

# MEMORIES

*From Dan Amenta's Journal*

**WE HAD THE PERFECT LIFE** in the French-Swiss countryside until that mysterious windstorm in February. No one realized anything unusual had happened, but the next morning, while driving Annah, my daughter, to school, I discovered that vehicles littered the highway—with their dead occupants still inside.

Returning home, no one answered the phone at any of the emergency departments nor could I or my wife, Mary, reach our relatives and friends. Checking on the neighbors, I found them all dead.

We soon realized we might be the only survivors of a global catastrophe. We stocked up on emergency supplies, turned the house into a stronghold, and collected food and medicine. The Internet still worked so I launched a large, online campaign to find other survivors with the hope of learning more about what we were facing. While waiting for any response at all, I managed to befriend some neighborhood dogs and we armed ourselves with survival gear.

At first, it felt weird and disturbing to go into stores and take things without paying but, of course, there was no one to pay. The whole world had become one big ghost town.

At home, to keep a sense of normalcy, we went by the calendar and home-schooled Annah. After lessons and on weekends, we trained the dogs, practiced shooting with the arsenal I had gathered, and patrolled the surrounding area to nurture the hope of finding others alive.

More changes came as the months went by and our lives took some turns we couldn't have predicted in our wildest dreams. Yet, now, it became a case of survival and adapting to what would come our way.

Finally, we discovered others had also survived and that some strange entities were behind the human extermination.

We met Laura, and her presence made us question what was right and wrong in our new existence. Mary chose to support Laura's infatuation with me rather than chasing her away and possibly condemning Annah to an isolated life, waiting alone for her own death. We became a multi-partner family and Laura became pregnant to give birth to our daughter, Hope.

Those behind the extermination of humans manifested themselves to me, and my family experienced the horror of the first encounter. I learned from the aliens—the Moïrai Alaston, Ménéis, and Algea—what the extermination entailed: the genetic transformation of a small group of people, the Selected, and a planned process for the creation of a new race with others survivors spared in the culling.

Through the Palladium, an alien artifact that modified us genetically and provided the Selected with a means of direct communication, I recovered the lost memory of the frightening history of mankind; a disturbing revelation I could've never envisioned.

Yes, I'm one of the Selected on the planet and I'm charged with the reconstruction of the race of man. Mary became the mother of my first transgenic baby and, together with Laura, we settled with the first survivors we met beside Laura: Jean-Claude and Liliana, Camille and Sarah, and others who joined us in the medieval city of Civita, Italy.

The communities of spared ones, each led by at least one of us Selected, grew under the benevolent eyes of the Moïrai. The aliens instructed the survivors thanks to the Palladiums and we all developed technical skills that were crucial in the initial months and years.

The final events brought some closure about the catastrophe to everyone... but also laid a heavy burden and responsibility on the Selected, myself included.

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We kept in touch with other communities and the Moïrai, the humanoid glowing aliens who culled the race of men with their twisted salvation

plan. They became a constant presence, although they tried not to become an intrusive one.

Early during the first year, another Selected, Marina, and her rescued people joined us in Civita; other spared ones found our community, too. They said they followed the Palladium's beams, visible from afar. People still feared the future, the uncertainty, and the way the Selected had been changed scared many of the spared ones. We knew people thought of the Selected as aliens—the same as the Moîrai—and suspicion took hold in the minds of those who refused to join us. They were suspicious...we are different...though, in many respects, we are all still the same.

We couldn't verify the actual number of survivors and we had no way to tell whether only ten million spared ones lived on Eridu, as we called Earth. Communities founded by the Selected received support from the Moîrai and they allowed each community to become self-sufficient. Things looked promising and were moving along, so why did I have the impression the Moîrai pursued goals other than just helping us to settle in only a few years? At times, they showed urgency in their manners I couldn't explain.

## QUESTIONS AND NO ANSWERS

**OUR HOUSE IN CIVITA** was silent soon after dawn. Civita, the little medieval town in Italy that provided us with a shelter, fostered our hope for a brighter future.

From our terrace, we could see the lights from the houses occupied by the survivors who joined us, the spared ones, the human beings the Moïrai hand-picked to allow the Selected to give birth to a new race.

One of those houses, the one my eyes searched for—with fondness—each evening, was the nest my daughter Annah and her husband, Federico, chose to start their life together, as a couple.

I turned to look back at our own shelter, where Mary, and Laura, with our kids, Samuel and Hope, slept already.

Samuel was my first transgenic son, and Hope my last human daughter. A profound sadness always assailed me when I thought of my kids, and how different Hope's future will be from her brother's.

In a sense, Hope was a spared one, a frail human being destined to die in a few tens of years while we Selected, with the new generations, would sail through the centuries thanks to the Moïrai's genes in our bodies.

We had to swear to the Moïrai to look after the spared ones, an oath each Selected had no difficulty honoring with every action and every thought; a legacy, and a burden, too. The Moïrai had told us the spared ones were there to make our task easier and expedite the rebuilding process; their spaceships hovered over the planet, watching us, to help and to control.

The prophet Jeremiah once wrote in his Letters, "Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your

daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters." But only seed of the Selected could germinate in our wives; the Moîrai made it so the spared men were sterile. Women who wanted to bear children got pregnant artificially from the gene pool of the Selected. The communities with the most pregnant women received a more generous support from the aliens.

No wonder we now faced insurgence, and incidents and unexplained failures. I knew well we faced acts of sabotage, and in growing numbers all over the planet.

I had a Bible at home, and I had the shakes each time I read Jeremiah: "Multiply! Do not dwindle away! And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."

I wasn't sure there was a Lord, but sure there were the Moîrai, who carried the same message to us.

A rustling noise woke me up from those reveries. Even without turning, I recognized Mary approaching in the twilight. I smelled her fragrance, and that made the air more soothing for my lungs. She wore a silk nightgown that revealed the soft roundness of her shoulders. The moon glittered on her skin, almost as if she was a Moîrai, too.

"It's late; why aren't you sleeping, hon?" Mary said when she reached me. Her eyes gazed upon Civita's terracotta and stone houses, only a few with lights still on.

Our terrace, perched atop the hill where the Etruscans founded Civita thousands of years before, was a refuge for us. Surrounded by vegetation, and delimited by an ancient stonewall, it was the alcove where we shared our thoughts, fears... and more.

"Oh, Mary." I searched for her hand, brought it up to my lips and sighed. "You know, my mind cannot rest with the burden that is on us..." I turned before she could say anything to add, "us Selected."

She frowned. "Dan, you're not guilty of anything. Look around you; look at what you've done." Her eyes wandered, caressing each house, and each street of Civita. I followed her gaze.

"You take care of everyone," she continued, "you and Marina. What you have done together, for everyone... How can you feel guilt?"

I took a deep breath. "And yet, Mary, people committed suicide; not long ago even here in our community. I feel responsible for every