



Dies Irae — Day of Wrath

Oil on Wood Panel

Disclosure: The return of the Ancients

The Saga of the Annunaki

Volume 3

A Novel

written by

Christine Berthel

This Tale is a Reflection on Fate as the Result of
Action

And on the meanders of Hyperspace where Reality
defies Fiction

When seen through the eyes of Extra-terrestrials who
enjoy extremely long lives.

E-Book published on Bookelis

Paperback: Second imprint by Bookelis on 11.11 2020

ISBN: 979-10-359-3435-4

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This book has been independently published on Amazon.com, for the first time, in November 2019, in English

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Academic Publication under the name of Christine Bertel:

The nuclear filamentous inclusions of a human glioma. Their relation with nuclear bodies

C. Bertel, J. Gouranton

European Journal of Cell Biology, Volume 25, No 1, August 1981

I dedicate this book with love to the Ancients who
came here long ago,
Whose civilisation drowned during the Great Flood,
To Those who are living now on Mars, Venus, and on
several moons in our solar system,
And, of course, to Ea Anki, Lord of the Abzu.

I also thank my husband Noël who accompanied me
on this journey into our past and future.

Prologue

The Exodus of the Annunaki

Three months and two weeks before the Great Flood drowned the most wondrous of all civilisations on planet Earth, a procession of three hundred and fifty-six souls slowly advanced across the rugged terrain of the large landmass in the west. One pregnant woman walked among them, and four small children.

They were heading to Lord En-Ki's space port, which had been built on the slopes of the first mountain ridges, when you came from the ocean. The site was one of the gates to the sky, a haven shrouded in the greyness of the mists rising from the valleys. Here, two space ships would be waiting for them, for Ea En-Ki, Lord of Ki, had promised to give them sanctuary on Lahmu, the sixth planet.

Most of these people were refugees from Atalantash, and they belonged to the race of the Annunaki and their descendants.

They had believed when envoys sent by Lord En-Ki told of a great flood which was certain to come, and the scientific data provided by Lady Anta Uriah — "In-Anna" — had helped to convince them more than anything

else. They had believed, and they had gathered their children and their most important belongings, and they had packed the crates and bags into magnetically powered vehicles and carts.

Guided by Lady In-Anna, they had boarded two tall ships which carried them from Atalantash towards the north, and she had promised to accompany them until they arrived safely at their haven.

Silently, the emigrants had stood on the railing and watched the southern coastline with its cliffs and lighthouses disappear, until even the high summits near the south pole disappeared behind the horizon. They had been sailing away from their home, and their hearts had been heavy. Solace could only be found in the company of the others, and in simple gestures of comfort, a hand holding the hand of someone who cried, or the gentle touch of a face.

They had abandoned everything dear to them: their former life with the friendly gatherings and the happy feasts, the schools and libraries, their work and everyday chores, and they had turned their back on the wide land with its many lakes and meres. Perhaps, leaving Atalantash had been the most difficult thing to accomplish ever, for they loved their land, they cherished it, and the knowledge that it was doomed was even harder to bear.

Lady In-Anna understood the sadness of her fellow voyagers all too well, for she had also left someone very dear to her behind. They all had.

The weather had been fine, the waves had been gently rising and falling, while the clouds accumulating above had sometimes darkened the sea with their shadows. But as they had been approaching the equator, temperatures had been rising, and it had almost been too warm to sleep below deck.

At the same time, a strong current in the ocean had been carrying them onwards, northwards, and one morning, they had found themselves at fifteen degrees latitude, too far north and too close to the equator, and there, the wind had completely dropped. Not even the slightest breeze had filled the sails, and the sky had resembled a metallic sheet pressing down from above on the glistening expanse of water.

Fortunately, the electromagnetic propulsion system had been well-maintained, and they had blessed the technology which rendered them independent of nature when it failed them.

At last, they had arrived at their destination: a seaport on the shores of the western landmass. There, they had disembarked with all their luggage. Two among Lord En-Ki's officers, his sons Nammu and Nergal, had personally come down from Hyperspace, or teleported here, or re-incarnated somehow, or descended from the Abzu which was a part of Hyperspace — with the Annunaki from the old lineage, one could never be quite sure about these things. They had come to greet them and to guide them on their trek towards the waiting space ships.

The three officers had tenderly embraced Lady Anta In-Anna, from whom they had been separated, ever since she had been excluded from the Abzu by an unlawful decree.

Then, after one abundant meal, the last feast on Planet Ki, the second part of the journey began, this time on foot. The refugees had brought luggage, bags, crates, and all sorts of small containers, but this was not a problem for their weight-lifting machines and transporter units, and soon, all were courageously trudging on, in a long-drawn-out caravan.

