

# THE INVERTED PYRAMID



AHMAD I. ALKHALEL

# The Inverted Pyramid

Ahmad I. Alkhalel

**A journey through memory, myth, and the invisible threads beneath  
history...**

# You are reading the first nine introductory chapters of the novel "The Inverted Pyramid"

 Full Edition:


Each chapter is a code.

Each code, a new stone in an inverted pyramid...  
unfolding from its apex, not its base.

From Chapter Ten onward, the journey begins –  
through a maze of symbols, myths, and psychological reflections.


A journey that doesn't hand you truths,  
but dismantles them,  
and reconstructs meaning on the edge of madness.

 Release Date: January 2026

 Until then, the novel is undergoing careful review,  
in collaboration with readers passionate about decoding symbols  
and tracing the shadows between the lines.

 Pre-order Price: \$0.99

 Post-launch Price: \$9.99

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The full edition will be released on: January 2026

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Full Edition

## Introduction

What if the real secret wasn't buried in darkness, but shining right before your eyes?  
Hidden not by absence - but by a presence so overwhelming, you could no longer see it.

This isn't a novel that begins on the first page.

It begins at the first fracture in awareness.

And the moment you feel that fracture...

you've already begun.

Each chapter is a cipher.

And each cipher - a stone in an inverted pyramid,  
revealing itself from the top down, not the bottom up.

The starting point: Cairo, Summer of 1988.

A family of tourists arrives on what seems like an ordinary trip,  
but something in that land had been waiting for them for thousands of years.

A child begins to see what no one else has.

A father follows cryptic signs leading him into the heart of the mountain,  
until both realize that what they thought was a dead past... never truly ended.

But 1988 is only the first thread.

What they uncover there doesn't remain in the past -

it stretches like a heavy shadow into the present,  
reminding us that what we thought was closed history

is, in truth, an ongoing war.  
A war over consciousness,  
still burning as you read these words -  
and it may not end with them... it might just begin with you.

"The Inverted Pyramid" is not just a journey through forgotten ruins,  
but a bold attempt to reclaim stolen awareness,  
and decode what was deliberately buried beneath layers of history, myth, and manufactured  
science.

It is not a map.  
It is a living trace -  
a silent call heard only by those who dare to listen.

And what begins here...  
will not end here.



## Chapter One: A Summer at Ramses Station

We were never lost.

But the path wasn't clear, either.

Sometimes, a journey doesn't begin when you set out, but when you lose your sense of direction.

And getting lost isn't always a sign of failure - sometimes it's a hidden invitation to rethink everything.

In the summer of 1988, it all began with a single sentence from my father.

My father suddenly decided he wanted to become an explorer.

Yes, my father - the man who could get lost in thought at the strangest times, so much so that my mother would ask me to stand by the door and wave as his car approached, just so he wouldn't accidentally pull into the neighbors' driveway.

And even then, the car would sometimes keep going all the way to the end of the street before turning back, as if it had suddenly remembered its true destination.

This was the same man who would often recruit us to help him find his keys, or would stop and ask, looking genuinely confused:

“Was it right after the traffic light... or left at the grocery store?”

I never quite knew what was going on in his mind.

How can a person be completely present in a conversation, only to suddenly slip away, his mind drifting to another world - he hears you, but he doesn't really hear you.

Over time, I learned to distinguish between my father when he was fully aware of what he was saying, and my father when his mind was lost elsewhere.

Strangely, his words always sounded logical, persuasive, even wise - in both states.

This man - so absorbed in thought that he didn't even have the field skills to pick the right groceries off a shelf - woke up one morning, drank his coffee, took a long sip of silence, and, with a mix of seriousness and a theatrically exaggerated enthusiasm, waving both hands in the air, declared:

“We're traveling to Egypt - to discover what has never been discovered!”

He was neither an archaeologist nor a seasoned adventurer. He was a thinker, someone who spent most of his time solving riddles and diving into books.

But it seemed that a mysterious documentary he had watched late at night, or perhaps a witty article in a morning newspaper, had awakened some ancient dream within him - a dream that had slept since the days of the pharaohs themselves.

And so, with no real warning, our ordinary summer trip transformed into an “expedition,” and my father became a nineteenth-century field explorer overnight.

As for us - the family - we found ourselves preparing for the journey in earnest, still trying to believe this was all just a joke...

Egypt had never been part of the family's plans. Yet somehow, this joke booked plane tickets, reserved a hotel on the banks of the Nile, and even brought along a hat worthy of a tomb explorer.

We checked into an old hotel overlooking the Nile - a slightly cramped room, but one with a certain charm, as if suspended between two eras.

On the first morning, we got to the breakfast hall before him, and soon he appeared, dressed in a way none of us had ever seen before:

A linen shirt the color of desert sand, wide-pocketed trousers, a rounded hat reminiscent of archaeologists, and a leather bag that looked as though it concealed ancient papyri.

My mother looked at him for a long moment, then said with a resigned smile,

“Good thing you didn’t bring a camel with you... Did you tie it up at the hotel entrance?”

He didn’t smile. Instead, he pointed upward, as if he could see something invisible to the rest of us, and said:

“We won’t take a taxi... We’ll travel as the locals do. It’s in the crowded alleys, not at the grand monuments, that stories are born.”

I looked up to where he was pointing, but saw only a wall adorned with a few decorative motifs in the breakfast hall.

Before my mother nudged me in her usual way, as if to say:

“Don’t follow his finger - follow his idea!”

That sentence taught me a lot.

We so often get distracted by what others are pointing at and miss what they actually mean.

We watch the finger and miss the idea.

We see the gesture but fail to grasp the depth.

We lose the essence of meaning because we focus on the sign, not the intent.

And so our adventure began...

We boarded a cramped minibus, barely big enough for its passengers to breathe, then another vehicle that was itself short of breath.

We zigzagged through narrow alleys, walked past markets and backstreets, and at every turn my father would point to a faded wall or a worn inscription and whisper:

“Look... Don’t you notice something?”

He would then launch into an enthusiastic explanation of those markings, even though they were nothing more than a child's scribbles or a faded detergent ad, with no connection to the pharaohs whatsoever.

But he was living in the spirit of discovery, as if the journey had truly begun - even before we reached the pyramids.

As for us, all we could notice was the sweat, the exhaustion, the screeching brakes.

Time passed. Fatigue set in. The faces and streets started to blur together. We began to wonder if we were really getting any closer to the pyramids, or drifting farther away.

And then, just as we reached our limit, we found ourselves, quite suddenly, enveloped by the chaos of Ramses Station - the main train station in Cairo.

Yes, the station that's about twenty kilometers from the pyramids...

while our hotel at the start of the journey had been only three kilometers away.

My mother collapsed onto one of the benches, her face drawn and weary, clutching her bag as if it contained what remained of her sanity.

She looked at him and said, in a voice edged with anger,

"We were closer - so how did we end up farther away?!"

He, meanwhile, sat with an excessive calm, as if he had just made a brilliant discovery, and said:

"You're not afraid because something scary happened. You're only afraid because you've lost control."

That was the sentence that opened the door of awareness for me.

Fear doesn't begin when danger occurs; it begins when we lose our ability to understand or to predict.

You're not afraid because you're in danger, but because you can no longer draw the boundaries of reality around you.

And when perception is disrupted, shadows begin to stretch - from the smallest of things.

And in that moment, as the noise around us faded and time seemed to stand still, I looked at the tired faces, the wooden benches, my father sitting as if he'd reached his destination without ever setting foot there... and I understood something I'd never realized before:

We weren't lost.

We were exactly where chaos wanted us to be.

Not at the foot of the pyramid, nor on the edge of some ancient discovery...

but here, in Ramses Station, in the heart of the noise, in the embrace of randomness that had chosen us before we ever chose it.

And maybe chaos was wiser than all our plans.

What happened next...

was simply unbelievable.

The discovery we traveled for wasn't waiting kilometers away; it was right here, exactly where we were.

My father's dream - a dream that once sounded like nothing but a joke - wasn't fulfilled there.

But it took its very first steps in the one place our imagination could never have predicted.

## **Chapter Two: He was searching for something not found in tombs... older than kings, more elusive than their relics**

Only a taxi separated us from the pyramids.

A short ride - one that could be over in half an hour.

But something kept us suspended at Ramses Station, as if we weren't waiting for transportation, but for a secret signal meant only for us.

My father sat on the edge of the wooden bench, unmoving, silent, staring into a void invisible to the rest of us.

Outwardly, he looked as exhausted as we were... but I sensed something different.

His gaze wasn't vacant - it was too focused, as if his eyes were searching for something among the crowds.

Then he did something strange.

He reached into his bag and pulled out a small, carefully folded piece of paper.

He opened it quietly, and the moment my eyes landed on it, a chill swept over my skin.

I didn't know why.

In the corner of the paper was a tiny drawing of a hand holding an inverted pyramid, with a childish line of Arabic text underneath.

It wasn't a map, nor a ticket... just a clipping from an old newspaper, apparently excerpted from an article about strange symbols carved into the walls of Cairo's popular neighborhoods.

At first, I didn't understand why my father kept that paper with him.

What stunned me most was that, on our way, we had passed by that very advertisement.

When I asked him what the phrase meant, he replied,

“Cleanliness begins on the inside!”

And I had no idea how he understood it - he didn't even speak Arabic, as far as I knew.

We laughed, poked fun at his odd theory, and said it was surely a desperate attempt to inject pharaonic symbolism into a soap commercial.

But my father, then, paused longer than usual in front of it, studying the faded ad in silence, as if it held a meaning only he could see... as if he were reading a message never meant for us.

Even I felt a sudden shiver - the drawing seemed strangely majestic despite its childish lines.

Now, I saw that same symbol on the paper in his hand.

He was looking at it as though it contained a code. And I... I started to tremble a little.

Some of those markings we thought were trivial... he never saw as trivial.

He was reading something we could not. For the first time, I realized he wasn't chasing legends - he was following a trail.

As I watched my father in silence, a strange scene crept into my mind... I didn't know where it came from, or when it happened:

We were on a plane, flying high above a boundless desert. I looked out the window and saw straight lines etched into the sand, giant circles as if drawn for an eye not of this earth.

I turned to my father. He was sleeping - or so I thought.

But he was muttering words I didn't understand, in a language I'd never heard before, his eyes closed.

