

Prologue

Darkness and light; good and evil are all part of the same life force. They were not separated in the dawn of creation, nor are they distinct elements within humanity today. It is a never-ending spiritual battle to exist within these two realms. Despite their best efforts, people cannot fully comprehend this conflict within their short lifespan. That was the plight of their early ancestors and it will likely be the curse of their future generations.

But it does not have to be; if they could only have remembered the simple truth.

A single dramatic event in the Appalachian foothills of Ohio in 1927 provided the genesis for a dark and ancient life force to converge on the pristine, rolling farmlands. While life had always been challenging for those who lived there, this dark energy transfigured their world. The change was slow and almost imperceptible. Within several decades, many lives would be tragically lost and families would be scattered across the continent, never wanting to return.

This is the story of some of those families who lived in and around Noble County, Ohio. Their family roots went back to the mid-eighteen hundreds, many of them refugees from the turbulent and feudal Kingdom of Bavaria. Most of them were aligned with their German churches and came to this country in immigrant groups, longing for a better way of life. Noble County and America was not fulfilling their dreams as poverty and the chaos of the Civil War unfolded before them.

Those who were impatient or weak in spirit began to turn away from their Christian religion. They sought out a "quick fix" for their troubles and turned to powers beyond their human understanding.

They had forgotten the truth.

As they followed this dark path, they often failed to recognize the danger that awaited them and the ones they loved. Perhaps they felt that the faster they accumulated wealth and power, the more enjoyable life would be. The more they received the less likely they were to share with others. It soon became a vicious cycle of selfishness and over-indulgence. To them, it felt natural. They had given a piece of themselves to the Devil, but there were dues to pay; sooner or later.

They already knew this, but greed made them forget the universal truth.

For there was no reason to stop and search their soul; these people lived for the moment. The world revolved around their incessant need for pleasure and power. It was a black abyss they would not understand until it was too late.

Humanity had been making this same mistake repeatedly since they achieved a higher level of consciousness eons ago. However, there were brief times when they saw the light and understood where they had come from and where they were going.

This story involves one of those rare moments when people stepped back and recognized the madness that was created around them. Amidst the grief and the mysterious deaths of his own family, Drew Christman is thrown headlong into a voyage of discovery, not aboard his nuclear submarine navigating the vast oceans, but in his pastoral childhood home in Southern Ohio.

What Drew and his new friends discover is something most people will never have to deal with in their lifetimes. It is the direct confrontation with the unseen forces of chaos which humanity helped to create. Along the way, there was additional heartache and suffering, but none of them retreated from it.

This is the story of how it all began, deep in the wooded forests of the Appalachian foothills, far from urban centers and clustered homes; a place that could be both serene and surreal. Quiet enough for a person to hear their own heartbeat at night, yet so ungodly loud during a storm. Noble County is a dichotomy. It is a place of beauty and of ugliness; of compassion and hatred; of goodness and evil; and of course, darkness and light.