At present, the elder ones were strolling stately, and their pace was slow, while the younger ones would saunter or even skip and scamper along. Despite a sense of urgency which they all felt, they made slow progress, for they had to wait for the weakest among them. It was essential that Nindamar, the woman with child, avoided too much physical effort. The height and size of the Annunaki varied, but their caravan held together, and the tall and the short, the old and the young were walking one after the other, and two by two, in a winding row.

Lord En-Ki's sons composed the rear-guard. The helmets on their heads were full of magnetic micro spirals and spools, and it made them twice as tall as all the others, and when they intoned the weight-lifting chant, they were formidable. Humming and chanting deep harmonics, they created a resonance with the electromagnetic field of the transporter units, and this, in turn, interacted with the charged field of their

helmets. As a result, they were able to raise and carry even the heaviest cargo, from the personal crate to whatever granite stone slab was necessary for a building.

Soon, the younger Annunaki joined in the singing with their clearer voices, and together they marched on. However, only the deeper voices could trigger and build up the acoustic force fields which enabled levitation. Therefore, this was men's business, and only the grown men were the builders in their society. All other professions were equally shared between men and women, except child-bearing, of course.

It took them four whole months to reach the first mountain slopes. In the evenings, they would build up a fire and heat water, and a pot of lentils or peas for a rich soup. Then, they would sing together, or tell stories until late in the night before wrapping themselves in their thermal blankets for a few hours of sleep. At dawn, they would pack their belongings, fill their water skins with fresh water, and resume their trek across the undulating lands, while the men chanted again the acoustics which triggered the forcefields of the weight-lifting units.

Not so long ago, Ea Anki had charted the terrain and surveyed the area from space. Therefore, their maps were accurate and permitted them to pick the easiest path. Gradually, meadows gave way to more arid, stony shrublands, where the uneven ground sometimes made them stumble. It was daunting, but the strong helped the weak to overcome any obstacle.

Three weeks later, they reached the first mountain slopes. From then on, the hike went uphill, into regions where frequent rainfalls had allowed the growth of dark trees and a rich undergrowth.

Eventually, one day at noon, they arrived at the rallying point. In a vast clearing surrounded by high coniferous trees, mostly fir trees, larch and yew, several massive platforms with a square base seemed to fill the whole space. Huge granite stone slabs had served to construct these platforms, and the flat tops had been perfectly levelled with atomic cutters, so that not the slightest asperity marred the smooth surface.

There, the Annunaki beheld them: Lord Ea En-Ki's space ships. Real space ships!

Poised on two of the truncated pyramids, the jewels of their ancient civilisation were waiting for the travellers. The two gleaming metal disks were clearly outlined against the dark-green background of the rocky and overgrown overhang and ready to take flight. Their hulls were seamless and without rivets, providing an ideal protection for their passengers.

It was a moment of intense emotion, and it seemed that time stood still, frozen in the moment, as if the universe held its breath. Even the birds made no sound in the quietness of noon. These were the same ships which had brought the Annunaki under the leadership of Lord Ea Enki to this planet, the planet which had received its name from them: Ki, and now, these same

ships were going to carry the Annunaki away from Earth.

They had come full circle.

The Annunaki from Atalantash had not seen such in their lifetimes, for Lord En-Lil's space fleet had been reduced to just one functioning ship which he guarded jealously like the apple of his eye, and the magnetic drives of his ship had sometimes trouble to perform near the poles. Only his brother, Lord Ea En-Ki, still owned fully operating spacecraft.

Until now, the Annunaki had not really believed that they would leave Ki and travel to another planet, but now, the eventuality had become a tangible reality. Reverently, and a little scared, they touched the shiny metal hulls and looked up at the towering vessels, these testimonies of their glorious past, as if they wanted to reassure themselves that they were not an illusion.

Little by little, the rest of the company wandered into the clearing, filling it, and milling around in the sun, until even the last stragglers trundled in. As soon as all were present — no one had gone missing — Lord En-Ki contacted his three sons and called for an outdoors meeting.

When the airlock of the nearest space ship opened, the Annunaki held their breath.

There he was! Lord Ea En-Ki in Person!

As he appeared in the shadow of the open airlock, Anta In-Anna's heart leapt with joy. A sigh rose from

deep within her as she looked at him in rapture. Ooh, how much she had missed him!

Overawed, the Annunaki emigrants bowed down deeply. Never had they dreamed of meeting one of the heroes of old in the flesh, one of the legendary figures of the beginning, at that! Before the tall, black-haired man with the powerful aura, who just had descended from the Abzu — the cosmic sea, — they felt very small and insignificant.

