

KINGDOM COME:
THE MAYAN ANSWER

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BOOK THREE OF THE
MAYA EARTH TRILOGY

CHAPTER ONE

Peruvia, California, the Magees' home, Sunday, November 11, 2012

THE EARTH SHUDDERED, HUGE AND THUNDEROUS.

Joe Magee pulled his two small children close to him and glanced toward the kitchen when he heard a glass hit the tile floor.

Amy Parrish Magee flew to the doorframe of that room.

“Was that an earthquake, Daddy?” their five-year-old son Adam asked.

“Not sure, son,” he said, hustling his little ones toward another strong-beamed doorframe.

The jolt felt different from other earthquakes. Nothing more happened, although they waited a full five minutes. No rolling, no sliding, no shaking. Perhaps it would start again shortly or maybe it wasn't an earthquake at all, which posed a different set of questions.

Joe let his squirmy eighteen-month-old daughter free to run to her toys, but he noticed Adam remained close to him. The boy likely remembered other earthquakes. He ruffled his son's blond hair, then he turned to his wife.

“Okay, what was that?”

“I don't know, but I'll go see what I can find out.”

Amy grabbed a light jacket and took off through the kitchen door toward the rise that led to the woodland, still misty at this hour. She knew the trees would soon be gone. The bushes were already cleared, and she touched tree trunks lightly with her fingers as she made her way to the other side of the forest, remembering a time when the sun shot blinding shafts through the tree branches, slicing the mist. Those days were past—enchanted mornings she would have to find someplace else. A camouflaged tarp covered the tree tops now, and beyond that was a cloudy late autumn sky.

At the other side of the forest, she saw a handful of Mayan workers and the reason for the booming jolt some minutes earlier. A huge redwood tree, cut in numerous sections lay at the workers' feet, but its main trunk, freshly cut and several feet in diameter, lay at hers. A mighty piece of wood, alive until moments ago, a glorious breathing creature brought first to its knees, then to its death, felt several pairs of hands as they prayed over its spirit. One of the men looked up at her.

“Would you like to pray with us?” he asked and invited her to lay her hands on the colossal trunk.

Amy joined them in welcoming the tree's spirit to join theirs on the journey toward all becoming one spirit, one life, together with the divine. She could almost feel its energy pulsing, its molecules scattering, as it transitioned from one life's form to another.

Are we all like that, she wondered. And when we die, do we leave some of our spirit behind for others to absorb?

She understood these beliefs, which belonged to the Maya peoples and many others around the world, were not part of the Christian faith in which she had been raised. But the parallels and coincidences that she repeatedly discovered on her own journey through life left many questions unanswered. They all nagged at her, and answers that had once seemed solid now yielded to more thought.

Amy figured whatever the truth was, it would likely be a great surprise to all of them when they finally got there.

Elder Simeón, one of the Mayan priests, joined the group and invited Amy to see the view from the top of the Temple of the Snakes on the largest of the three pyramids behind them. They spoke as they climbed the narrow, stone steps, Simeón holding her arm.

“We thought it was an earthquake.”

“A test,” he explained. “We needed to know the extent of sound a falling tree of this size would create here. We discovered it was not heard or felt in town. Just by you and your family. Sorry if it frightened you.”

“Not Poppy,” Amy responded, smiling, thinking of her young daughter. “I came out to see what it was.”

He nodded, and they climbed a few moments in silence.

“The view this morning is beautiful. The clouds are starting to break up. Come, I’ll show you.”

The tarp was strung above and around the pyramid, and Amy peeked through its mesh at the valleys and ringing hills. She looked up and saw bits of rich blue with its usual measure of parfait swirls between the clouds. She knew when Simeón left her to enjoy the morning, and she knew when someone else joined her, feeling his presence before he spoke.

“You have one more task to perform.”

“I thought we were done,” she returned but felt the smile cast on her before she turned to see it.

“Nothing is ever done,” Will Rodriguez responded. “It is always becoming.”

Amy’s gaze fell to the steep steps of the pyramid and to the far-away ground. In the distance, she could make out the dot of the big house where she and Joe lived with their two children.

“What’s your diversion so nobody will hear all the chain saws?”

“You can’t wait until tomorrow to find out? Why don’t you ask me, instead, what your last task is?”

She’d been avoiding the question. These last eighteen months had been so normal for her, if anything at all could be called normal in recent years. It had been full of secrets and excitement about future days but quiet.

“Okay. Out with it.”

“My sister will bring the royal robes up these steps for the Transition ceremony. You will ascend with her, carrying something else.”

Amy’s mind raced. Royal robes. . . for the coronation of a new king? But the boy Umoxtl was so young. She had thought this event would not occur for at least ten years or so and that there’d be another kind of ceremony on December 21st, more of a change from one age to another, not a transition of leadership.