Then the vision faded, as if someone had switched it off inside me, and I was back on the wooden bench at the station.

Before I could ask him anything, an old man sat down on the next bench.

He wore a faded galabeya, a battered turban, and carried a cloth bag and a staff with a curved head - something that looked made for more than walking, as if it was meant to carry something older than the road itself.

His features radiated a peculiar strangeness, hard to define... His skin was a deep brown, hinting at those regions that had appeared in a scene from “Death on the Nile,” starring Peter Ustinov - the actor my father always claimed was the embodiment of genius, free from all pretense.

I’d watched that movie with him one night, and remembered a scene in which a man waves to Poirot from a crowded market, wearing a galabeya and turban just like this, carrying a double-edged look - of the place, yet not quite belonging.

I looked again at the old man beside us, and realized I’d seen those features before. On the screen? Maybe.

But now, they were entirely real. And so was he.

His gaze was piercing, his voice deep and calm. For a moment, I felt he didn’t really belong here, as if he was disguising himself to pass as one of them.

He began speaking in heavily accented Arabic, but when he heard only the echo of his own voice, he suddenly switched to English - with a clear British accent, crisp and academic, as if straight out of Oxford.

He smiled and said:

“Are you lost?”

My father didn’t answer. But he smiled.

The old man continued, gesturing with his staff at the travelers:

“We’re all lost - but not in the same way. Some lose themselves while walking, others while sitting still, and some think they’re lost only when they’ve already arrived.”



My mother laughed lightly, as if to hide an unfounded fear, and said:

“You sound like a poet!”

He laughed too, then lit a cigarette, and his tone changed at once.

He no longer sounded like a simple man, but like a philosopher in ragged clothes. He spoke in slow, clear English, like someone delivering a proclamation in an ancient hall:

“We think we live at the peak of civilization,  
measuring our progress by the number of satellites  
and the floors of our skyscrapers.

But what if we’ve never reached the peak of perception?

What if we stand only at the summit of our machines,  
while our true awareness has been eroding for thousands of years?

Perhaps we are not at the peak of humanity,  
but at the peak of what humanity has created...”

A moment of silence fell.

It was as if the whole station was holding its breath, the noise receding in deference to his words.

Those words... clashed sharply with his shabby appearance!

I knew he’d said something weighty. As soon as I glanced at my mother, I saw her staring at the old man, her mouth open in rare astonishment.

She was not easily impressed - especially by words.

Even my father, who had spent his life among books, always chose his words carefully around her.

But now, for her to look so shocked meant those words were truly remarkable.

My father kept watching him - not in amazement,  
but as if he had just found something he'd long known.

And for the first time since the journey began...

I felt that being lost wasn't random.

There, in the midst of that silence, I sensed something I couldn't explain...

And began to realize that my father wasn't driven merely by curiosity, but as if something  
was guiding him.

Something no one else could see.

And that he wasn't searching for relics, or a mummy, or a king's tomb - but for something  
far older than all of that...

Something not waiting in a museum, but hidden in a place no map could show.

And this...

was only the beginning.

## Chapter Three: The Family I Never Knew

“We think we live at the peak of civilization,  
measuring our progress by the number of satellites  
and the floors of our skyscrapers.  
But what if we’ve never reached the summit of perception?  
What if we have only climbed to the peak of the machine,  
while our true awareness has been eroding for thousands of years?  
Perhaps we stand not at the pinnacle of humanity,  
but at the summit of what humanity has created...”

The moment the Old Man finished his weighty words, a silence descended - unlike any other silence. Not the silence that follows politeness, nor the awkward hush that precedes embarrassment, but the kind that settles over an inexplicable moment, a moment we all sense is not fleeting, even if we don’t yet know why.

Even though I was a child then, it wasn’t hard to feel that something had shifted.

Perhaps it was the astonishment on my mother’s face, or the strange calm that seemed to wrap itself around my father, or that mysterious smile on the Old Man’s face - a smile of one who knows more than he says, and says more than the moment can bear.

My gaze, almost unconsciously, drifted to my father’s hand.

He was clutching the small piece of paper as if holding the key to a house whose shape he could no longer recall - a carefully folded paper that seemed insignificant to anyone else, but at that moment was the most precious thing he owned.

Before I could emerge from my thoughts, the Old Man had already risen, without a word of farewell and without looking back.

He headed toward the train tracks, leaning on his staff, as though his journey had not begun here - but was simply picking up a path long interrupted, one he had to return to.

Suddenly, I remembered my sister.

She was still sitting beside my mother, playing with her little doll, just as she had been before the conversation, as if nothing had happened.

For her, the world remained unchanged - a toy in one hand, a doll in the other.

But my mother... she had changed.

A few minutes ago, she was afraid.

Now, she was fear itself.

She looked at my father, her eyes blazing, and said in a voice she tried to stifle but which burst out like a hot wind:

“Is this...?”

My father nodded slowly, as if admitting something that could no longer be hidden.

She pressed the words through her teeth:

“Is this the ‘exploration holiday’ you promised us?”

My father said,

“You know that -”

She cut him off:

“No... I don’t want excuses. I want to go back. To the hotel. Now. I’m not taking part in this madness any longer.”

At the hotel, a quarrel broke out - but it wasn’t ordinary.

It wasn't shouting, but angry whispers, as if they were carrying a tremendous secret and feared anyone might overhear.

Low cries, eyes that spoke more than tongues could, as if the true voice of what was happening wasn't in the words, but in all that was left unsaid.

My sister and I sat in the lounge.

She played with her small doll, lost in her own world, while something strange began to creep into me.

At first, I tried not to show any interest, but curiosity started crawling inside.

I crept closer to the door of the room they had entered, pressed my ear gently, trying to catch something.

I heard my mother say something about "a house lost for nothing."

She meant an old house my father had inherited, larger and more beautiful, which she claimed he had lost in pursuit of a mad research quest.

Then I heard her whisper something about my grandfather... and his murder... and about Rome.

I was stunned to hear the word "murder."

Was my grandfather really killed?

No one had ever said so before. I hadn't even known his death was a matter of question.

Then came the next word... "Rome."

I didn't know the connection, but it sounded ominous, as if it were not just a city, but the name of a missing chapter in our family's life.

Suddenly her voice rose:

"You deceived me!

You swore to me you'd stopped chasing things... that you only wanted to give the children a journey full of wonder and excitement.

But you lied... You're still chasing that old madness...

The same madness that caused your father's death."

Later, when the voices had subsided, I knocked on the door softly.

My father opened it - his face pale, my mother wiping her tears.

I sat beside her, and she hugged me and whispered:

"We're going back to London tomorrow."

My father approached, placed his hand on my shoulder, and said:

"I didn't know he would be there. I thought all I had to do was follow the signs."

My mother glanced at him and asked:

"When did you resume contact with them?"

"A month ago. They sent me that clipping, along with a short note: 'It is done.'"

"And what exactly does that mean?"

"Maybe... maybe that they found something not to be said in a letter."

My mother, in a low voice:

"I just hope all that money wasn't wasted."

My father said:

"You saw the staff, didn't you?"

"I didn't notice anything unusual."

“There are inscriptions on the staff... one of them is an inverted triangle, with hieroglyphs beneath: a half-open eye, three vertical lines, and a horizontal line beneath them...

‘Vision will be restored when the pyramid is inverted...

And the eye not yet born will see what was forgotten before it was ever written.’”

I didn’t understand any of this... but something in his tone made me feel the matter was far greater than it seemed.

As if he was reciting an incantation - one that no one knew if it was real.

He continued:

“The incomplete eye... is incomplete perception.

The three lines... repetition, or resurrection.

The horizontal line... the barrier of time.”

He sighed and said:

“The inverted triangle?

Ever since they sent me the clipping, I’ve been searching for the purpose of this symbol in particular.

It has no precedent in ancient Egyptian civilization.

It isn’t mentioned in any papyrus, nor does it appear in any inscription... in fact, it was never acknowledged as an Egyptian symbol at all.

So I conducted extensive research, compared symbols, until I discovered something that piqued my curiosity.

In ancient India, the inverted triangle symbolized the feminine, the energy of creation, the principle of formation, the union of elements in a single womb. It represented water, descent, the beginning of life.

In Greece, it was also used to represent the element of water, considered the first substance of all things, according to the philosophies of Anaximenes and Thales.

They believed water was the origin, and the inverted pyramid its cosmic image.

In the chakra systems, it stands for the center of creation, the navel chakra - where energy is born and ascends toward consciousness.

It's not just a shape... but a hidden code for the energy of life.

It was never a mere decoration.

It was a message.

A sign of the primordial energy... which preceded sculpture, and language, and even time."

Then he fell silent, and cast a sharp look, as if on the verge of confessing something long buried:

"All civilizations imitated them, or inherited something from them.

They built pyramids like them, but... how strange that all of them revealed a meaning for the inverted triangle, except for one civilization: Ancient Egypt!"

My mother, frowning:

"What do you mean?"

He exhaled:

"I don't know yet...

But isn't it logical to ask: why did the ancient Egyptians make symbols for everything... except for this one?"

My mother replied with a sarcastic tone, a hint of a smile:

"Maybe it was sacred for them, so they didn't want to insult it by inverting it?"

Then her eyes suddenly lit up, as if she had forgotten all her anger for a moment:

"My God... Do you mean they found the symbol?"



My father smiled - a warm smile, not a smile of triumph, but of return:

“Have you come back to me, my love...?”

She turned her face away, and tried to hide her retreat:

“Never mind... I’ll leave tomorrow, but...

I want to understand... a little.”

He laughed softly, as if he knew she’d return...

that somewhere inside her, she had never left this path.

A path it seemed she’d once shared, before stepping away.

He said quietly, as his eyes looked out the window in the direction of pyramids I had yet to see:

“And what is the grave danger in finding a pharaonic inscription with an inverted triangle?

Would an ancient doodle on a tomb bearing this symbol... really call for all this secrecy?”

A moment’s silence - she pondered what he had said. And for the second time that day, my mother’s mouth dropped open in astonishment.

Her eyes sparkled, she leaned back into the chair as if her strength had drained away all at once.

Her breathing quickened.

Something whirled in her mind... a crazy idea, perhaps!

Then a long silence, as if their minds suddenly plunged into unspoken depths.