Another man held himself two steps behind him: Lord Anki's first son on Ki, Lord Nin Gishzida, who was almost as tall as his father. No one had seen Nin Gishzida for such a long time that the memory of him had almost faded into greyness. Nowadays, he resided permanently in Hyperspace, but for his endangered brethren, the Annunaki, he had teleported here.

During their long voyage on the ship, Anta had explained what awaited the pioneers, and she had told them that it was Nin Gishzida who would pilot the second space vessel. For the Annunaki emigrants, this was another hero of old who had stepped right out of a legend.

In the Here and the Now and not in any legend, Lord En-Ki stood still for a moment in the open hatch of his spaceship and scrutinized their faces. His gaze was far-reaching and seemed to search their very souls, and many had to lower their eyes.

'What is the colour of his eyes?' Nindamar wondered. 'They are certainly not blue like Lady In-Anna's, but they are not black either.'

"His eyes are bright, almost flaming!" she whispered to her husband Nungi.

"Hush!"

Nungi motioned her to keep silent, for he was loath to lose even one word of what this almost mythical Prince announced. After all, he had come from Angad, the cradle world of their whole race!

At present, Lord En-Ki's deep voice rang out:

"Shilim — Peace".

His demeanour was friendly and his speech was meant to reassure them.

These men and women had all consented to leave the planet Ki and to establish themselves on the outer planets and moons of the solar system.

"I salute your courage, and I understand that this is a moment of fragility for you. Therefore, I am going to tell you about the headquarters and strongholds that the Annuna of old had built, those who have come here from our distant home world, the legendary Angad... And these are not our only living quarters..."

Long ago, he had ordered to repair and to restore the damaged underground dwellings on Planet Lahmu, the sixth planet of the solar system, and nowadays, more than three hundred and fifty Annunaki Lords were living

there in four extended underground cities, well-protected against any deadly radiation from the cosmos.

"In four places, we have restored the spinning double wheels which produce artificial gravity, thereby keeping the oxygen where we need it. Sometimes, the deadly radiation almost disappears, and then, we can even venture outside for a while. Of course, we also grow cereals and vegetables under the domes. More than enough space is available to every one of you, and you shall find all you need."

Anta In-Anna moved forward through the listening crowd towards the spacecraft. Passing near Nindamar, she whispered into her ear:

"He has grey eyes with flecks of indigo!"

Then she climbed up the metal ladder and positioned herself at Lord En-Ki's left side. What a relief to be near him again! All anguish disappeared at once, for only with him could she feel safe, and she wanted to be in his arms and be consoled like a child.

But this was not the time, for they had work to do, urgent work. So, she just said quietly:

"During the voyage, these people have asked me all the time about the reasons for the flood, and I have always explained it rationally. However, they are not satisfied..."

"Tell them what you think!" he answered.

She advanced a step and stood immobile in front of the open airlock, blinking in the sun, for she needed a moment to gather her thoughts. Then, she exclaimed:

“Yes, hostile powers, the rulers of this planet, have written harmful decrees against us, the Annunaki! Yes, one disaster after the other has befallen us! Ki —Earth — has turned against us! It would be safer to live off-world!”

Her voice transmitted the passion she felt.

“Of course, hostile decrees can only hold when they agree with the physical world and its laws and probabilities. If you prefer to use the language of science, you can also argue that the path of our whole solar system is fraught with danger, since it is threading its way around the galactic equator, weaving in and out of reach of the dense, ionized streams from the centre. No less than 154 000 suns inhabit the galactic core, but most are brown dwarfs and do not present any danger. However, the thousands of bright, blue stars do! And what is more: right in the centre, three gigantic suns exist, huge plasmoids which are igniting the surrounding plasma — and they are real monsters, ionized vortices which are forty thousand to sixty thousand times larger than Ki’s yellow sun! These suns are sending lethal volleys of ions and plasma our way! Regularly! It has happened and it shall happen again!”

She looked at them, beseechingly, wanting them to believe her, and more than three hundred people were looking back at her, waiting for her to continue.

'Oh, great God, what a responsibility!' She silently thought. 'It is weighing on me. Am I using the right words? Yet, they cannot stay here...' So, she resumed:

"Yes, these streams of ions are deadly and dangerous, and they have destabilized comets and other meteorites more than once, wreaking havoc on Ki. Here, we are too exposed in our cities built on the surface. When combined with the ill will of the ruling powers, this has catastrophic consequences for our race!"

She saw that the Annunaki were shaken by her words.

"Therefore, I repeat: Leave with Lord En-Ki to safer heavens! To Lahmu where domes and layers of rocks protect us! To our strongholds on Lahmu's moons, where we are well-shielded against any danger coming from space!"

