

### Chapter 3

Chuck and Lyle enjoyed sweet sleep until 2 that Monday afternoon when cranky old Mrs. Fushman retaliated from Lyle's *moonlight madness* the past Wednesday morning. She took delight in blasting the volume on her daily marathon of game shows, soaps, *Geraldo*, *Sally*, and *Phil*, even though she *knew* the boys got in very late and wanted to sleep in.

Chuck's *second* waking thought was to tell Marty to hold off on booking another club date soon (His *first* was something about a guy who became a skinhead lesbian transvestite trapped in a male body).

The boys were just too tired. After all, they just finished up ten weeks in Morocco little more than a week ago, and they'd only had *one* day to relax before going to Scranton.

Lyle's *second* waking moment was spent thinkin' how crappy Chuck's couch made his back feel (His *first* was a rough draft of an elaborate *payback* for Frau Fushman).

With his 6'4" frame curled into a fetal position on the tiny sofa, he knew he had to get a bed. But he *really* missed sleeping with Willa. If only she'd accept his music, and come back.

But, even if she *did*, he and Chuck had become so close, musically and personally, that Lyle could not leave Chuck and go back to her.

The boys may have had one of those *post-traumatic syndromes* like the kind suffered by soldiers after returning home from battle<sup>1</sup>. And, after all, they virtually *had* been at war. They faced death countless times in Ishtar from the guns of international spies, the desert sun, and even at the hands of the Emir and Jim Harrison. All they truly had was each other and *that ain't poverty!*<sup>2</sup>

The old rotary phone in Marty Freed's office rang for the fourth time. Marty had never bothered upgrading his phones over the years. Once, this same phone had at its distant end the voice of a young struggling lounge singer from Hoboken, looking for work.

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<sup>1</sup> I can't say I'm not a doctor.

<sup>2</sup> from the song they tried to write in the desert, but the desert had no pencil.

Now, a leather gloved hand reached for it as though it were fumbling in the dark.

Picking it up, the tired and raspy voice answered, Freed Talent Agency, now the home of *Blind Camel Records*.

Marty? Chuck Clarke here.

Having grown fond of the boys, despite his assessment that they were old, white, and schtickless, Marty, as an agent, warmly returned the greeting.

Hey babe! How was Scranton?

Not bad, although I did get a little sick from the salad bar on Saturday, Chuck whined. Listen, Marty, I got some interesting news to tell you. We played for a Senator from Indiana who wants us to play at a party he's having in May for Vice President Bush! Can you believe it?

You're kidding!?! Marty asked.

No, no, I'm not!. Anyway, I told him to call you to make the arrangements.

Yeah, we need paid in *advance*. Marty warned. Politicians are always reluctant to pay those cheap bastards, he muttered.

Unlike Chuck and Lyle, Marty Freed wasn't the least bit enamored with public figures and celebrities. After all, he'd launched the careers of some of the best entertainers and, as of late, some of the worst.

In a tiny office in another part of the building from the Freed Talent Agency, a cassette recorder had just picked-up the entire conversation between Chuck and Marty.

Jim, you'd better get in here. There's something going on. advised *another kind* of agent. Listen to this.

As the tape played, Jim Harrison's face changed to a look of concern, and he yelled, Shit! Son of a bitch! *Now* what are those morons up to? Do you know what the *potential* fallout is, here? he plaintively asked the other agent.

Harrison had reason to be worried. Not only could his personal hopes of getting a cabinet position in the Bush Administration go down the drain, but he could also lose his job as CIA Bureau Chief for the Middle East. He might even be called before

Congress to explain why he ordered the shooting of two Americans in the desert, and could even face jail, if news of the boys' adventures in Ishtar were made public.

But, none of this would happen, unless the public found out about the George Bush-Ishtar connection. Bush had been Director of the CIA from 1976 to 1980 when Ronald Reagan had asked him to be his vice president. Harrison reported directly to Bush in those days as a young bureau chief, *handpicked* for the position by Bush, himself, because of his reptilian proclivity to neutralize his opponents, *whoever* they were. Harrison treated the business of espionage and assassination as just another game. There was *no* right or wrong in the *game*.

In 1979, Director Bush had authorized *Operation Desert Coup D'état*, wherein, reigning King Fah was quickly, but bloodlessly replaced by Emir Mohammed Dou-Ite Yosef. It was important that Fah, himself, *not be killed*, as Bush had promised Congress that no more CIA assassinations would occur. But, taking control of Ishtar was not a particularly difficult thing to do anyway, since its Saharan boundaries had, naturally, always been somewhat undefined. The CIA wanted Ishtar so it could spy on both Morocco and Libya, who had both just signed a pact. With Morocco to the west, and Libya to the east, Ishtar was a place in-between where Harrison could keep tabs on Muammar al-Qaddafi, Libya's ruler and archenemy of the United States.

The map in Marty Freed's filing cabinet (an unlikely *Holy of Holies* as the manger was for the infant Jesus had been considered), was the Ishtari Holy Grail, its legend handed down for thousands of years. While it provided geographic information like all maps, there was no scale of measurement. And, there were no borders to separate Ishtar from neighboring countries. It was as though there *were* no countries. The map, then, was more of a Holy Scripture—a prophesy, wherein, the weak would rise up against the mighty, defeat them, and give Ishtar back to the people.