As for me... I didn’t understand everything.

But I saw that gleam in my father's eyes...

The gleam of a man not chasing a fantasy, but nearing a secret that had haunted him for years.

And something within me, despite my childhood, believed that this secret... was here.

The symbol of the primordial energy - the original spark...

## Chapter Four: Something Breathes Beneath the Mountain

“Vision will be restored when the pyramid is inverted...

and the eye that was never born will see what was forgotten before it was ever written.”

That night, the voices finally quieted.

The city was not silent, but it seemed to bow slightly, lowering its tempo and retreating into the shadows of its alleys.

In the hotel, my mother sat by the window, gazing at the trembling lights reflected on the Nile’s surface, as if reading something in the water that could not be read.

My father was on the opposite side of the room, pretending to read, though the pages never turned.

My sister had drifted off on the carpet, clutching her new toy - a tiny pharaonic statue with blue stone eyes - whispering words no one could understand, words from realms unreachable by grown-ups.

And I... I lay stretched out on the bed, trying to summon sleep, but something inside me was awake.

My eyes were closed, but I was not asleep.

I was waiting for something I didn’t know - something I couldn’t name.

I didn’t realize when I slipped from wakefulness into dream, but suddenly I was there.

Stone ground stretched beneath my feet, cold as if untouched by sunlight for centuries.

A narrow corridor, low-ceilinged, carved into the rock - no lamps, no torches, but the walls glowed with a color that was no color at all.

The light didn’t come from any visible source, but from the stone itself, as if silence itself had turned to radiance.

The corridor led me onward, or perhaps I was leading it; I couldn't tell.

At its end, a wall appeared.

But it was not an end - it was a beginning.

There, in the center of the wall, was the hand.

Deeply carved in stone, grasping an inverted pyramid - not as a symbol, but as an act, a wound.

As if the hand was tearing the pyramid from the depths of the earth, or deliberately burying it with a cruel intent.

Then came the voice.

It was not a human voice.

It was as if the stones themselves were murmuring, an ancient, brittle sound, like something the sand might say if it could speak:

“When vision is born... those who were never buried will return.”

I awoke.

I did not scream, but my breath was short, and my heart hammered in my chest as if searching for a way out.

The darkness in the room was familiar... but it no longer felt the same.

The next morning, I tried to convince myself it was just a dream - a faint hallucination, the residue of what I'd heard that night.

I decided to act as if nothing had happened.

We went down to the breakfast hall on the ground floor.

The hall was spacious, filled with soft light filtering through the long windows overlooking the Nile. The aroma of coffee mingled with the sound of spoons and cups, and the whispers of tourists in a medley of languages with no common meaning.

My mother sat facing the window, silent, as if she was still searching through the night for an explanation she could not find.

My father was examining a tourist brochure, folded carefully, turning it in his hands without opening it.

My sister was building a tiny pyramid from cubes of butter and sugar at the edge of the table, then exclaimed with childish delight:

“Look! This pyramid is mine, and I am the queen!”

My father laughed and patted her on the head.

“Surely, you are the queen... but that pyramid is much too small for your reign.”

My mother, sipping her coffee, said,

“After breakfast, let’s go to the pyramids. You promised us.”

My father nodded, speaking in a tone meant to be light:

“We’ll go, and try to please history a little - perhaps then it will be pleased with us.”

But that day, we didn’t go.

After breakfast, we wandered through the old city.

We visited the Coptic Museum, got lost for a while in a bustling market, and returned before sunset, exhausted by the heat and the crowds.

In the elevator, my mother said,

“We should leave a full day for the pyramids... They don’t deserve a hurried visit.”

My father smiled, replying,

“We’ll go when we are ready for wonder.”

That night, the vision returned.

The same corridor. The same wall. The same hand.

But something was different.

The walls were closer, the carving deeper, and the hand was no longer just holding the pyramid - it was etching tangled lines beneath it, as if trying to reveal a deeper symbol.

Then the voice came again.

But it was not like before.

It was closer - internal.

As if the walls were no longer speaking on their own, but had entered my body, settled within me:

“You do not see - you remember.”

On the third day, my father kept his promise.

He took us to the pyramids.

Under a merciless sun and among the crowds, we made our way across the sands, climbed, posed for photos, listened to guides we couldn’t tell were telling the truth or simply repeating a script.

My sister traced lines in the sand with her little stick, looking at them as if they were maps we couldn't read, and laughed for no clear reason.

In a fleeting moment, as I looked toward the horizon, I saw something among the rocks. A swift shadow - as if the carving had been stamped there for an instant, then vanished. I blinked... and it was gone.

That night, the dream did not wait for me.  
I was inside it from the very first moment.

The corridor trembled. The walls pulsed.  
Light emerged from deep within the stone.  
And the wall was there, waiting.  
But this time, the hand was not holding the pyramid - it was driving it into the ground.

The voices... they were not one, but dozens. Hundreds.  
As if the whole place had awakened.  
As if time itself had begun to speak:  
“What is in the earth... will overturn the sky.”

I woke up.

I sat on the bed, without thinking.

Then I stood.

I could no longer bear the silence.

I went to my father in the morning and told him, with a voice I didn't recognize:

“It’s not just a dream. It keeps repeating. Every night it goes deeper... and every time something new happens.

Last night... all the walls were speaking.”

My father looked at me, and in his eyes I saw not surprise, but something far more serious - knowledge.

He was silent for a long moment, then said, in a heavy, quiet voice:

“Tell me everything... from the beginning.”

My father did not have his coffee that morning.

He stared into emptiness, as if waiting for the silence to give him an answer.

I sat beside him, stirring my juice, recalling the details of the dream the way one recalls an old pain they do not know how to silence.

My mother was turning the pages of a tourist booklet with little interest, as if performing a slow ritual to escape her own thoughts.

After breakfast, my father pushed his chair back and said,

“I’ll go to the front desk for a bit. I might need help with something.”

The clerk behind the desk was a man in his fifties, dressed in a gray suit and a tightly knotted tie, writing something in a paper ledger.

My father approached and spoke in a calm tone:

“Good morning... I have an unusual inquiry.”

The clerk looked up with interest:

“Certainly. How can I help you?”



My father said,

“A friend once described a place that piqued my curiosity, but I can’t locate it. He said he passed through a narrow passage carved in stone - not a natural cave, but seemingly man-made. The walls were bare, no carvings, no decoration, but at the end, there was a strange wall, perhaps with a symbol or an unclear inscription. He felt that the light did not come from any visible source, but as if the place itself was glowing.”

The clerk thought for a moment, then opened a drawer and pulled out several illustrated tourist brochures.

He began flipping through them as he spoke:

“That’s a rare description... but it reminds me of some lesser-known sites. Here we have an ancient temple in Ain Shams... but it’s open, with no interior passages. There’s a small shrine beneath one of the old arches, and a Roman cave near the eastern plateau, abandoned for years.”

He gathered the brochures and handed them over:

“Take this set. Perhaps you’ll find something that matches your friend’s description, or at least sparks a similar impression.

And don’t hesitate to rent a private car from the hotel if you wish for a longer tour - some of these places are off the usual path.”

My father thanked him, returned to our table, and laid out a set of illustrated brochures before us.

He said as he sat down:

“The clerk didn’t give me a definite location... but he suggested some sites that might resemble what you saw in your dream.”

My mother picked up one titled “Unconventional Landmarks in Cairo,” and began turning its pages slowly.

I reached for a blue booklet with a photo of a nearly buried stone entrance and started leafing through its pages.

So many pictures... forgotten shrines, stone corridors near the old aqueducts, caves on the city's edges, and half-deserted temples.

Suddenly, I stopped at one photo.

It showed a narrow, rough stone corridor, slightly curving, with no columns or ornaments - just smooth walls narrowing as you went deeper.

Something about the image made my fingers freeze.

I said quietly,

"It looks like this... very much so.

As if it's the place I saw, or something very close."

My father leaned in for a look, then nodded.

"Alright. Let's try this or something similar. As long as it's in Cairo, we can reach it."

He returned to the concierge and asked him to book a car for a full day.

Within minutes, the car was waiting at the main entrance.

The driver was a man in his forties - well-dressed, friendly, his gaze steady and composed.

He opened the door for my mother:

"Good morning. My name is Girgis, and I'll be your guide today. I'll take you anywhere you wish to visit."

We all got in, and the car moved slowly through the streets of Cairo.

A short while after heading toward the site my father had chosen from the brochures - a deserted stone shrine on the city's eastern outskirts, long abandoned but sometimes mentioned in specialized tour routes - the driver spoke up:

“The place you picked is beautiful... It's not an official site; tourists rarely request it, but it's sometimes listed in private guides.”

My father turned to him:

“In truth, I'm not looking for the place itself, but for something matching a description a friend gave me. He said he entered a narrow stone corridor, fully carved in rock, with no carvings or decorations, but with a certain unique character... At its end, a wall seemed to bear a strange symbol, perhaps an unfamiliar mark. He also said the light was strange - not from any clear source, but as if the walls themselves pulsed softly.”

The driver was silent for a moment, then glanced in the mirror, his voice thoughtful:

“That description is very familiar. I've seen similar places myself, in old caves in a remote part of the mountain. It sounds like you're describing the ancient caves in Mokattam.”

My mother looked up and simply said,

“I've read about the mountain before... They say it has a breathtaking view over Cairo.”

Girgis:

“Yes, that's absolutely true. The mountain overlooks the whole city, and the view from the top is unforgettable. But what most people don't know... is that its interior is just as unforgettable.”

My father, with keen interest:

“What do you mean?”

Girgis:

“The mountain is full of old caves. Some people think they’re natural, but some were perhaps carved long ago for reasons nobody knows anymore. There are places that only locals ever enter, and even they don’t go in often. Some say those caves were used even before they had any name... as if they existed before their story was ever written.”

He added, as if catching himself:

“There’s an old legend among the Copts. They say Mokattam Mountain was about to fall on the city, but it - moved - by a religious miracle after the prayers of a certain saint.

The man credited with this is called Saint Simon the Tanner.

It’s a symbolic story, of course, but many believe the mountain has never been ordinary since that day... as if it carries something inside it.”

Father:

“And is the place open to visitors? I mean... can we enter?”