She stepped back and diffidently touched Nin Gishzida's hand in a greeting, whilst he put his arm around her shoulder with an affectionate gesture.

Ea En-Ki resumed his speech:

"I understand that the decision to leave Ki has been difficult, for you have abandoned your life, your friends and your homes, knowing that this is a voyage of no-return.

But now, in the face of a looming cataclysm which is certain to come — and oh! How I deplore it! — a new task awaits each one of you: safeguarding our culture and maintaining the knowledge of old! It is a task that is

easier to accomplish outside of Ki, because life has become very dangerous here.”

He paused... and then asked the crucial question, the question of all questions:

“Who wants to come with me and start a new life on the red planet?”

Most chose to leave. Yes, they hoped for a good future on another world. Finally, joy filled their hearts, and they were eager to discover this new world. From this moment on, most embraced their destiny wholeheartedly.

Only Nindamar who was by now very advanced in her pregnancy, her husband, and four other couples, those who were holding small children in their arms, preferred to remain on Ki and to carve out a living near the lake on the high plateau of this southern continent. This lake was as wide as the sea, one of the deepest of Planet Ki, and certainly, the highest, and on its steep shores, they would be secure from the coming flood.

Several communities had already been founded there with the help of Lord Ea En-Ki. In addition, he had promised to come back from time to time with new seeds and instructions of how to plant them.

“All maritime cities are in danger!” He murmured worriedly to Anta who was now standing beside him. “And you must warn as many of our people as possible, on all continents!”

The doubt on Anta's face was obvious, and he hesitated. He was aware that she was scared, and that she did not wish to stay without him on Ki.

"Nu ni — no fear! I shall protect you. And you shall teach them!"

He sincerely believed this to be true, and she trusted in his strength.

After this, every refugee was allotted a berth on one of the two space ships and the final exodus began. Each spaceship could transport as many as fifty settlers, and since several trips would be necessary to transport them all to Lahmu, it would take three weeks to evacuate them all.

When the two ships rose for the first time, a hush fell over all those who were standing there. Only a slight hum was audible when the lights began to turn and to spin, a sign that the force fields of the drives were building up and the plasma produced in the core.

Then, the ships of the Annunaki climbed into the air. For a moment, they hovered above the clearing, silently. Next, they inclined their axis and soared with a thirty-degree angle. High up they soared, towards morning they raced, and their speed was breath-taking.

It was a sight from the Annunaki's past, when space ships were still coming and going to and from this planet.

It was also the sight of the future and would become familiar to those who were leaving, for space flight was a part of everyday life outside of Ki.

Soon, they reached the upper stratosphere, and in an instant, they were silently floating in space. The planet lighted up from the east, where morning was coming. Lights sprinkled the night like lamps, and they were signs of the well-illuminated cities down there. Signs of life. Were these cities all doomed?

But the immensity of the all put everything else into perspective. What were they, indeed, compared to the endless?

All too soon came the last heart-wrenching orbit around Planet Ki — Earth, their home! — like a last salute to a beautiful world which they would always love... Silent tears ran down their faces, and they were not ashamed of them. They realized that they would feel homesick for a very long time.

The Annunaki left. In what was but an instant in the planet's history, they were gone.

Within three weeks, all found sanctuary on the neighbouring planet, Lahmu, the red one... and they began a new life.

Six weeks after their departure, as if on cue, the cataclysm struck planet Ki, and the monster from the sea came: The Wave of all waves, and it brought the Flood of all legends.

The fundament of the gigantic ice sheet covering a quarter of the southern continent had started to melt, and soon, the whole glacier slid downwards as fast as the sound travels and plummeted into the sea. The sudden lift of weight triggered several seismic pulses on the continent and in the deep sea, and the combination made the ocean bed itself crack.

Waves upon waves were let loose as if the sluices of the deep opened, and the waves were sea monsters on a rampage.

The resulting flood was merciless, and it was murderous.

It set free unimaginable amounts of energy, and the axis of Ki itself was unhinged. The whole Earth bowed, then straightened and bowed again, as if it was greeting Death who had come for the myriads of little creatures inhabiting the planet, thus betraying the trust of all its life-forms among whom one must count the Annunaki. The axis stooped four times in all, and the planet's magnetic shield flipped erratically. When it came to a standstill, two weeks later, its tilt stabilized at 23.5 degrees, 1.6 degrees less than before.

Eventually, the waters retreated, but most cities of the Annunaki had sunk below sea level. Five hundred and fifty-six thousand Annunaki had drowned, eighty

percent of their whole population, which had already been sorely diminished by the last cataclysm, a thousand and three hundred years earlier. The ancient knowledge had faded and all but disappeared, and their civilisation — which had spanned the whole world — had been reduced to nothingness. Their wise culture of enlightenment and learning was no more...