And did that mean Princess Marxan’s time was near? That news had been devastating enough, when they’d told her yesterday, but she’d always thought it was in the future, not anytime soon. And she didn’t know if they’d really go through with it. After all, this was a very careful bunch of Maya priests who prayed over everything before they made a decision. Sometimes they changed their minds.

She searched Will’s eyes but found nothing. As ranking Lord of the Maya, he kept everything moving to the next age, revealing each piece as its time came, guiding everyone. She knew he knew what she was thinking and asked a different question.

“What will I be carrying?”

“The staff itself is here, but its crystal orb is hidden within a cavern where it has been guarded by the gods and human guardians for centuries, awaiting this time in history, awaiting your visit and its liberation. There’s something else there you need to bring back.”

She looked to him for enlightenment.

“I don’t know what it is. We’ll both find out when we get there.”

“When do we go?”

“Soon. I’ll bring your tickets tomorrow.”

They remained where they were, taking in the swirls of color through the tarp.

“Glorious, isn’t it?”

She nodded.

“We all shine through it,” he continued.

“The fragrance of the lilies is amazing. I can even smell them up here.”

“Yes. The future will be good. You have only to trust.”

“All the time?” she asked.

“We will overcome time.”

Will continued to speak to her in riddles. But what would all those Maya gods whose purpose and obsession had been watching over time for millennia suddenly do without a job? If idleness was the devil’s workshop, as Amy’s grandmother had often said, would there be more mischief in the next world?

He guessed her thoughts.

“With joy they will rest from their labors. Their ceaseless work made many of them cross. So much

distrust in the world. So much fear and greed.”

“Don’t they care?”

“The peoples of the world are growing up.”

She thought for a moment.

“Will this all go smoothly?”

He shrugged.

“How many times do I have to tell you that I don’t know everything?”

She looked thoughtful.

“I worry about Panhuaja and all his people, those two men who came with Panhuaja’s brother when he challenged you at the trial in jade, the problems with the world today, hunger, poverty, natural disasters, greed—”

He held out his hand to stop her.

“Have you forgotten to trust?”

“Do you worry about nothing at all?” She had children to care for who depended on her and Joe to feed and protect them.

He hesitated, his expression changing.

“The lilies will do their job, as will the lights in the sky. Soon everyone will begin to feel the energy if they open their hearts. All will happen as it should happen, as it was destined to happen from all time. Are there still dangers? Sure.”

She cast a questioning look at him.

“Still, you don’t look worried. Six weeks is a long time.”

He smiled.

“Amy, six weeks brings us only to the beginning. Many challenges lie ahead.”

His words were puzzles heaped on puzzles. If a new world began on December 22, was that what he meant by “only to the beginning?” Did that mean she wouldn’t just wake up and see a whole new world? Every time he talked to her, he gave her a different perspective. And yet. . .

Her mind told her there were way too many loose ends not to worry. What about Panhuaja, the brother of his people’s traitor? Where was he and what was he up to? Had he accepted his lack of position in the new world, as it seemed? Did he accept remaining banished?

Or, did he have plans of his own. . . ?

Santa Marita, Guatemala

IT WAS LATER THAN USUAL IN THE DAY, but the fish, confused by the rainbow lights in the sky, swam vigorously near the surface of the stream. Panhuaja leaned against his favorite tree, pondering the fish, the sky, his dead brother, the trial in jade, the mother who ceaselessly loved him no matter what, his murdered father, and the grandfather who had hated him and changed his life.

The disobedience of his people centuries before had been the real catalyst in his world. He would never know what was behind their thinking or what his life would have been like had the tribe obeyed their Lord of the Maya. But Panhuaja knew that had they never disobeyed and been banished, things would have been very different.

There was much to consider. Xarantu was not the evil man his grandfather had led him to believe; he was decent and fair. Clearly the gods were on his side or the trial would not have gone his way. But Xarantu was not the original, destined leader of the Maya for this final phase of the Fifth World. Should it be happening this way? He’d thought about this for nearly two years and at nineteen, he was no closer to figuring it all out than he had been at the end of the trial.

Before his grandfather had arranged for his father’s untimely death, Panhuaja had spent much time with his father and learned his people’s history. He continued his secret study of Mayan hieroglyphs for years, not daring to share this with his younger twin brother who tormented him constantly no matter what he did. He went to pains to keep everything he did from his grandfather, as well. Panhuaja knew so much more than they guessed.

Like Panhuaja’s father, Xarantu shared the knowledge freely and had recently given him a tall, narrow

book to read, a book on stiff bark folded like an accordion. As he struggled through the glyphs, it began to shed light on the Mayan people, their early days and years. The Maya were an amazing people, yet the book did not reveal their origins. It referred, instead, to the many who arrived in their lands over the centuries, some in flimsy canoes, others in bigger boats, many on foot, who came from all corners of the known world and contributed to the culture that was already here. It spoke of answers that would be shared at a transition ceremony to the new age.