Driver:

“There’s no official, organized site yet. But I’ve heard some priests are planning to build a monastery there, carving it into the heart of the mountain. It’s a recent idea... talk that it will be called the Monastery of Saint Simon. For now, it’s just rumors, but people are talking.”

My father and mother exchanged a quick glance - not surprise, but suspicion.

He leaned closer and whispered softly:

“Damn... they’ll hide any trace, as always.”

She replied without looking at him:

“A new monument... so everyone forgets what came before.”

My mother asked the driver, cautiously:

“And is the area safe?”

He answered calmly:

“It’s in a neighborhood called Manshiyat Naser - Garbage City. It’s not a tourist area, but it’s not dangerous, especially since I’m from the area and know every corner. Even if we can’t reach the caves, there are high spots with a simple café overlooking all of Cairo.”

My parents exchanged a brief look, and my father said, exhaling slowly:

“Let’s try it, then. We have nothing to lose by seeing the place.”

Girgis, with a faint smile:

“You won’t regret it... Some places are revealed not by cameras, but by intuition.”

The car turned slowly onto a road that looked nothing like those on the map.

Gradually, as we climbed higher, it was as if the city surrendered its noise willingly, letting us approach something that did not belong to it.

I sat by the window, watching the neighborhoods shift, then recede, then disappear.

No more tall buildings, no more orderly cars.

Heaps of stone appeared, dusty roads, faces that didn’t look up.

I saw boys carrying broken wood on iron carts, children playing by half-collapsed walls.

Then I saw something that astonished me:

A half-ruined stone wall, with faded drawings barely visible - circles, squares, strange geometric shapes.

As if someone had begun to write something, then stopped... or was prevented from finishing.

The road narrowed, the air grew cooler.

My mother said, looking out the other window:

“It’s strange how the air changes as we climb... It’s as if the mountain isn’t part of the city, but its opposite.”

My father, as if recalling something he once read:

“Mokattam Mountain, according to geologists, isn’t a mountain in the traditional sense, but a rocky plateau formed from the bed of an ancient sea. Its layers are irregular - some dense limestone, some fragile shale. This strange alternation makes the mountain prone to forming internal voids, cracks invisible to the naked eye.”

My mother, focusing more on the question than the answer:

“Do you think it could really hide something... in the literal sense?”

As the car climbed a winding dirt road, my father checked his watch, surprised:

“The compass has stopped... it was working just a moment ago.”

The driver glanced at him in the mirror, voice calm:

“That happens sometimes...”

In some parts of the mountain, the compass behaves strangely.

I’ve also heard from other drivers that radio signals sometimes disappear and return for no reason, as if something in the air is reflecting or swallowing them.

And I remember a foreign tourist telling me he felt a sudden dizziness near one passage, as if a hidden pressure surrounded his head.

And there’s a particular spot, on one of the plateaus... if you stand there, you hear no echo at all. The sound vanishes completely, as if the mountain absorbs it.”

My mother leaned slightly to the window, then said thoughtfully:

“It sounds like what you describe... resembles magnetic anomalies. I’ve read about such things in a book, and the symptoms seem exactly as you said.”

Girgis, in a low voice:

“No one has a precise explanation... but some things here cannot be understood by maps.”

My father, peering out the side window:

“Do you see that angle? There... on the hillside. It’s oddly sharp - not like the usual shapes of sedimentary rocks.”

The driver, slowing the car:

“Yes, it’s there. In deeper parts of the mountain, you see similar angles - sharp, sometimes smooth, as if someone deliberately carved them. Not many, but striking. Even geologists from the university said they’re unlike anything they expected from a mountain formed at the bottom of a sea.”

My mother, after a short silence, watching the overlapping layers:

“Sedimentary rocks are usually smooth-edged...

These angles aren’t produced by nature easily. Either they result from very deep fractures... or there’s something else... something not yet understood.”

My father, in a low voice as if talking to himself:

“As if there’s something beneath that satellites cannot easily detect. Some say it’s just rare geological changes; others... think it’s a sign of a hidden structure, yet undiscovered.”

He added, as if speaking of something he knew more than he wished to say:

“Old rocks don’t just conceal...

They choose when to reveal themselves. They yield not to pressure, but to time.”

I listened to them in silence, but inside me, something else was whispering.

A feeling I could not translate...

As if the mountain doesn't tell you its shape, but what it hides from you, and what it wants to keep hidden until the right moment.

Yet a small detail kept haunting me...

If this mountain was born from an ancient sea,

how could a sharp angle, like the edge of a geometric blade, be found at its heart?

As if something... existed here before the sea.

Then the sea came, and the mountain formed above it...

Perhaps that thing remained in the depths, silent, waiting for someone to see it - or awaken it.



## Chapter Five: The Edge That Does Not Rise

The car gradually veered away from the main road, taking us deep into a narrow dirt path - no signs, no trace of any passerby.

It was as if the city had closed its doors behind us, leaving us alone in the embrace of the mountain.

The car's wheels strained over the gravel, the vibrations growing stronger, until it seemed to me the vehicle itself was hesitating - should it go on, or turn back?

But it did not retreat.

When we reached a slightly elevated spot, Girgis slowed down, then parked beside a massive boulder. He got out, circled the car with steady steps, then opened the back door for us and said in his calm, confident voice:

“We’ve arrived.”

Those words - “We’ve arrived.” He didn’t say, “Here we are,” or “We’re close.” He spoke as if he knew exactly where we were headed.

Strangest of all, he spoke as though we were going somewhere planned... when we ourselves had no idea what we were even searching for.

We stepped out, though my mother hesitated for a moment, holding my little sister’s hand tightly. She whispered to my father,

“Are you sure about this man? The place is completely deserted...”

My father replied in a reassuring voice,

“Girgis is an official hotel driver. Our trip is registered in the hotel’s itinerary.”

My mother closed her eyes briefly, sighed, as if remembering there really was a document to prove it... yet worry still hid behind her features. She wanted to convince herself, so she forced a smile, and my father replied playfully,

“And do you think all those hours I spent at the gym would go to waste if the driver decided to rob us?”

She shot him a mocking look and said,

“It was a single visit - just one day, and you spent a week in bed with cramps.”

They both laughed. Even I laughed. My sister didn't understand, but she laughed with us anyway.

We began following Girgis along a sloping path winding through faded rocks.

We were not yet at the summit of the mountain, but close - about 120 meters up, at a considerable height.

The mountains were still, the air was still... Everything around us seemed to breathe with a heavy calm.

Then Girgis stopped and bent to pick up an old wooden stick lying on the ground. He brushed off the dust and pointed it toward a part of the stone wall:

“This section collapsed in 1960, twenty-eight years ago. No one cares about this area, but I wanted to show you it first.”

We approached. I saw a cracked stone wall, but not an ordinary crack.

The fissure looked deliberate - no random fractures, but a sharp, regular angle.

Girgis traced the edge with the tip of the stick:

“Look here...”

These aren't natural erosions. These are strikes. It seems someone did some light, secret digging here - maybe years ago. They resemble axe marks, but more precise."

My father crouched by the wall, examining the angle closely. Then he pulled a small notebook from his bag, tore out a page, and started moving it along the wall, sometimes wedging it with stones, sometimes asking us to help hold it in various spots. He measured the slope at three distant points along the rock line, as if searching for a mathematical regularity he wasn't sure existed.

After a minute of silence, he said,

"The gradient here is clear... close to 30 degrees."

He hesitated, as if a thought was beginning to form, and said,

"This slope suggests that if a structure exists here, it widens as it rises - meaning it is broader at the top than at the base..."

He took a step back, gazing at the wall, and added,

"If we suppose this edge extends from the tip of a structure to this height... its length would be about 150 meters."

My mother raised her eyebrows:

"And what does that mean?"

He replied, more slowly, as if drawing something in his mind:

"It means the tip might be buried deep in the mountain... and we are standing now at the edge of a broad base."

He immersed himself in his calculations, drawing lines in his notebook, measuring angles with his fingers, comparing span and height, then muttered,

“The full length of the base would be about 190 meters... if this is indeed an edge of some structure...”

He looked around slowly and said,

“This level of the mountain... could easily conceal a massive foundation for a buried building... if one exists.”

And then... Girgis’s voice came from behind - soft, yet dry as stone:

“The pyramid... inverted.”

Time froze.

The moment froze.

I stopped breathing.

It was as if the word had not been spoken, but stabbed into the air.

Something inside me shivered.

My father turned to him, his eyes narrow, and said sharply, but quietly:

“What did you say?”

Girgis did not answer immediately, as if realizing he had said something forbidden.

He looked at us, then at the wall, then at nothing:

“Sorry... Maybe just a myth.”

My father approached him:

“What myth?”

Girgis breathed slowly:

“My grandfather was a simple man. He worked with a British expedition here in the early 1940s.

He was a carpenter, making crates for their equipment.

He once told me... they spoke of an inverted pyramid, said it was built in an unknown era, by humans we don't know... They whispered as if its existence was the condition for everything around it.

They said: Without this pyramid, civilizations could not stand... nor would anything built above it have meaning.

My grandfather didn't understand - he said they spoke in riddles...

But they were afraid, though they never said why.”

“Afraid of what?”

“I don't know. He never finished the story. He only said they would whisper at night, arguing over a hidden drawing, a buried foundation... and he kept repeating: Not everything that was built has appeared... and not everything buried is erased.”

From this moment, Girgis no longer seemed just a hotel driver... but like an accidental archaeologist, a man who knew more than he said, as if fate had gathered us here for a reason none of us yet understood.

I sat on a small rock, thinking about this strange coincidence that brought us together... was it really a coincidence?

He stood, holding his stick as if it was an extension of an ancient memory, looking at the stones as we did - but his gaze was different. It was as if he had joined the game just because he heard a sentence from his grandfather... as if the place itself knew him.

For no reason, I remembered the Old Man in Ramses Station. I wanted to ask my father about him, how he appeared, who he was... but something kept me silent.

My father sat on a low rock, sketching something in his notebook.

I asked him, staring at the stones:

“Can something exist... before the mountain itself?”

He looked up:

“The mountain here, in Mokattam, formed from the deposits of an ancient sea, called the Tethys Sea. It covered this region millions of years ago, then retreated.”

My mother asked:

“And how long ago was that?”

He said:

“About 50 to 60 million years ago.”

Girgis shook his head in amazement:

“My God... Were there even humans before 50 million years?”