Only small groups survived here and there, and on the high plains of all continents, those who had heeded the warnings and the prophecies made by Lord En-Ki and his family, and those who had accepted to relocate to the neighbouring planet.

The survivors wept for the dead, and toiled while they tried to rebuild, and mourned their friends and loved ones, and they vowed to keep their memories alive. It was the last song of a dying culture. In the end, they died too, and the memories and the songs died with them.

And the large underground dwellings with the sophisticated ventilation shafts would just be empty halls for ghosts where no living soul would ever breathe and walk again.

The world-spanning power grid which the Annunaki had constructed on Ki, using huge, quartz-filled stone blocks for the massive buildings, would be even functioning in the distant future, and still be standing thousands of years hence, but the knowledge of its purpose would be forgotten. Its very existence would be no longer known.

People would be staring with wonder at Cyclopean monuments and believe them to be altars, or tombs, or temples, but they would be unable to link them to the points of the earth grid where a magnetic discontinuity was building up an electric charge. The Annunaki had harnessed this power to recharge the drives of their space ships, but later, only a few unconventional souls would believe that a space-faring civilisation had existed long ago.

Nothing but deformed and distorted remembrances would remain of the Annunaki, and this glorious race who had brought life and learning from the stars to Earth would become myth.

It was a tragedy greater than any tragedy which had happened before.

Only En-Ki and his family had tried to save lives, and with their help, a remnant of the Annunaki had survived. But the ruling powers of Hyperspace had not supported him, and neither had the faction of the Annunaki under the rule of Anki's brother En-Lil. They even resented Ea Anki's intervention, with the result that he was ostracised and slandered. In time, he and Anta In-Anna would be perceived as disreputable persons not to be associated with, people to be punished even.

Ea Anki and his family would pay a heavy price for the succour they had lent to the Annunaki...

Descent into the Dark Ages

Dark Plots

Anta In-Anna Uriah had come back from the Abzu — or Hyperspace, a word which aptly describes the vastness of the cosmic sea. Much time had passed since her last passage on Earth. For her, it was a new life, as if she was born anew.

But she needed to have direct contact with her family, and her sons. Moreover, she truly wished to preserve what was left of the knowledge of old, of the ancient wisdom, and of the ways of past times, which certainly were more enlightened than the modern superstitious mores.

She came to teach, and teach she did, imparting secrets, travelling from one country to the next, or from one *Kur* — pyramid — to the stone observatory next-door, and conducted initiations of young disciples who would carry on, after her. Aset was her new name, the one she had adopted for this, and as Aset, she had gathered a dedicated group of followers, who would swarm out to other regions and carry the flame of knowledge to where there was darkness.

Knowledge, what a fragile flame it was! How easily the gusts of violence could snuff it out! Its seed had to be protected and tended like a fragile plantling.

Symbols were very efficient carriers of meaning, and her group devised many ways to convey their messages by sculpture, reliefs carved into walls, songs, and stories. Her knowledge of the revolving, geometric shapes, so typical of the mind patterns Ea Anki had studied for such a long time, proved to be very useful for this task.

After the Great Flood, isolated groups of survivors had rebuilt small towns, here and there, and a group of Annunaki had settled in the mountains north of Nibru-Ki, from where they had salvaged many of the ancient tools, and even constructed four cities with stone buildings and a whole system of underground chambers and corridors. Constant flows of ions from outer space had been assailing the genes of all living organisms, for the last thousand years, and the fear of further genetic damage was ever present. Finding shelter underground had become an obsession. But the surviving Annunaki had planted orchards with fruit-bearing trees on the surface above, and barley and wheat still yielded bountiful crops.

Yet, real happiness eluded them, because their numbers were gradually dwindling. Even though several of the Old Ones had returned from the Abzu like Anta, almost no children were born to them anymore.

The old blood lines of the Annunaki were dying out!

Their human descendants remained, those whose lifespan had dramatically shortened when the magnetic field of Ki had broken down. But their fertility was staggering in the eyes of the old ones, and it seemed to them that nature wanted to compensate for the loss of life.

In this context, Anta was one of the few women who had recently borne a son in a world which desperately needed renewal. She had become a coveted prize, she was an asset, and necessary for the survival of the royal line. Foremost among those who conspired against her was her cousin Utu whose new name for this life-time was Shamash, and who was by now the chosen inheritor of the Old Ones ...

Long ago, long ago, before the Great Flood, in the glorious days of the first city-states on Ki, he had been crouching on a grassy promontory at the sea shore. From this vantage point, he had watched them. From above, he had observed, and he had missed no detail. No one ever knew that he had been standing there every morning, waiting. Wanting her.

