



the BINDING

From Ancient Egypt he came ... to save the future



JOHN PARHAM

Chapter 9

Levitating with Juno

Jerry picked up his cell phone to make the call to Lazlo. The cat seemed agitated and jumped across the bed to land on his dialing hand. Jerry hesitated for a heartbeat, jumped up and shrieked, “What the hell?” Then he dropped the phone.

Juno focused his golden eye on Jerry and more or less floated or jumped over to the windowsill. Jerry at least thought he saw the cat floating and thought his eyes were still playing tricks on him.

“What?” Jerry asked somewhat excited.

At the windowsill, the black cat stretched and put her paw on the window lock, which was unlatched. *Okay, what is this about*, Jerry thought as he shuffled over to close the lock. There were two more windows in his apartment; unclear what to do, he checked those too. *Hell, I always lock the door but never pay any attention to the window locks.*

Jerry would soon appreciate the extra protection locked windows could provide, and how a lost black cat could contribute to having continued good health.

Nikola thought the time was ripe for intervention, so he imbibed in his traditional mission drink: vodka. The ceremony was always successful for him, and he liked the taste and calmative effect it brought him. The vodka ratcheted his adrenaline down a notch or two and delivered him to the space he needed to become silent as the Ghost. Stealthy, silent and deadly, he steeled

himself to carry out his mission. Nikola whispered to the occupant of apartment 13F, “Good luck in the coming mayhem.”

After he made sure he had locked the apartment, including the rear bathroom window, Jerry felt a little better. The back bathroom window was three floors up, so he thought it would be the most secure area of the apartment. The three windows and front door would be the most vulnerable. Jerry felt safe in his apartment and did not realize the mayhem that the countdown clock had already started.

Nikola completed his vodka ritual and silently slid from his car to complete his mission to capture the cat. Confidence high and with his PSS pistol at the ready, he checked once more the vented canvas tote bag for the cat. He knew Lazlo and realized he would not pay for a deceased cat.

Nikola exited the Camry and ascended the stairs to the third floor. He turned right in the opposite direction of apartment 13F. *Plenty of time. I should do a little reconnoiter on the property first*, Nikola thought. He continued by several apartments to make sure no loud noises or other activity were present to compromise his stealth.

“This is it,” Nikola said abstractly as he had already played the attack out in his mind. *First, check the windows and if unlocked, gain entrance to the apartment. If locked, proceed to the door as the last option.* He knew of the back bathroom window but at three stories high, he did not consider that an escape route.

Nikola was humming on all cylinders, finely tuned by his training while in the Chechen Kadyrovtsy Special Services. Not much more to do than enter the apartment, dispose of the occupant and seize the cat. Easy assault and no one gets hurt, except for the occupant, unfortunately.

Nikola thought of himself not as a bad guy but as someone with unique skills, making a living as best he could. This would be a rescue with a high price, even if Lazlo didn't know it.

Nikola made his reconnoiter and did not expect any real resistance. Nikola was confident the occupant had no weapons; besides, if he did, it would not make any difference. He checked the windows and found them locked.

Jerry, alerted by the cat, heard pressure being placed on the window sill locks. First, one window lock then the next. "I am running out of windows," Jerry whispered to himself. Totally out of his element, Jerry thought about calling 911, but he knew it would be over before 911 could arrive.

He glanced at the cat who projected a calmness as he sauntered into the bathroom. Jerry could swear he heard the cat say, "Follow me," or was it a meow? Either way, the slight panic had morphed into a tsunami of emotions. Jerry's psyche was in neutral as he thought *ok, let's go into the bathroom*. For a split second, he thought about meowing, "OK!"

Jerry entered the bathroom and discovered the cat on the windowsill with his paw on the latch. "Okay, I will bite. What the hell do you suggest we do?" Jerry asked loudly to the cat. The cat meowed something again that sounded like, "Open."

"What the hell do you mean *open*, It is three floors down to a not pleasant landing."

The cat seemed undeterred and meowed, "Open." Jerry was confused but reached over and flipped the locking mechanism open.

Nikola was confident that this would be a quick snuff and grab, and the money he would demand from Lazlo would make this a profitable mission. With all the windows locked, he headed for the front door.

It doesn't matter, Nikola thought. Blow through the door, two taps to the head and package the cat. Easy in and out, no one gets hurt, except the apartment resident.

When he flipped the bathroom window open, Jerry thought he heard a stressed sound on the window. He accepted that an intruder intended to harm him with great prejudice and thought of a way out. He knew a three-story jump might be fatal, and what would he do with the cat? Hell, the cat was probably the only reason he was in this predicament.

For a fleeting moment, Jerry considered opening his apartment door to inquire what was going on. Maybe he could at least negotiate a settlement. That thought went out the window as he and the cat huddled in the bathroom with a locked door. Then, he heard wood splintering.

When Jerry heard the door splinter, the cat looked at Jerry, this time with his golden eye. He placed his paw on his arm and somehow conveyed to Jerry, "Jump." Jump they did. Rather, they floated, as Jerry later surmised. They should have been killed

If Jerry had time, he would have pondered how they could have jumped three stories and landed without a scratch. Jerry landed on his feet with the cat on his shoulder. "How the hell did that happen?" Jerry absently asked the cat.

The cat looked at him with both eyes open and somehow conveyed to Jerry, "If this is Dodge, then let's get the hell out."

“What?” Jerry said aloud, then thought, “You’re damn right. It’s time to get the hell out of Dodge,” Jerry agreed and sprinted to the nearby tree line as the black cat dug into his shoulder, holding on.