Who was to say which one was right, the gods, the priests, the ones who voted to banish his chosen tribe? And what if Xarantu was really the one to take control and do a better job of transitioning the world to the new age? Maybe it was the will of the gods that Panhuaja stay out of the picture. Xarantu was older, and perhaps he was wiser than Panhuaja. There was that to consider. He felt the gods must still have a plan for him, though, or more likely a use for him in their plans.

Panhuaja returned to his study of the lights in the sky and the puzzled fish, and noticed a patch of pink-tipped lilies growing on the other side of the creek. He could smell their pungent fragrance from where he sat. Funny, he'd never seen lilies growing here before, but there they were.

Then he looked again at his book and felt strongly that he should be doing something.

Kona on the Big Island, Hawai'i, late Sunday night

BALOXTLAN YAWNED.

A rainbow of sky lights danced off the water, fractured by ripples, scattered to infinity.

"Go to sleep," his companion Memotixuatzin told him.

"It's so beautiful. I don't want to miss it."

Memotixuatzin made no comment. Some people blamed global warming; others touted the coming end of the world, the approach of Judgment Day. Maybe it really was the end of the world. Nobody was around from the last magnetic pole reversal to tell them what it had been like. So the Mayan worried, but he didn't need his friend to panic right now. Not until they were all safely tucked away somewhere when the magnetic poles completed their reversal. Or the end of the world arrived when the planets all lined up. Or whatever was really going to happen.

It was easy to collect on people's fears when so many of the world's cultures and religions were thinking the end was near. Old Ua'metl had told him that money could buy anything and the Mayan gods always favored the strong. Survival and the new world would be their reward. He was sure of it.

It also meant that Icarus, the mysterious man who had been telling them where to go and whom to meet for the past year and a half, was a very smart man. Their contacts were always there, always on time, always willing to listen to the message of hope and donate money for a share in a fabled valley of safe haven—protected from magnetic disturbances. They now had a real bank account, off shore, and it was filling up fast. Icarus was surely making a lot of money off this, but it was nice to be a part of it.

The pair lounged in their sleeping bags just inside the brush boundary by the black sands on the Kona coast of Hawai'i's big island, a delightful change from the four walls of a hotel, no matter how luxurious. They'd been around the world since the debacle of the trial in jade in Peruvia.

Some of his contacts were high in governments. He kept to the script Icarus had given him and it worked. Many had welcomed his proffered help and insight where fear of loss of power in a threatening new world order was great. Money flowed when people felt a predicted world ending could be averted if they were the ones to take charge. So much money—and they were so close.

Yet other problems surfaced. As the group began to bulge at the seams, some now challenged Memotixuatzin's authority from time to time. But it was tricky trying to reach his benefactor and the communications had started coming through e-mail. He'd had to buy a cheap laptop computer and learn its basic functions. Every time he tried to reply to an e-mail, it was rarely answered, so he was pretty much on his own with his concerns, at least until his next task came.

He began to represent himself as a broker and not the leader. It brought less hostility and more trust from his new recruits to whom he promised much power and authority, huge returns on their investments. He spoke of a backer of unimaginable brilliance and vision who was looking for someone to oversee everything, made many promises supported by carefully forged and many-times folded letters with

unintelligible signatures. They took the bait. Yet he still feared the monster might be growing beyond his control.

“Look!” Baloxtlan spoke. “It’s changing again. Now there are streaks of green. That scent smells good, too. I feel. . . peaceful.”

“If you’re so peaceful, go to sleep. We have a lot to do and little time left to do it.”

At this, Baloxtlan rose up on an elbow and stared at his friend.

“You told me this was almost over.”

“It is, but I also told you we still had lots of work to do.”

“But it’s only a few weeks away. I thought we were all set. That guy Icarus said we only had to do this until December 21. Then we could stop.”

“Remember all those people we met? They might seem nice and friendly, but they are very powerful and can be dangerous if anything goes wrong. That’s what I’m focused on right now—keeping everything going smoothly.”

“What’s next?” Baloxtlan asked.

“I’ll tell you more when we get to Santa Marita and meet with Panhuaja,” he answered, sharing his latest directive from Icarus.

Baloxtlan laid back and closed his eyes, glad they were on their way to speak with Panhuaja. He’d always thought they should have brought the older twin into the game early on, but Memotixuatzin was the leader and had nixed that plan. Good to know his friend had reversed his thoughts on the matter. Panhuaja was the one they should have gone to in the first place.

Memotixuatzin ignored his friend’s light snore and wrapped his arms around his raised knees, shot a glance at the sky show, then out to sea. He inhaled deeply but smelled only the sea and heard nothing but the rushing waves.

ICARUS HAD WAITED PATIENTLY all these months, watching over his protégées, but now things would need a boost. It was time to bring Panhuaja into the mix and see what happened.

Yes, it was all going well.

Exactly as planned.