On the sandy shore down below, the tall, black-haired man and his companion had stepped into the light-sprinkled blue of the sea. They had been laughing, reaching out to each other, running, and splashing in the shallow water. In the early morning sun, they had embraced, dripping wet, beads of water glistening on their skin. The sun's reflections on the waves had surrounded them with a halo of light and with sparkling silver droplets, and it had seemed as if the light came

forth from them. The woman's sensuous shape had been a splendour in the morning.

Happiness. Innocent joy, sensuous joy. Soon they were to give in to the pleasure, immersed, shielded by the water from indiscreet onlookers.

Ea and Anta.

Utu's desire became obsessive. From then on, he plotted and planned... And acted, as soon as the two lovers returned from the Abzu. Several times, he had almost succeeded and torn her away from her mate. Almost. Because each time, his schemes had been thwarted. Once, he had come very near to killing his rival in a fit of insane rage. Unfortunately, En-Ki had survived despite his injuries.

But this he knew: he would try to conquer and subdue the woman until the very end, even if the man had to die for this, even if she also... he did not finish the thought.

Then, the Great Flood had drowned their cities and almost wiped out their whole race. But instead of bringing them together, the cataclysm had increased Utu's desire for this woman — the only one for him!

One day, he acted again.

She had been standing in the square room of a low building with white-washed walls, where she projected pictures of sacred geometry in front of an audience of twenty disciples. The main subject of her teachings were resonance patterns which naturally appear everywhere

in nature, from the smallest atom up to the largest galaxy.

The afternoon sun was streaming through the windows, and a fresh wind rustled in the overhanging branches outside, while their shadows painted moving patterns on the wall. A potted citrus plant completed the impression of serenity and general well-being.

At that moment, the door burst open.

A squadron of eight heavily armed men charged into the school room, surrounded the students and their teacher, and expertly blocked the only other exit

“Sit down!” The leader snapped and pointed his disrupter weapons towards Anta. He was a captain in Utu’s personal guard.

“Nothing shall happen to you if you all keep quiet! We have orders to take Lady Aset In-Anna Uriah with us!”

“This is outrageous! What do you want from me?” Anta’s voice sounded angry, but her waxen face belied her air of confidence.

The sudden intrusion of these armed men kindled old memories of a similar event, and the remembered trauma heightened the emotional strain. Fear, ice-cold, gut-wrenching fear was what she felt! At that moment, she knew that her uncle and cousin still insisted on the old decree, that horrid ruling which commanded her to marry Utu, to ensure the continuation and legitimacy of his line.

“Lord Shamash, son and heir of Lord En-Lil, the ruler of the planet according to the ancient decree, has given order to escort you to him!”

Anta’s heart leapt in her chest, and it seemed to her that it missed a beat.

One of the soldiers grabbed her arm.

“This is an abduction! Don’t you dare touch me! I shall accompany you without feeling your dirty fingers on me. But if you insist on taking me by force, or if you harm any of my disciples, I shall scream and resist until you knock me unconscious, or hurt me, and then, King Anu himself would condemn you! And he is standing high above my uncle and my cousin in the hierarchy!”

“Please come with me, Lady Aset,” their leader said calmly. “We do not want to hurt you, and we are just fulfilling orders.”

Resistance is impossible when you are surrounded by soldiers pointing their lethal weapons at you, and so, no one resisted.

Anta was rushed towards an aircraft which had landed in the nearby field, behind a group of trees. The men were running, and by now, they were dragging Anta along by force, for she had stumbled, and they were afraid of Lord En-Ki’s army which was bound to arrive at any moment, soon.

The council of the Annunaki had attributed this part of the region to Ea Anki, Lord En-Ki, and his whole clan

and family stood behind him. When something was seriously amiss, they informed him immediately.

Of course, the students had alerted the city guards and sent a message to Lord En-Ki, and a general alarm was sounded, immediately. The reaction was swift, and less than ten minutes later, armed guards and soldiers converged towards Utu's men who quickly realized that they were vastly outnumbered.

However, their captain and two of his men managed to grab Anta, and although she was writhing and fighting like a wildcat, biting, kicking, and screaming at the top of her lungs, they forced her brutally into the aircraft. Then, they slammed the hatch shut and took off, leaving their five comrades behind.

The five remaining intruders were directly arrested and taken into custody. Among them was a young grandson of Nun Lil, Lord En-Lil's beloved wife.

"This is an insult!"

Anki's anger was white-hot and burning in his heart. This was more than just a diplomatic incident! These men and their leaders had trampled the Law, one of the pillars of their culture.

"They have taken her again from me!"