He hesitated, then replied:

“According to current science...

No. The oldest Homo sapiens we know of lived around 100,000 years ago. Primitive human traces dating back nearly two million years have been found... but those weren't civilizations. Just scattered tools - stones, not buildings.”

My mother, gazing at the sharp angle:

“So if this angle is truly part of an inverted pyramid... that means not only the existence of a structure, but of someone who built it, who conceived of it.”

He answered, more muttering than explaining:

“If there was an ancient civilization, then a sea covered it for millions of years, then layers accumulated and the mountain formed... nothing would remain of it on the surface.”

Then he looked at me:

“Everything they did... would be covered... just like this.”

Girgis, still staring at the stones, asked:

“But... what if the mountain didn’t form at the bottom of the sea at all? Are you sure of that?”

He answered with quiet confidence:

“According to the geologists, Mokattam’s layers are full of marine fossils. The calcareous crust, the alternation of limestone and shale - all indicate a shallow marine environment that once covered this place 50 or 60 million years ago. There is hardly any scientific opinion denying that the mountain was formed at the bottom of an ancient sea.”

My mother, as if recalling something she once read:

“But... what about ancient rains? I remember some researchers saying that North Africa may have been much more fertile thousands of years ago... Is it possible that could have made a similar effect?”

He replied after a brief thought:

“Heavy rains left their mark on some surface formations, yes...

But they were not enough to carve or build sedimentary layers of this depth and accumulation.”

He added, as if trying to open a new door for contemplation:

“But, if we assume this structure did not predate the sea, but came after it... maybe it wasn’t buried, but hidden.”

My mother looked at him in surprise:

“What do you mean?”

“I mean that the mountain itself contains natural caves and internal fissures formed over millions of years... some deep enough to hide an entire building.”

Girgis stepped closer:

“As if they didn’t build it under the mountain... but within its heart.”

My father nodded:

“Exactly.

They could have used geological voids, or quietly expanded them... so the mountain became a natural shell. A shell that reveals nothing, and can’t be discovered... except by accident.”

I approached one of the protruding angles, running my hand along the line.

I thought to myself, as I traced the line like a map for something I couldn’t see:

Wait... are we really believing this? Just a line on a crumbling stone wall, some amateur measurements - and suddenly we’re talking about a buried, inverted pyramid beneath the mountain? What madness is this?

Is it possible? All this talk about buried structures, about an inverted pyramid, and in the end we’re facing just a single crack... a simple angle that could be entirely natural.

But something inside me whispered - it wasn’t just stone.

It was more like a scar... or the trace of an ancient wound.

Something here doesn’t want to be forgotten.

But it doesn’t want to be revealed... easily.



As if the rocks are waiting for someone who understands them, not just someone who digs.

Then, from behind this contemplative silence, a strange sound crept in... faint, like wind playing with something hollow.

Girgis looked around slowly, then said in a low voice:

“The strange thing is... someone might have been here before me.”

He didn't explain, and we didn't reply. It was as if the mountain had decided to say something... then fell silent.

I looked at the wall again, reaching out to the angle.

The texture was slightly different here - smoother, as if someone had run their hand over it many times.

Then my mother leaned forward a little and whispered:

“Did you hear that?”

No one answered.

But I felt... that something - or someone - was listening to us from within.

They were trying to uncover the heart with calculations, chisels, and sketchbooks... but maybe, just maybe, there is something here that can be seen without all of that. Something you don't measure - you sense it. Something you can't prove - you feel it.

As if... I had always known this place, even before I arrived.

## Chapter Six: The Words That Came Before Us

We stepped away from the stone wall where we'd paused in the first passage, but none of us felt the journey was over.

Silence was more present than any words, as if the mountain had not yet said all it wished to say.

Girgis opened the car door, then turned to us calmly and said, in a measured voice:

“There’s another place... much closer to what your friend described. Not far from here, but nobody ever goes there. It’s as if it doesn’t want to be visited.”

No one commented. We all got in, and as soon as the car started its descent, Girgis reached for the phone mounted beside the steering wheel, lifted the heavy black receiver, pressed a short number, and waited.

“Good evening... this is car 822. We are now heading to the eastern point of Mokattam, via inner route number 3... Yes... the terrain is a bit rough, and the area is deserted... I just wanted to register the location in case of emergency.”

He ended the call, placing the receiver back.

It all seemed normal - just a routine precaution to log our location.

But something inside me shivered.

It wasn’t only to reassure the hotel, but felt like an indirect message... as if he wanted to win our complete trust, not just to calm us, but to prepare us.

Not because the road was dangerous... but because what lay ahead was not a road, but a threshold.

A threshold separating what we once knew from what we would never know again.

The next step - there was no turning back from it... You couldn't just cross it; you had to believe in it.

It was as if he was saying without words:

Don't fear the road... don't fear me. This is the time to close all doors of doubt. Forget any lingering fears - what's coming is too important to be approached with fear. You... are in safe hands.

We stopped at a gap between two large rocks - no sign, no marker.

He gestured toward it, and simply said:

"This way."

He entered first, hunched, moving confidently.

We followed, one after another, silence walking with us.

The rocks seemed to have wounded themselves to open a passage only wide enough for those whose burdens were light.

The ceiling bowed low, as if prostrating for us to pass, and the walls seemed to hold their breath for centuries.

Air without sound - but not still, rather, lying in wait.

At the end of the cave, the wall split open to reveal a square opening - not carved to be opened, but to be hidden.

At that opening... I did not enter a crypt.

I felt as though the mountain itself had exhaled, opening a fissure in its chest for us.

Everything in me trembled as I crossed the threshold.

I didn't know if I was descending... or going deeper into something that had always been inside me.

The stone floor stretched beneath our feet, familiarly cold.

The walls were unadorned, yet glowed with a colorless hue.

The light did not come from a lamp, but from within the wall itself - as if the stone remembered a light the world had forgotten.

I moved forward, my hand trembling, then cried out without realizing it:

“This is it! This is the place! I swear I’ve seen this wall! And this hand! And the light... from the stone!”

My mother came toward me. She said nothing, did not scold me.

She only looked at me - a quick, fleeting glance, but it was enough.

A single blink, holding more than a thousand words.

And then I remembered.

Girgis knows nothing about the dream.

He thinks my father described this place to him as he heard it from a friend - nothing more.

My father moved toward the end of the crypt, where the wall stood.

It was not an end, but a beginning.

At its center... was the hand.

Carved in stone, holding an inverted pyramid.

As if driving it into the ground - or tearing it out.

The act was violent - not symbolic.

Girgis stood silently, not surprised, not stepping back.

He looked as if he was standing in his own home... before something he knew well.

My father tried to examine the carvings.

He approached the wall, raised his flashlight, and slowly traced the beam across the stone, like someone reading a chapter whose words had been smudged by dust.

The image was familiar... just like in the dream. But it was not exactly the same.

Now, I saw it with greater clarity. Details unseen before began to emerge.

It was as if the dream was only a shadow of what was engraved here...

And only here did the form reveal what it had whispered there.

At the top, an inverted pyramid, its tip grasped by a meticulously carved human hand.

Beneath it, a half-open eye - not seeing, but remembering.

Beside it, three vertical lines, falling like rays, but instead of illuminating, they darken whatever they touch.

Then a curled human form, like a fetus preparing to rise - not to die.

And in the upper corner, a solar disk spinning counter to its course, followed by upside-down birds, as if fleeing a cycle of time that had deceived them.

All this seemed to tell a story - not of the past, but of what had yet to come.

Then, below this complex scene, my father glimpsed another line, softly etched on a smoother strip of the wall. An inverted line - not traditional script, but clearer than anything else.

As if someone came later, wanting to translate the meaning for those who did not understand the images.

My father whispered, gazing at it:

“This isn’t traditional hieroglyphs... Some of these symbols resemble older systems, but they’re inverted...”

Suddenly, and without warning... Girgis spoke. He didn't look at us, didn't turn. He only looked at the wall, and the words flowed from him as if they had been waiting:

"If the pyramid is not inverted, humanity will not be reborn. And if you ever think you've reached the peak of civilization... you will have only climbed to the summit of what your hands have made, not to the summit of your selves. What you believe is the future... will be a forgotten past.

And what you imagine to be the end... will only be the beginning that has not yet been written."

Time froze.

My father whispered, as if suddenly recalling an old voice:

"These... are the same words... The Old Man said them... at Ramses Station."

He repeated them, waving his hand in the air before the carving... as if feeling for a trace he dared not disturb by touch. As if the words were returning from the stone, not memory.

He added, with the astonished tone of discovery, as if the meaning had suddenly unfolded before him:

"They weren't his words... He was only repeating them."

My mother spoke, in a voice I had never heard from her before - quiet, yet heavy with certainty:

"He repeated them from here."

She paused, her eyes dissecting the place - as if she saw not the wall, but the time carved within it.

Then added, her voice slower, as if speaking the truth for the first time:

"These are not casual words, nor a traditional inscription... but a prophecy. Engraved in the heart of the rock, thousands of years ago."

A silent tremor welled up in my chest as I watched Girgis staring at the wall... his eyes not looking at it, but through it.

Then... I remembered those whispers at the hotel - my mother's voice murmuring in the next room.

A single sentence kept ringing in my ears, like a cry that never dies:

“Your father was killed in Rome... and to this day, no one dares to say why.”

Could it be?

Was my grandfather killed for this? For this place?

Did he die because he knew? Because he got too close?

A sweeping certainty seized me - Girgis was not alone.

And this journey, from the very start, was not a coincidence... but seemed as if every step had been planned with precision.

This was not a meaningless journey.

And perhaps it did not begin from the hotel to the mountain... but from our home in London, to all this land we now tread.

Doubt began to swirl within me...

Who is Girgis?

But who is my father?

Who was my grandfather?

And for a moment...

I felt as if I'd just been born into a family I'd never truly known.

A family whose true face was revealed... only now.

My father lifted his head, looking straight at Girgis,  
as if recalling a conversation that had never left him:

“You mentioned on the way... a project for a monastery to be built here... in this mountain... Is this the place?”

Girgis did not hesitate. He replied with confidence, and a single smile -  
a smile that stripped away the mask of a hotel driver, revealing a man who knew us better than we imagined.

