off and were both awake just before dawn. They ate some of their rations and were back on the street as soon as it was light enough to see.

After avoiding several gangs they ran across a different looking young man on the deserted street. He was different looking because he seemed fairly civilized and clean. He was also very large. Stephen guessed that he was at least 6'6" and over 250 pounds. He even asked if he could help them.

"Yes, we're hunting for my great-niece Kim Collier and her husband Bill Collier. They have a little boy with them. Oh, by the way, I'm Charles Hampton, this is my son Stephen."

“My name’s Paul,” the giant said extending his hand. They both shook hands with him.

“Nice to meet you, Paul,” the Judge said. “So nice to meet a fine fellow like yourself, ah, in a place like,...well,...”

“I understand, sir. It is a God forsaken place. I am, well, sort of a missionary here.”

“A missionary. I see.”

“Yes, a self-appointed missionary, but a missionary all the same.”

“I’m from the Apostle's Church Of The Cross, we have a feeding station a few blocks away.”

“I see. Well, I’m an Episcopalian and my son here has become a Baptist,” the Judge volunteered.

“A Baptist, I know Baptists,” Paul answered shaking Stephen’s hand again. “Can’t say I’ve ever met an Episcopalian though.”

“Well, there’s not many around here,” the Judge said.

“If you will come with me to our little mission, we will see if anyone has seen your folks,” Paul said striding off down the street. Stephen and his father were hard pressed to keep up.

The mission was an isolated two story building next to what had once been a gasoline station. The streets all around were cluttered with trash and junk. There was several abandoned old cars and one burned out car. The little mission building was fortified with a variety of bars on the windows and even a few sandbag barriers.

“I learned how to secure a position in the army,” Paul said.

“The United States army?” Stephen blurted. Then he realized that he may have made a mistake.

“Yes, you’re not from the United States, are you?” Paul said.

Stephen decided quickly that he might as well come clean now. “No, I am from Texas.”

“Yes, the Texican Republic. I’ve been there,” Paul said.

By now they were inside the mission. There were at least a dozen people eagerly eating some soup and bread. A tall young woman quickly emerged and kissed Paul.

“My wife, Nancy,” Paul said.

There were greetings all around. Paul motioned to a rather disheveled middle aged man to come over to their table and introduced him as Charlie. Paul chatted with Charlie quietly for a few minutes while asking Stephen to describe Kim and Bill and the child. Then Charlie moved away without ever making eye contact with any of them.

Paul leaned forward and talked quietly. “Your folks might be being held in a basement nearby,” Paul said. “Now, I can’t go with you. It would impact too heavily

on my work here because we live here. But you have machine pistols, I believe, and you can probably get them out.”

Stephen and his father exchanged glances. No use denying this. No use saying anything.

Paul began again, “But what I can do is drive you out of this area with your folks afterward. I have a good vehicle hidden here and I’ll show you where to meet me.”

“Stephen and Charles Hampton did not have to speak to each other about it. They both knew that if Paul was not the person they thought he was, they could all be captured or killed at the rendezvous. They also realized that they had little choice. Charles motioned for his son to make the decision.

“I don’t know how we can thank you,” Stephen said.

“No need,” Paul said. “This is one of the many reasons we are here. Now, let me show you the location of the meeting place.” Paul took out a flat carpenter’s pencil and drew on a somewhat used paper bag that Nancy provided. The meeting place was only three blocks North and two blocks East of the Mission. In a few minutes Stephen and Charles were on their way.

Stephen and Charles went straight to the outside basement stairs of the building after holding two scruffy looking guards at gunpoint and tying them up. They pushed through the shabby double doors with the machine pistols covering the entire area. They didn’t notice anybody, the area must have been empty. They heard shouts of “help” from a room about 50 feet inside and Stephen shouted, “Kim!”

“Yes, here, oh, please hurry!” she responded. Both Stephen and Charles recognized her voice.

They found the door locked. So Stephen told them to clear away from the door and shot off the lock. But this made a lot of noise and they knew it was time to move very quickly.

Kim wanted to kiss and hug a lot. Charles told her that there was no time for that. Bill was walking with a limp but he still picked up his son and they all cleared the basement door, the steps and crossed the main street to a side street in a hurry where they rested for a short time. Stephen and Charles looked at the hand drawn map and saw what they must do. Stephen picked up little Cliff and Charles pulled one of Bill’s arms around his neck and they moved as fast as they could to meet Paul.

Paul was there. His vehicle was an ancient Hummer that had evidently been painted several colors over the years, but once inside they all felt safer. Paul proceeded quickly but carefully toward where Stephen and Charles had stepped out of their last cab into the no man’s land of the carcass of Chicago. They were far enough into the safer part of the city to find a cab.

“Charles gave Paul a large amount of United States currency and they all thanked him profusely. A cab returned them to the Drake hotel where several people

including the doorman looked at Kim and Bill and Cliff disapprovingly. Security was called. Only Secretary Charles Hampton's credentials kept them from being denied access. They went to their suite and the Judge actually ordered clothes for them all from a shop in the hotel over the phone.

They rested and ate and rested and ate. The house doctor cleaned up Bill's foot and treated the infection. The next day they dealt with the next problem. They had no entry papers for their three relatives. The judge had brought some temporary papers with him for them so they could all fly to Memphis. Stephen had papers and a car waiting for them in Memphis to take them to Dalhart, Texas near the Colorado border so Agnes could visit her daughter and Bill and her grandson from where she lived in Colorado in the United States. Bill would work at the ranch of a friend of Stephen's near Dalhart. It was good that these three refugees had powerful relatives.

"We did it together, son. We planned it and we pulled it off," the Judge said on the plane to Memphis.

"We sure did, Dad."

"When I was a child, the whole country was free and prosperous and open. Look down there. America the beautiful," the Judge said.

"I hope and pray my children will have it all back," Stephen said. "But," he added, "it may take longer.

"I'm afraid so, son," the Judge said.

"There's so much to rebuild," Stephen said. "The very concept of liberty. The economy built on free enterprise. The work ethic. The faith in God."

"And they threw it all away," his father said.

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