Turmoil was in his heart, and he could barely restrain his outrage.

This was an act of war, and Anki feared for Anta's safety. He remembered far too well how his brothers and nephews — his own family! — had harmed her, during another life-time, when those she loved and trusted had injured her grievously. Alas, strong imprints in the patterns of Time tended to repeat themselves...

Oh, what anguish he now felt! And how angry he was, not only at his brother, but also at himself, and his voice resonated in the hall where he had received the information as he shouted:

"I should have foreseen this!"

He knew Iti En-Lil's fortress to be impregnable, and if ever he was to conquer it by means of his own technological superiority, it would cost the lives of far too many of his people. Any victory would be a defeat in terms of loss of life and blood.

Only one way was open to him. He sent a message to King Anu. Then, he dialled the public radio channel.

An offer to negotiate on an open radio channel would force his enemies to behave with civility, at least in appearance. After all, their public image was dear to his brother and nephew. They had plans for the future of Ki, and these plans needed a spotless record.

"But I am perfectly aware that their spotless record is just a fake!" he uttered grimly between clenched teeth.

"I shall make them an offer which they cannot refuse..."

Meanwhile, Anta had been taken to Lord En-Lil's stronghold, the last one to remain in his hands, for his nephew Mar-Duk and his other brother Shin Nannar had effectively overtaken and subdued most of the nearby lands.

Then, the negotiations started, while Anta remained imprisoned in a shielded chamber. It was a public bartering, and the Annunaki listened avidly. What a scandal!

In the end, Lord Iti En-Lil accepted his brother's proposal: His detention for her freedom. An exchange! Lord En-Lil was known to keep his promises and vows.

"No!" Utu screamed. He screamed his rage and desperation.

At the instant he thought to be holding the much-coveted prize in his palm... she was snatched again out of his hands!

"Yes!" His father answered firmly. He certainly did not tolerate anyone contradicting his orders. "En-Ki has offered to become our prisoner in exchange for her safety and her freedom! And since my brother has taken

hostage five of your men, including my royal grandson, I have accepted!"

"But I want her, and not him!" Utu yelled.

He could not muster any self-restraint. No one was allowed to yell at Lord En-Lil unpunished, but at that moment, he could not contain his anger, and quite uncharacteristically, his father remained calm.

"Now is not the time. You shall have her one day. Have I not written this decree into the Tablets of Destiny? But things must fall into place by themselves... You have acted prematurely!"

Utu stared at him balefully, but he did not insist. Without another word, he turned and retreated to his private quarters.

"I have not even been allowed to see her!"

He would have to think and make plans, for he certainly did not trust in Destiny, or things falling into place all by themselves. In his experience, you had to labour hard to ply fate to your will. Maybe, his cousin Mar-Duk would be able to share some useful insights, and help him achieve his goal and to satisfy his obsession: to own In-Anna!

The next day, Ea Anki arrived alone and unarmed.

He appeared out of nowhere, without guards, and without his private glider, but he was no fool, and he was wearing his protective tunic and boots which maintained a movable shield. No disrupter weapon could harm him.

Sullenly, Utu waited in the background while his father's guards verified that no weapon was hidden under Ea Anki's blue cloak. A simple metal detector sufficed for this. During the exchange of formal greetings, Utu did not listen, but he watched and noted every detail and made an inventory of every weakness.

How effortlessly powerful his enemy moved! But he, Utu, would take that seemingly easy control from him! He would destroy that handsome body forever! He would take away his enemy's potency which had allowed him to father so many children, while he, the Crown Prince, had none! But only until today. This would change as soon as he took In-Anna!

No one could hear his thoughts, he believed, since the screams of his self-righteous wrath existed only inside his head, while he indulged himself in a fantasy where he mutilated his rival horribly.

Of course, disrupters were useless on a shielded person, but he knew of other lethal weapons which might affect any person, shield, or no shield!

By now, Utu's hate had grown into something unpleasant which threatened to engulf him entirely. The hate was like a black cloud oppressing him, and compressing his chest, so that he even had trouble breathing, sometimes.

It was a stand-off, for although Lord En-Ki had given himself over into Lord En-Lil's hands in exchange for Anta, Nun Lil's grandson remained incarcerated. Utu deplored that he had not been able to escape during

the abduction, and that he and his four comrades were now prisoners in Lord En-Ki's domain. What a liability!

The negotiations did not advance, and, moreover, King Anu himself, the great king of old, had received news of the scandal, and impatiently demanded a detailed report.

A light signal transmitted the report, and a short verbal exchange passed through the radio channel, which took a certain time. Then, the king simply dictated his orders in succinct and precise sentences:

"Nun Anta is free to leave, as had been promised!