“Not exactly in this spot... but nearby. And when it is built... it will hide everything.”  
He looked at the wall, his eyes not seeing it... but through it.

My father took a single step closer...

Looked straight into his eyes, as if trying to wrench the truth from him.

“Was he here? Did the Old Man pass through this place? Do you... know him?”

He didn't answer.

He only... smiled.

And that smile was not friendly.

It was... an admission.



## Chapter Seven: The Guardians of Asiria

The wall was not the end.

Nor was the hand grasping the inverted pyramid more than a first sign of what we had yet to understand.

From that moment, time inside me became blurred, as if the corridor we'd entered was not just beneath the mountain - but beneath the skin itself.

Girgis remained standing before the wall, silent.

Something in his smile... in the steadiness of his gaze, spoke more than a thousand words.

In that instant, my mother's eyes seemed to collapse, as if something had broken inside her when she realized that Girgis was not a stranger - a driver - but someone who knew us. She looked at me with eyes filled with both fear and betrayal, then grabbed my hand with sudden force - not like a mother, but like someone rescuing what remains of her world.

Then, in a trembling whisper that was barely audible, she said:

"Get out of here... now... quickly."

She pulled me, grabbed my sister, and rushed us back through the same passage we'd entered, feeling her way as if fleeing from something unseen... but breathing behind us.

My sister stammered, looking at me with wide, terrified eyes, silently asking: What is happening?

But I had no answer... I simply ran with her.

"Mum? What's wrong?"

"Hurry! Quickly! Hold onto me and don't look back!"

My father shouted from behind us:

"What are you doing?!"

But he followed. And behind him... was Girgis.

We ran through the narrow corridors, the air around us growing heavier, as if the mountain was closing in behind, slowly sealing its passages.

The shadows seemed longer than they should be, creeping silently behind our steps.

And when we reached the stone opening and our faces collided with a rush of fresh air we hadn't felt since entering, we stopped.

Not because we were tired...

But because something was waiting at the threshold, unmoving, with an uncanny, silent presence -

A presence that seemed to have been standing there since the very first moment... waiting, not watching our steps, but awaiting the result of a test we had just undergone.

There, directly in front of us, at the mouth of the cave...

Stood a man. He was not a stranger to us.

He was the Old Man himself - the same one we saw at Ramses Station, in the same form...

Carrying the same strange staff, decorated with the very same engravings we had just been pondering inside the passages.

My mother froze in place, squeezing my hand tightly, then shoved me behind her in a decisive move, like a creature driven by instinct, not reason - like a she-wolf whose sense of danger had awakened in her veins, separating me from the world as the body shelters its heart at the approach of a knife.

For a moment, I thought I heard a low growl escape her chest - a primal pulse, not a human sound, but something older, deeper...

An instinct that acts before thought -

A sense buried in her depths, rising only when touched by certain conditions, as if programmed to awaken only when danger becomes too real for words.

“Who are you? What do you want from us?”

Then I heard my father’s breathing behind us - heavy, tense, as if something inside him had awakened too, something unlike his usual self, needing no permission to act.

I turned and saw Girgis standing directly behind him, still as a shadow that casts no light.

At that, my father reached into his bag and pulled out a small, half-rusted knife that had never left him since we arrived in Egypt - one like those archaeologists carry out of habit, not necessity, as if it were part of the role he’d chosen to play.

Then, in a swift motion, he clamped down on Girgis’s neck...

For a moment I thought there was a frightened tiger inside him, not attacking to kill, but to protect -

To draw a line between himself and the threat.

An instinct that doesn’t bargain. It only warns.

“If you two don’t explain what’s happening right now... I swear I’ll kill you!”

Then he turned to my mother, his voice sharper than I’d ever heard:

“Get to the car, start the engine immediately, and take the kids. If I’m not with you in minutes... don’t wait. Leave without looking back.”

The Old Man did not move, remaining rooted as if time meant nothing to him. Only his eyes shifted, holding a cold, disdainful look and a slight, unfinished smile...

Then words slipped from his lips, words that seemed not to belong to this moment, but to precede it:

“You’ll cause them all to be killed... just as your father caused his own death.”

My father froze.

The sky grew colorless.

The Old Man spoke in a voice bearing the mark of an old scar, as if conjuring something heavier than memory:

“What happened in this cave... the Guardians of Asiria have only witnessed once before - when your father entered it. Now it happens before my eyes... for the second time. How remarkable.”

My father stepped forward, his grip still tight on Girgis’s throat, as if the instinct that had awoken in him would not let go. He looked at the Old Man with eyes roiling with suspicion and anger, and spoke in a tense voice that cut through the silence:

“What do you mean? What’s happening? Explain yourself!”

He spoke as if the most important word the Old Man had uttered had slipped past him - “Asiria.”

But I heard it clearly. It echoed inside my head, a distant resonance I knew but couldn’t recall, as if it wasn’t a foreign name, but a deeply familiar one, part of a memory not mine... yet living inside me.

The Old Man surprised us with a sharp question:

“Which of you... saw this place in a memory never lived?”

My mother stepped forward, as if trying to shield me from danger with her body before her words, protect me with a lie, and push the truth away before it arrived. She cried out in a nervous, desperate tone:

“I did! I saw it!”

The Old Man laughed - not with mockery, but with certainty:

“Impossible... It has to be one of his children.”

He nodded at my father, including both me and my sister, but not my mother, as if something runs in my father's blood - a secret that cannot be inherited by marriage, but only by those born of his line.

From Girgis's lips escaped a few strangled words, mixed with gasps and before my father could squeeze tighter, a thin thread of blood trickled from Girgis's neck, yet the words struggled out, fighting to be spoken:

"It's... the boy... he said it... himself... the cave... I saw it... in my dream..."

Then his voice choked off entirely, and silence fell as if someone had closed the door on everything that remained.

I stepped forward and, unusually, was not afraid.

It was as if something deep inside me, steady and clear, whispered that there was no reason to panic...

As if my body remembered something it hadn't told me yet.

"What do you want from us?"

The Old Man looked at me for a long time:

"That's logical. You have your grandfather's eyes."

Then he turned to my mother:

"It cannot be you. Being their mother doesn't give you their genes... or their memories."

He turned to my father, his voice calmer, as if trying to drain the poison from the air:

"As you see... I am an old man. But I... am British, like you - or I once was."

He glanced at my father's hand still gripping Girgis's throat, and continued:

“There’s no need to threaten my son’s safety further. If we’d wanted to harm you... we’d have done so differently.”

My mother raised her eyes toward him slowly, as if something in the Old Man’s words pierced the certainty she thought she had.

She looked at Girgis, then at the Old Man, then back to my father...

Her features froze for a moment, as if trying to reorder the world inside her mind.

Girgis? ... His son?

The shock was silent, but etched on her face like a slap.

As for my father...

He looked around as if seeing the place for the first time with instinct’s eyes - not the mind’s, not fear’s. There was no one but us. No ambush, no weapons, no easy way out if things went wrong.

Everything around him whispered the truth he hadn’t wanted to believe:

If they wanted to harm us... they would have done so the moment we arrived.

He slowly released Girgis’s neck, as if letting go of something larger than a man - a possibility he had not been ready to face.

The tension suddenly eased, and a strange calm seeped into the air...

For everyone understood, even in silence, that this confrontation was not a battlefield.

My father looked directly at him, as if his patience had run out:

“No more riddles... Tell us everything, at once.”

The Old Man raised his eyes slowly, a glint of hidden admiration in them, and replied with a half-smile:

“Just like your father... he faced the truth as it was, never liked to hear it in doses, always wanted it all at once, like a wall brought down in one blow - not like a web of threads needing time and patience.

The Old Man breathed slowly and began to explain, flowing on without pause:

“This place... others found it before your father. Scholars, explorers, and researchers passed it by like a shell in the sand. But your father... he was the only one to delve as deeply as he did. He engaged with the place in a way I’d never seen before. He didn’t just explore it... he remembered it.”

Then he turned to me, his voice easing:

“Just as you have.”

He fell silent for a short moment, as if letting the words settle, then said firmly:

“And for that reason... they will never let you go, no matter what.”

My father’s head shot up suddenly, as if for the first time truly hearing the word the Old Man had said before... “The Guardians of Asiria.”

He looked at him and asked in a more composed, but deeply anxious voice:

“Who are they? Who do you mean?”

He answered with no room for ambiguity:

“The Guardians of Asiria... a secret society without faces or names, existing for centuries - perhaps longer. Their sole mission: to protect the secrets of the ancient civilization - the civilization of Asiria.”

The Old Man spoke quietly, his eyes still fixed somewhere between us, as if seeing something we could not:

“But they don’t know what they are protecting. They don’t understand it. They only inherit it... like a child inherits a lock with no key.”

He added, his voice dropping as if stating an unwelcome truth:

“They are driven by signs, not by understanding. They guard the sites described to them, caring nothing for the meaning of what they guard.”

He glanced at the wall behind us for a moment, as if the words came not from his mouth, but from the stone itself:

“And whenever anyone gets too close... they are removed.”

He returned his gaze to my father, his tone tinged with the weight of memory:

“Your father? He was not the first to get close... but he was the only one who truly engaged with this place... He didn’t just study the wall - he felt it...”

He paused, as if reliving a scene he’d never left, then added:

“He would touch the carvings as if his skin remembered them, and he saw... not with his eyes, but with something else inside him.”

Then he looked at me sharply, as if speaking of my grandfather, but meaning me:

“The closer he got, the more he interacted with the place physically, the more senses awoke in him that were unlike those of other humans - more precise, more lucid... He could hear the whispering in the stone... and he fell silent, because he understood.”



Then he added, still gazing at me, as if seeing something inside me I could not:

“Just as happened with you...

When you saw the engravings on the staff for the first time at Ramses Station... perhaps you didn't notice then, but your un-lived memory caught them before you understood... Some senses are not summoned - they awaken by themselves, when something like them whispers.”

He looked off into the distance, and spoke softly, as if reciting the conclusion:

“And when they realized the place had responded to him... they decided to eliminate him. As always, when humans fail to understand, they fear what cannot be explained, and they oppose all that is unlike themselves... So fear was quicker than wisdom, and the decision was to banish the light before it could expose the darkness.”