On the western end of the map lay the mysterious icon of a homed-demon. Omar, the late brother of Shirra Assel, had translated the image as that of the *Devil of the West* who would, in the years to come, steal the land and its riches, and subjugate its people.

The map provided a basis for the Constitution of the Socialist Peoples Movement, led by Shirra, and gave the devout Muslim Berber and Arabic peoples of this land, a sign from God that the Emir was not, in fact, the rightful ruler of Ishtar. And if the Emir goes, so does the CIA.

From a Western perspective, stability of the Middle East had less to do with the protection of people, than the protection of oil stocks on Wall Street. Bush knew that. In fact, Texas Oil, had been his biggest political supporter, even from the beginning, when

he had a successful run for Congress in Texas 7<sup>th</sup> district in the late 1960s.

American-sanctioned oppression of the Ishtari and other Middle Eastern peoples goes back over a hundred years, when, true to prophecy, U. S. oil companies struck deals with corruptible leaders to seize control of the oilfields, reminiscent of the Dutch deal with the Algonquin Indians to get Manhattan Island for twenty-four dollars worth of trinkets. The local politicians fared much better they always do. But, now the people had grown to deeply resent their exploitation, and they lashed back in the only way that *anyone* would listen violently.

Should these radicals actually *acquire* the map, which was *safely* tucked within a stack of Sonny Bono 8 by 10 glossies<sup>3</sup>, in that *Holy of Holies Freed Talent Agency*, The Peoples Movement would depose the Emir and seize control of Ishtar. It would be feared that other Middle Eastern countries would follow suit, then *drastically* curtail oil production, crippling the world economy.<sup>4</sup> To her *utmost* credit, Shirra Assel, leader of The Peoples Movement, *knew* where the map was, of course, but did not let on. Why not?<sup>5</sup> Because, while she had much to gain *personally*, a crippled world economy would certainly not provide prosperity to her people, nor alleviate their suffering. She was smart she *leveraged* the map to get what she wanted from the CIA: social reforms in Ishtar, . . . and a record deal for *Rogers & Clarke*.

Harrison had to make sure that Vice President Bush suffered no embarrassment over his involvement with the coup in 1979. Some, in fact, believed that the overthrow of Fah was one of several factors which precipitated the Iranian Hostage Crisis.<sup>6</sup> Word of *that*, leaked to the press, would certainly destroy Bush's political career overnight. Therefore, he must insulate Bush from Rogers & Clarke. Anything but a brief conversation between them could spell disaster for Harrison.

"Marge, get me the Printing Department. " he ordered. "Yeah, Sal, hi, Jim Harrison. . . Fine, thanks. Hey Sal, print me up a dozen or so cards reading, *Capitol Caterers*, and use one of the agency's *special* 800 numbers. How's that boy doing? Is he in Little League this spring? Great. . . . Sal, Give my best to Angela, . . . Ok, thanks."

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<sup>3</sup>Who would ever think to look in *there*?

<sup>4</sup>Well, *It* could happen! Couldn't it?

<sup>5</sup> Yeah, why not?

<sup>6</sup>Just go with me on all this history and stuff, ok?

Marge then booked Jim on the next flight to Washington.

The next morning, Jim Harrison sat patiently in the lobby of the U.S. Senate Offices, when, at last, Senator Quayle's personal secretary said, "The Senator will see you now, sir."

When Jim gets to the end of the long hall leading to Quayle's office, Senator Dan greets him at the entrance and extends his hand. "Jim, nice to see you. How's things at the FBI?"

"Uh, that's the CIA, Senator." Jim gently corrects, mustering up as much diplomacy as he could. Not since General Ramirez, the deranged dictator of a South American CIA puppet government, has he dealt with such an idiot, he thought.

"Oh yeah, ok." retreats Dan.

Jim then skillfully steers the conversation toward his purpose, "Senator, I wanted to tell you in person that I gladly accept your invitation to the party for Vice President Bush, next month. I know the Vice President is quite fond of you, sir; there's even talk around the office that you might be at the top of his *short list* (short list of *The World's Stupidest People*, Jim thought.)

Really, Jim? a surprised Dan Quayle asked. I don't know, I haven't ever given it much thought, lied Dan. (Politicians *always* lie when asked if they will run for something in the future.) I've just been re-elected, and I have an obligation to my constituents. . . he droned.

Jim tactfully interrupts and gets the conversation back on track, "Anyway, Senator, I'd like to suggest a caterer. Having had a long association and mutual friendship with George and Barbara Bush, I know they will appreciate this, as *your* choice of caterers." (hands card to him)

Quayle was flattered and convinced; he would call *Capitol Caterers*. He really wanted to impress Bush and get on the ticket.

"Great! Thanks, Jim! Say 'hello' to Director Casey for me."

Harrison, was, again, as astounded by that request as he was when Chuck Clarke intimated that he thought Qaddafi was a *country*. "Uh. . . Mr. Casey died *last year*, Senator."