Lord En-Ki is to be released in exchange for the five prisoners, including the royal hostage!"

With this, the king interrupted the communication. Disobedience was out of the question.

Utu was devastated. He swore that En-Ki would not get away with this, not after all this effort! Sleep would not come, if he could not obtain satisfaction.

The day of the exchange of the hostages dawned.

Two hours before sunrise, Utu rose and packed his gear and his new weapon. It was a simple mechanical weapon and consisted of a small iron ball which pierced

any protective tunic or magnetic shield when projected at a very high velocity. It would kill on impact!

Then, he slipped out of his father's palace. No one saw him.

He had to walk for an hour until he reached the barren place where the exchange was scheduled to take place. The stony valley was situated not far from Lord En-Ki's settlement, and on one side, a steep and rocky mountain ridge permitted a view on the long, straight road below. It was a perfect place for an ambush, and the two ragged boulders would serve as a parapet.

Utu was powerfully built, and he climbed up the steep wall without breaking a sweat, in just half an hour.

The two large rocks provided a good hiding place, he sat down, and decided to wait. As soon, as En-Ki was alone, he would direct his weapon at his enemy and kill him. At last! The weapon was far-reaching, and he was an excellent shot. And he knew the route En-Ki would take to reach his home. No one would ever know about En-Ki's death, not for a long time!

It was a warm and clear day, and no wind would deviate the iron bullet.

One hour passed, and then another. No one was visible yet, and no flock of startled birds rose into the air to warn of any human presence.

Utu had thought that the exchange would take place at noon, but the sun was long past the zenith when he

finally decided to sip some water from his cooled isotherm flask.

He had not brought any other provisions, but that did not matter. The place was calm, and he leaned comfortably against the sun-warmed boulder, certain that he had all the time in the world. No one had seen him coming, and his grey clothes blended perfectly in and rendered him undistinguishable from his surroundings.

The fresh water had restored him, and he thought about how En-Ki had always opposed everything he wanted. The thought set his hatred on fire again.

“Hatred gives me strength! I shall cast this man into un-being!”

His body felt newly empowered, and he rehearsed in his mind how he would kill the man he hated more than anyone else on Ki, the man who had taken from him the only woman he loved, the only woman who could satisfy his needs.

The shadows grew longer, and soon, the sun set behind the distant mountain ridge. Night fell, but it was not a dark night, for the full moon inundated the landscape with its bone-white light defining each stone by its shadow. Shapes and shadows, like skeletons and coal. You could not distinguish any feature in the coal, but Utu knew that he was alone.

He waited.

Towards midnight, a strange drowsiness submerged him. He yawned. How tiring this all was... How difficult to keep his eyes open, and it had been a long day... The sudden sleepiness would have astounded him, had he given a thought to it.

Suddenly, he keeled over to the left and fell into a deep slumber.

Meanwhile, distinctly visible on the moonlit road, two groups of men were approaching cautiously and walking towards each other: From the right side, three men — one of them a son of Anki — advanced with the five intruders who had abducted his wife from her classroom. At the same time, and coming from the left side, six high-born Lords escorted Anki.

Each group slowed down, and paused at a little distance from the other.

Utu opened his eyes, but he was entirely caught in his dream-state. Dreaming, or sleep walking, he recognized the regal figure of his enemy, taller than all the others. He distinguished the blue cloak with the white trimming, and he was certain that he was looking through a visor to adjust his aim. Then, he raised his weapon and pointed it at the head...

But it must have only been a dream, for the real event was quite different. Had anyone watched from above, he or she would have seen Utu still lying in the same position, on his left side, and fast asleep.

He did not see the five prisoners sprint over towards their own side, nor did he watch Anki join his men with a few determined strides.

The tall man with the flowing cloak was easy to recognize, and furthermore, he walked along the near side of the cliff. His boots emitted a little noise, a tap-zing... tap-zing..., which was clearly audible, as his personal shield was set-off and renewed, at each step. It was a moment of utter vulnerability, but Utu never woke.

He slept through the night, and Anki never knew how close he had come to death, during that exchange.

The next morning, Utu felt refreshed and serene. But when he discovered the new tracks in the dust on the road, he screamed in anger and frustration, startling a flock of birds into flight. Three crows were squawking angrily.

How could that happen? He did not understand his own lack of vigilance. He had fallen asleep, without having fired a single shot! Just like that.

Perhaps, this was meant as a sign.

Providence had wanted to postpone the death of his rival. But he swore that the time of Utu-Shamash would come, just like his father had announced, and he would eliminate permanently the man who had stolen his woman. He would have his vengeance, but not today.

What had caused his strange sleepiness? Could it have been someone watching from the Abzu, from