He breathed slowly, then spoke in a heavy tone:

“They didn't kill him here... They lured him to Rome... They would never be foolish enough to kill a British researcher on Egyptian soil and draw suspicion... They are far too clever - an order that inherited the cunning of centuries, moving quietly, leaving behind nothing but silence.”

He added, his voice growing deeper:

“It didn't end with your grandfather's death... it began after it. Strange things started happening at different sites, as if an ancient prophecy had awakened... That's when I decided to bring you here - not to reveal something, but to protect you... and to help you... protect yourselves.”

The Old Man fell silent, and a thick silence settled...

But it was not the silence of endings, but of imminent revelation.

Inside me, fear was not the dominant feeling, but a strange sensation, as if something in my blood had awakened - a thing I did not know, but which knew me.

For the first time, I felt I was not here to understand... but to remember what I had never lived.

Something within me was stirring - a sense I'd never learned, but had been born with.

And I knew, though I had no explanation -

that nothing would save us today...

except for the memories I'd never lived.

## Chapter Eight: The Civilization of Forgotten Senses

After the silence settled, the old man moved slowly and fixed a long look at me.

Then, without saying a word, he extended his staff toward me -

As if he was still waiting for confirmation of something he suspected, or perhaps wanted to see if I was capable of doing what he already knew, deep down, I could do.

It was adorned with the same carvings I'd seen in the cave... but now, they seemed to shift beneath my skin.

I hesitated for a moment, then reached out my hand.

The instant I touched the carvings, something inside me shifted out of place. It wasn't a feeling or a thought, but a deep tremor running up my spine, as if something ancient within me had risen all at once.

A faint dizziness swept over me. Something in my balance faltered suddenly, as if the ground had moved without moving. My head tilted - not backward, not forward, but inward. And something in my eyes seemed to retreat from the visible image, searching for something else... behind the light.

I closed my eyelids. Or perhaps they closed on their own, as if something within had decided to seal me off from the outside world in order to complete what had begun.

Then... inside me, a vision opened up that I had never known before, as if I'd stepped outside myself without ever leaving my body.

My feet moved over a soft earth, not like the dust of the cave or the tiles of any city.

The ground here was neither solid nor loose; it seemed to pulse gently.

Each step stirred beneath it a sound that was not heard but felt on the skin... not as a tremor, but as a faint tattoo, inscribing the path in silence.

The air was heavier, yet purer. No recognizable scents, but my nose filled with a sensation that defied explanation - a blend of raw presence, odorless, yet somehow forming a shape in my chest.

I turned my gaze around, but my sight was not as it had been.

Things no longer began at their edges. Instead, I saw them from their centers, from within.

I didn't know if I was truly seeing them, or remembering them as I stared.

A little girl passed before me, moving with quiet steps. She stopped by the trunk of a strange tree, laid her palm upon it, closed her eyes for a few seconds, and then opened them slowly. She did not speak, but a sentence slipped inside me:

“It is asleep... and the roots are dreaming.”

I didn't look around for the source of the voice. I didn't need to. The sentence was not heard - it happened within me.

Then I moved on.

I saw a man sitting inside what looked like curved cells, building them with an uncanny calm.

His hands moved with the confidence of someone following instructions older than his own mind.

They weren't stones, but light materials, unknown to me - yet somehow, I understood them.

I felt as if I knew the function of each piece, as if I was watching something I'd seen before in a dream, or in a place I couldn't recall.

I didn't understand how this was happening, but I knew... without explanation.

The structures repeated in an unbroken pattern, and the spaces between them were intentional, as if made not to be filled, but to breathe.

He worked in silence, not looking up, as if his senses knew the place before he did. He did not measure or plan; he just reached out his hand - and the piece seemed to know on its own where to go.

In a nearby open square, I saw a group of people moving together in astonishing harmony, as if each one knew what the other would do before it happened.

They exchanged neither words nor signals.

They carried strange tools, placed them in precise spots, then stepped back so that others could continue the work without the rhythm ever pausing, in a scene like a silent dance -

No leader, no known beginning.

Just a movement built on collective feeling, as if their bodies were joined to a single system, guiding them without revealing itself.

Then I saw a man who never looked where he was going, walking in a straight line without mistake.

His eyes were closed - or as if their function had simply vanished - but he would suddenly change direction, as if sensing his path without seeing it, responding to a call that could neither be heard nor seen, but pulsed within him.

To my right, a woman sat perfectly still, her eyes wide open, yet she looked at nothing.

The light around her flickered, as if forming and fading, shapes changing color and dimming, as if addressing her in a language I had no eye to comprehend.

A child sat on a rock, unmoving, yet fully aware of who was approaching.

He didn't turn, didn't breathe with anxiety - he simply sat more firmly as another body neared, as if he sensed the warmth of intentions before they ever emerged.

Another stood by a small lake, closing her ears with her hands, beginning to listen - not to the water, but to the vibrations of the air above its surface.

It was as if she could hear frequencies that hadn't yet sounded... and voices whose time had not yet come.

I tried to approach one of them, but something in my body held me back before I could take a step - as if the decision was not mine.

Something inside said: "Don't spoil the sense with sound."

I stood where I was... and for the first time, realized that silence is not the absence of speech  
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But a deeper language, spoken when sounds can no longer bear the truth, or explain the world around us.

I walked further... Everyone I passed resembled people - yet they were not like us.

No one whispered, no one gestured, no one ran or shouted or explained.

And yet, everything was understood.

As if there was a hidden note, whispering from within each body to another - not spoken, not seen, but sensed.

Then a conviction seeped into me from nowhere - not as a fleeting idea, but as a deep memory suddenly rising from beneath my consciousness.

I felt, without anyone telling me, that among them I was not a stranger...

As if I hadn't entered this world, but returned to it.

As if I understood its laws not because I had learned them, but because I was recalling them, little by little, as the body remembers a dance it once performed before it was forgotten.

Here, a person was not measured by what he possessed, nor by his skills or even knowledge...

But by what had awakened in him of that which cannot be taught or passed down.

Rank here was not granted as an honor, nor announced as a title, nor earned by effort or inheritance -

It was an internal resonance, unseen and unmeasured, coming to you only when a sense within you matures - a call that no one else hears, believed only by those who have tasted it from within.

When a sense awakens within you, your place does not change... but you yourself change inside it.

As if you move not on the earth, but through invisible layers of perception.

As if light does not leave your eye to understand the world, but enters through it to reveal you to yourself.

And each sense that awakens opens a new door to the truth - not to see it, but to reshape your place within it.

Some people stopped at certain senses, never surpassing what was familiar.

Others reached deeper states of perception that defied easy explanation.

And there were those whose senses surpassed even the power of naming...

So that the senses could no longer grasp them, not because they disappeared, but because they were no longer perceived by means we knew.

They did not vanish, but turned into an ungraspable presence -

As if the body was just a stage, and when all the senses had awakened within, there was no longer any need to remain.

Among them, I saw a child standing alone, still, as if waiting for a pulse that had yet to come.

When he reached out his hand to the air, something in the atmosphere changed.

Then the glow softened, seeping into his skin as if he was remembering it.

I felt that I knew him - knew that feeling that overcame him.

As if I was him, or would one day be, or as if he was the sense I was still searching for inside myself.

I took a step forward and placed my hand on a low rock beside me.

Its surface felt cold at first, but then I sensed a pulse radiating from it toward me, as if it was calling my name.

And for the first time, I felt that the purpose of my eyes was not to see, but to remember -

As if they did not look out into the world, but dug for memory within it.

Here,

Where there is no time, no language, no definitions - only awakening senses.

This is not another era.

But memory that precedes time.

And as I lingered here, something within me began to calm.

I was no longer afraid, nor astonished. I simply felt that every minute spent here opened a new window within me.

No one explained anything to me, but I understood -

As if knowledge is neither conveyed, nor taught, nor imparted, but summoned from a deep place in consciousness.

I began to realize that what I was seeing was neither magic nor fantasy, but a different system of perception -

A world built on senses for which we have no names, but here, they form the language, the knowledge, the conduct.



That man building the structures?

He was not designing - he was remembering.

His movements were like an inherited dance, as if his very cells knew where every piece belonged, as bees do when they build their hives with no blueprints, but an infallible inner rhythm.

And the group moving in perfect harmony?

They were not coordinating roles, but acting as ants do, when they are part of a single consciousness, pulsing in all without a word.

And the man who could not see his path but never lost his way?

As if he held an invisible map, as migrating birds do, knowing their destination without seeing it.

The little girl who touched the tree?

She was not imagining - she was translating the voice of the roots, as elephants do when they listen to the earth with their feet, picking up the hidden call deep in the soil - one not spoken or heard, but felt as a truth expressed in a language without sound.

The woman watching the light?

She saw the frequencies hiding behind the spectrum, as insects do when they communicate soundlessly.

And the one who closed her ears?

She was not fleeing noise - she was listening for what had not yet arrived...

The vibrations of time.

As some sea creatures do, detecting changes in water pressure before an earthquake comes, fleeing the scene before disaster is born - not by intuition, but with a sense we no longer possess.

I did not understand this; I remembered it.

As if I had once owned those senses... and then lost them.

And I wondered: What would humanity have been like - if we had not forgotten?

If we felt those before us without words?

If we read the truth in another's heartbeat before hearing their speech?

What would life have looked like if there were no language - only resonance?

At that moment, something on the horizon shifted...

No sound, no shadow, only a feeling growing dense, clutching me from within.

My head turned slowly, not by my will, but as if something stronger had whispered for me to look.

The air changed, as if the silence of the world had breathed a new note - unheard, but felt vibrating in my chest.

And there, between the scattered trees, stood a boy.

His body was still, his gaze alive. His face betrayed no age, as if time had passed him by without leaving a mark.

He did not speak, did not smile. But he looked at me as though he'd known me before I was ever born.

That look? It was not curiosity, nor suspicion, but something like recognition -

As if he had finally seen the one who would complete the echo that had always been missing inside him... as if his own presence was not whole until this meeting.

I realized, without a word from him, that his name was Orian.

Not spoken, not engraved, but trembling inside me the way an ancient memory shudders when it wakes.

His gaze carried neither question nor answer, but resembled a mirror where you see what you never knew you were hiding.

For a moment, I felt that everything I had seen in this world was only a series of waves, leading up to his arrival -

As if every sense that awakened within me was preparing me to see him...

