

THE TRIBULATION

by

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PROLOGUE

A Prophet had appeared in the early part of the twenty-first century, the last in a long line of healers, visionaries and mystics down through the ages. People around the world heard his message of oncoming devastation and his warning that the only shelter that would save them would be their own inner strength and nobility of spirit.

In response to his mission of compassion, the Prophet was beaten to death by an angry mob. No one wanted to face reality, not until it slammed into them in all its fury.

A handful of the Prophet's followers were left behind with instructions from their beloved teacher to survive the cataclysms ahead as best they could and start again. Religions and technologies had failed humanity. Only these few men and women inspired by the wisdom transmitted to them by the Final Prophet could offer desperate people a path to sanity and renewal.

But the odds were amassed against them. Not only was the planet facing utter destruction from wild weather changes, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods and a dreaded pole shift, but the world government considered them their most fierce some enemies. These humble few were carriers of truth that defied all the illusions which the iron-fisted Federation had instilled in the minds of the masses. Such persons were as dangerous as the storms gathering across the globe.

The time of reckoning was here. Everyone would have to face this age of transition in one of two ways—in utter horror and despair or with the slim hope that renewal lay on the other side of catastrophic earth changes. The second option would vanish entirely if it was known what forces were at the heart of the destruction, forces that were darker and more savage than Nature's mightiest upheavals.

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The lights had gone out in the human soul. Every aspect of life was drenched in the most primitive, sub-animal forms of behavior. Relationships, education, religion, politics, entertainment—all were seeping into a black hole of meaninglessness and despair.

Not even the newly formed mammoth military-political complex that transcended former national boundaries could stamp out the ever-present threat of fanatic and bloodthirsty terrorist cell groups hidden away on all parts of the globe. The killing of the innocent had become a hobby of the disenchanted and marginalized who measured their worth according to the volume of gore spread on city streets. The skills of these shadowy groups rivaled the sophistication of the Assassin sects of Medieval Arabia. In the new century, terrorism was a

tool that belonged to all races and religions. It was the means of choice for venting rage, despair, and madness. Such feelings were everywhere among a species that had lost its conscience and any traces of meaning as to its purpose in the cosmos. The law of the jungle reigned supreme even in this high-tech global civilization.

The Federation was forever on search and destroy missions against these elusive groups, facing hopeless odds against stamping them all out. The population simply had to accept the risk of living in these times. Personal safety was no longer guaranteed, not by the dynasties of insurance companies or multinational medical corporations who ruled the economies of the world and the lives of each person. Everyone was trapped in a colossal system that was not designed for personal welfare. Every human life was an unstable pressure cooker held down by an ever more oppressive world government that knew everything there was to know about each person. This was the very reason why entertainment was now the drug of choice. It numbed the pain and absurdity of living in such a world. But entertainment was the most invasive and insidious oppressive force of all. It stole a greater freedom than the military forces could hope to accomplish. It stole the freedom to think for oneself and make some sense out of life in the twenty-first century.

A highly toxic influence had slipped into the international media culture that dominated the human mind in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. How it had gotten there, taking center stage in the hearts and souls of people across the globe, could not be tracked. It had simply appeared as though overnight. In its wake lay a hundred years of slow development leading to the current state of affairs. In less than a century—the blink of an eye—everything had changed.

Young children were now bred on the most horrific displays of violence masquerading as harmless entertainment. Every child on every continent was influenced to the very roots of his soul by the all pervasive presence of the media. Subliminally or overtly, the great masses of humanity were shaped, brainwashed, manipulated through the powers hidden behind seemingly innocent entertainment. The technology originally developed to project a satisfying stimulus meant to generate ticket sales had reached a level of sophistication undreamt of by its creators. Neither Thomas Edison nor Charlie Chaplin had ever imagined that flickering images could mutate into spiritual vampires. Little boys built their identity on models spoon-fed from earliest childhood by their electronic mother, the television set. Little girls were told how to look and behave in songs and fashion by idolized and vacuous movie stars.

For years it was only the greedy heads of movie studios and crafty corporate executives who orchestrated these irresponsible assaults on the human soul. But now the media had become a precise tool in the hands of another power whose agenda was far more complex than retrieving money from the bored masses. Whether comedy or drama, everything had a common underlying thread. The same assumptions and prejudices were hidden behind the spell of imagery and myth-making. Only the very few could see it, and none of them lived long once they tried to speak up. The world government had a crucial stake in controlling the thought processes of a dangerously overpopulated planet on the verge of self-destruction.

An invading alien army could not have more thoroughly conquered the people of earth. The battle did not require bombs and generals. The invasion was from within, through the psyche

of each individual.

These forces which now dominated the international media were unknown even to the producers of this toxic material. Behind the cameras, glamorous personalities, and obscene mountains of money was the hideous face of demonic power whose mission was known only to lone visionaries and prophets.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, individual thinking had nearly vanished. But no one would believe that they were not originators of their own ideas. The illusion was overwhelming and yet nearly invisible. It was as though an all-powerful hypnotist had waved his hand across the sight of humanity and magically taken over the will, mind, and heart of countless millions. The question was, what kind of magician held this control?

The human body was desecrated into a marketing commodity, an object of lust to sell trinkets. The international sex trade had reinvented slavery for a new millennium, herding daughters and sons of the desperately poor into whorehouses on every continent where businessmen indulged themselves on company credit cards.

The mythic heroes of the day were techno-barbarians, wielding the latest weaponry with the same savagery that hurled Europe into the dark ages at another turning point of history. But this time the cruelty of these Neanderthal gods was praised and glorified rather than reviled and condemned. The dignity of being human was now mutilated beyond recognition, if not utterly forgotten.

An ancient saying from pre-sand Egypt echoed down the halls of human wisdom: "As above so below." The latest insights of quantum physics confirmed this intuitive vision of the nature of reality. The same dynamics found in the Macrocosmos—the vast expanses of the universe—could also be witnessed in the core of the Microcosmos, within the most infinitesimal particle. So it was with the human drama. Weather crises were reflected in psychological turmoil. Planetary catastrophes mirrored themselves in conflict across the globe, whether in the intimacy of human relations or in the political clashes between nations.

The onset of the great Tribulation was manifesting at every level of life. The oceans of the world stirred with storms and bizarre changes in temperatures. Human hearts and minds did the same, desecrating the last shreds of civilized behavior. Never had chaos reigned so supreme in the soul of men, women, and children. It was as though humanity were being hurled toward a vortex of destruction by powers utterly intent on that result.