And that meeting him was not an event, but the purpose behind everything that came before.

He did not step forward, nor did I.

But the space between us shrank, as if it had never been.

And inside me, a voice unlike any voice said: "At last... you have arrived."

For the first time, I felt that I was no longer a visitor to this world...

The senses had dissolved me into it until I no longer separated it from myself.

As if I had not entered it - but rejoined its consciousness.

And I was not born anew within it, but remembered that I had always been a part of it.

## Chapter Nine: Trapped Between Two Civilizations

Something trembled deep inside me.

It wasn't pain, nor fear, but as if an entire world had just detached from me in an instant.

The place I had been in... bore no resemblance to where I found myself now.

A hidden wave - silent, colorless - dragged me out from my depths, as a soul might be pulled from a body unwilling to depart.

A faint vibration began at the edges of my skin, then rose up slowly, methodically, as if awakening the dead with caution, pierced my spine, and reached my head... then vanished.

What I experienced was not a vision. And it was not an illusion.

I had been in another world. In a time that did not recognize hours.

And now... something expelled me from it.

Or perhaps... something set me free.

I opened my eyes.

I was still standing where I'd been, as if my body had returned a step ahead of me, my soul still swaying between worlds...

Though their eyes said I'd only been gone for seconds...

Everything inside me screamed otherwise.

My father stared at me with clear worry - not because he'd sensed my absence, but because my features had changed suddenly, as if a wave of dizziness had washed over me, or I'd been about to fall.

He had seen only a second pass. But for me? I had seen an era.

An era not measured by time... but by what had changed within me.

And here I was - away from them for only an instant, the blink of an eye, but now a stranger among them.

I was not the same as when I left... Many things inside me had shifted.

It was a strangeness not like loss, but as if I'd been exiled from my world, and returned to a place that no longer recognized me, to which I no longer belonged.

My breath was heavy, and the world around me flickered, as if it too was trying to recall who I was... or as if I was the one struggling to remember it.

How strange - to become a stranger in your own world in the blink of an eye, as if time itself had veered off course for just a moment...

A fleeting moment enough to change everything.

The sky was blurred, gray, as if it had faded from memory.

Fine dust floated in the air, drifting into my breath like secrets with no door.

And in that stillness -

I noticed.

I heard footsteps.

Heavy, stifled steps, moving through gravel and dust as fear moves through the dark.

It was not my ears that caught them... but something deeper.

A vibrational sense washed over me, like a baby elephant feeling its first steps in a world invisible to the eye.

A hidden resonance... pulsing, calling to me in silence.

As if I was rediscovering my senses - ones that no longer functioned as I'd known.

They were senses I never imagined could exist in humans.

Something beyond hearing and sight, as if awareness itself had begun to listen.

I knew he was drawing near, creeping, crawling with deadly intent... though no one had seen him yet.

Only then did I realize the truth:

What I'd been through was not a dream... but a new kind of awakening.

My perception had returned from Asiria, but something from it had come back with me - or perhaps awoke inside me, in the passage between worlds.

I had no time to scream, not even to signal.

He emerged from nothing - no sound, no breath, only a shadow stretching suddenly across the dust, as if the air itself had frozen for his arrival.

From behind a towering rock atop the slope, he descended - a sliver of night split off from the mountain.

He moved without haste, yet everything about him spoke of death.

And when my eyes caught him, he'd already reached the old man.

He stood behind him, silent... as if he'd always been there, waiting for this moment.

Tall, broad-shouldered, his forearm bare, branded with a familiar mark -

The inverted pyramid within a broken circle.

His face was half in shadow, but the scar crossing his brow revealed an ancient cruelty, as if a forgotten battle had written its message there. His eyes were cold, his hand gripping a small, black pistol - its silencer barely visible.

There was no threat in his movement, only the certainty of execution.

He muttered words unlike any language I had known... as if pulled from the depths of a forgotten tomb.

Each syllable slid from his mouth saturated with a sinister rhythm, measured like a forbidden litany.

Not a prayer - but an incantation recited in darkness, when there are no witnesses, and no forgiveness.

In it was awakening, in it was death - his mouth a gate closing behind truth, and opening before the end.

“An assassin.”

Girgis whispered, his face contorted, color drained.

He leaned toward my father and whispered in a trembling voice laced with dread:

“They must have been watching us.

He’s one of them...

One of the Guardians of Asiria. He’s here now to erase everything that has left this mountain.”

My mother’s eyes widened.

Without hesitation, she gathered my little sister in her arms, then reached for me - slowly, with a terrifying calm, as if pulling a soul from the edge of a cliff.

I was dizzy... my head spinning, the air pressing against my forehead as if something heavy sat upon it.

I could no longer feel my feet, everything was light... and disorienting.

I didn’t even realize I was still standing until her arms closed around me. Only then did I know - I was still here... barely.

Something shrank in my chest, as if the very air could no longer contain me.

Then everything inside began to move - sounds that were not sounds, but pulses, hidden vibrations rising from the earth, climbing my bones as messages that carried no words.

I could no longer hear the footsteps - I anticipated them.

As if the movement was born inside me before it ever began outside.

A sense I had no name for... but it let me hear the unspoken, understand the unsaid.

I even smelled something sharp in the air - a faint scent of blood, unnoticed by anyone else, but present, swirling around me as a silent warning, announcing the approach of the inevitable.

The old man did not move from his place.

He stood, his back to the stranger, eyes fixed on me - not on the sky, nor the earth.

He did not turn. He had no need.

He knew exactly who stood behind him, as if his presence there was no surprise... but a prophecy long overdue.

“Enough muttering, my son...”

His voice was calm, but behind it a wall of suppressed rage.

“You are not guarding a civilization... you are guarding silence. This legacy needs witnesses, not guards.”

No answer came.

Silence expanded, as if the air itself refused to intervene.

I saw the man's neck veins swell slowly, the pulse racing under his skin like a hidden drum on the verge of bursting... his arm began to tremble, as if battling an irresistible command.

The old man continued, his voice slicing the silence, flinging truth as a long-buried burden no longer tolerable:



“The system that made you... turned you into a human wall, keeping truth from passing through.

It turned you into a killing tool cloaked in sacred slogans, programmed for obedience without question, as if your very soul had been stabbed in the name of purity.

What you are guarding is not Asiria, but their system.”

He closed his eyes, sighed deeply, as if bidding farewell to something unspoken, then added with even greater depth:

“If the world knew who Asiria was... the system would collapse.

The civilization of blood and ruin, built upon the ruins of truth, would crumble.

The order that feeds wars in the name of peace, hides secrets in the name of sanctity, would fracture.

And what these people guard... is not Asiria, but their own interests, keeping humanity shackled in a world that drains it, never serves it.”

A deep sigh, then he turned slowly, stepping forward.

His gaze pierced the wall of time, while the other grew more tense, jaw clenched, facial muscles contracting as if fire had suddenly ignited within.

The old man went on, his voice hardening, flinging the final truth - for the last time:

“We now stand at a single moment.

This boy among us... holds the power to explode memory - not only in his own mind, but in the hearts of all.

Our legacy is still alive... and we have a chance.”

Suddenly... the man exploded in fury. A voice erupted from him, as if a crack had opened in his chest - neither scream nor command, but a raging storm of ancient anger never told:

“You’re a traitor! You came to expose the secret... to bring into the light what was meant to be buried in the dark. You broke the oath - and you know full well the price of betrayal!”

His hand rose - the gun pointed -

And before the shot, I felt it.

I did not see it with my eyes - the old man had his back to me - but something inside me quivered, as if it caught the echo of a tear before it fell.

A moment unseen - cutting through the veil, letting me know that something had broken in silence.

I heard his voice, realizing this was the end, as if everything bowed to let his last word pass:

“You were a gravedigger for a false god... but you have not yet seen the light, my son.”

A shot.

Its sound was not a blast, but a sharp metallic sting, emerging from the silencer as a deadly whisper that sliced the air, ending everything.

He staggered back, clutching his chest as if gripping a secret he meant to carry away -

Then he turned toward me.

Blood flowed from him like a shattered spring, yet his hand did not fall.

He looked at me, extending his other hand...

His look was not a farewell, but a legacy passed in the final moment.

“The staff...”

He said it as if it was the word he’d been born for.

My sister screamed first.

The moan came from my mother's chest.

My father rushed toward us, pulled us in close.

Girgis did not move - something unseen pinned him to the earth, paralyzing every cell in him.

Then he shouted, his voice splitting the air, opening a wound that would never heal:

“You did it!”

He charged the man, eyes filled with a resolve beyond turning back.

His gaze blazed, as if something inside him had snapped, beyond all repair.

Words vanished, thought froze...

Only the sound of impact remained.

Their bodies crashed to the ground, feet drawing circles in the dust, the gun dropped.

The staff was in my hand.

The air behind us ripped like a wound, as if something invisible chased after our breath, wanting to swallow it before we could draw it in.

My heart ran ahead of me, not waiting for my feet.

We dashed to the car -

Flung open the doors as if breaking into salvation.

My father behind the wheel, started the engine, and the car shot off like a bullet escaping the barrel of death.

As we sped away, I looked back -

Saw Girgis' body lying on the ground, in a pool of blood, motionless as if life had abandoned him.

The man was still standing above him, gun in hand, faint smoke curling from the muzzle.

My mother cried out, her voice trembling:

“Faster! For God’s sake, go faster!”

Her voice broke in the middle, her hand gripping the seat as if she meant to rip the road up beneath us.

Behind us, the mountain remained, the old man, Girgis, and the nameless killer...

And something else that could never be buried or killed:

That we were no longer searching for a lost civilization,

But for the part that had been stolen from our souls.

For the truth that had been buried by those who claimed to protect it.

For those who disappeared in body... but whose cries still echo within us.

We had changed. But not of our own will - we were targeted.

And within each of us lies the seed of an origin we were forced to forget.

There are those who do not wish us to return to what we once were...

Because our return would expose the lie on which they built their existence, and bring down a system that thrives only when human awareness is stolen.

A civilization built upon burying civilizations, upon suppressing consciousness and manipulating perception -

It deliberately erases every trace that might threaten its existence, even if that trace is only a memory reminding us of what we once were.

For in the end, we are souls passing through, burdened with memory -

Not as a weight, but as a compass.

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This is not a book of answers.

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