

J.V. Errichetti's Dump Miner

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Credits

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Dedication

This story is dedicated to you.

Foreword

You might meet an individual, on very special occasions, who dramatically alters the way you look at the world and at yourself. J.V. Errichetti is that extraordinary individual. Artist and author, J.V. Errichetti will intrigue you with his views of the world as a whole and of society in general. There are parts of *Dump Miner* that will seem hauntingly all-too-familiar to you. And yet other parts of *Dump Miner* will undoubtedly push your buttons and cause you to reevaluate the way you perceive things.

As an artist, J.V. Errichetti's "shared canvas" concept of collaborative painting is still regarded by many as pure genius, with its almost childlike orchestration of brushstrokes. As an author, he will provoke you to see our world - your world - in a different light.

I hope you are inspired with the pages of *Dump Miner*, as much as I have the honor of being involved in it. If man indeed is the writer of his own destiny, then perhaps man should put his quill down and review what he has written so far. Man will ultimately decide if his destiny lies within the pages of *Dump Miner*.

-Gil Sancha

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank several people that have been instrumental in the creation of “J.V. Errichetti’s Dump Miner” even though these people may not have been aware of it at the time. I feel that they are as important to the story as anything I could have written, you know who you are.

Cast of Characters

mariA – Dump Miner

Father Leo / leO – excommunicated Priest

weaseL – a Dump Miner who lives in the same barracks as mariA

Bishop Lamb – Chief, Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499

Cardinal Superbia – Pride

Cardinal Invidia – Envy

Cardinal Ira – Wrath

Cardinal Avaritia – Greed

Cardinal Acedia – Sloth

Cardinal Gula – Gluttony

Cardinal Luxuria – Lust

George Walker – the current Reagan of Americo

John Walker – son of George Walker

Father Templar – A Church of Americo enforcer

Bishop Magnus – Bishop Lamb's replacement as Chief,
Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499

Synopsis

Our story follows a woman named “mariA” and her life as a dump miner. mariA works at the Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499, which is run by The Church of Americo.

Through a series of unfortunate but fateful events, the other dump miners and the Government of Americo believe that mariA has conceived the messiah or “second coming” in her womb. What follows is a tale of deceit, treachery and hope.

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Dump Miner - Introduction

The year is 355 G.R. (Governmental Reform). The world has become a place where books like *Brave New World* and *1984* are not grim reminders of what the world could become. They are rather road maps for what the world should be.

The political system has turned from a two-party system into the illusion of a four-party system. Capitalism has been refined to its purest form. No profit, no loss.

Profit from Americo is redistributed back to Americo's shareholders, as donations to The Church of Americo, as employee salaries, and as a trust designed to offset unexpected costs. If there are too many employees, Americo does not make a profit. Since every citizen in Americo is a shareholder, it is every citizen's duty to make sure that the population of Americo stays constant. The ultimate goal is to give every Americo citizen the privilege of working.

Americo only has two holidays and every Americo citizen is expected to celebrate them: Thanksgiving and September 11. On Thanksgiving, every Americo citizen is given extra vouchers for food. The September 11 holiday is celebrated from September 1 to September 11, during which Americo citizens are expected to fast and pray. Every year on September 12 "The day of polling" is held, this is a veiled way for Ultra Republicans to entertain, feast, and indulge after eleven days of fasting and praying.

All American Presidents take the esteemed title of “Reagan” for it was argued that the ideals of the 40th President of the now defunct “United States of America” became the foundation for what America was based upon, thus allowing it to become the successful capitalist machine that it is, therefore his name should carry this honor in tribute. America has been able to successfully incorporate almost every other country in the world into its base company. Thus, only two great superpowers exist: The European Democratic States and Incorporated America.

The European Democratic States have taken what they believe to be the views of Thomas Jefferson as the cornerstone for their new constitution. In the European Democratic States, slavery is a part of everyday life. But unlike in the past, most citizens choose to become slaves.

This is because in European Democratic States, true slaves are treated as prized pets and used mainly in the fashion industry. Slaves are pampered and treated as royalty. To this end, The Church of America will allow you to sell yourself into slavery and proceeds from the sale are donated to The Church.

In the year 27 G.R., America was able to successfully incorporate all remaining organized religions into what is now known as The Church of America.

The Church of America or the “Church” is in charge of all social, welfare, and internal revenue programs. The Church selected chief director to be out-stationed in the New Vatican in Europe.

This figurehead retains the everyday title of Pope. His business-as-usual involves posing for pictures with new members and guests of “Heaven.” During consulting ceremonies, however, when his “approval” was required on decrees and declarations, he was referred to as the “Holy Father”. As Pope or “Holy Father”, he had very little power, except those that were granted to him by The Party.

Seven Cardinals were then selected by the Ultra Republicans during the “day of polling” These Cardinals serve their term for life although, but as decreed, they cannot outlive the Pope or “Holy Father”. Representing the seven deadly sins, the Cardinals have come to be the epitome of the very sins they were supposed to guard against.

If you are male and wish to become an active member of The Church, you must be willing to be castrated. This symbolizes your commitment to The Church. Prior to castration, a sample of your semen is frozen, to symbolize that you are still a man.

The Church of Americo abolished what was once the Vatican and replaced it with the New Vatican in Europe – nicknamed “Heaven on Earth” – to take advantage of the slave market. Slaves make great party favors for the Reagan’s and other Ultra Republicans who can afford a Governmental Reform Credit (GRC) of \$100,000,000.00 to become members of the New Vatican.

The Church of Americo believes that Heaven or Nirvana exists only up to the moment of when life is conceived. Thus, The Church has the power to take a life from any citizen.

After the Governmental Reform in the early 2000's, the most extreme Republicans rose to power. Abortion was determined to be illegal and punishable by death, resulting in a large abortion black market. "Miscarriages" became very common.

After the Great War in the East, the earth was left desecrated and scorched. There was not enough food for all. Americo's Governmental Economists did a study and determined that only 20 billion people could inhabit the earth for Americo to maintain a profit. By limiting the population, there could be enough for all.

For this to work, every individual had to know what his or her role in Americo was.

Birth control is a large part of the success of Americo. No one can have a child without prior approval from The Party and The Church. The penalty for having a child without papers (WOP) is loss of vouchers. If a couple has an unwanted pregnancy, losing her vouchers to cover the cost of bringing a new soul into the world would be the punishment for the would-be mother. She is then sterilized because she has proven that she has no self-control.

In order to have a child, the couple must apply for a waiver from The Party.

Depending on the current total population, The Party decides whether the application is approved or denied. The line of questioning required for the application is usually enough to discourage the average citizen who wants to have a child.

A Priest in The Church of Americo is also the Census Taker. Census Takers are known to be very corrupt and heartless when it comes to their job. As soon as the would-be mother has any knowledge of her conceiving, she must report it to The Church within 10 days of becoming aware of the new life.

The Census Taker will then visit the family to determine if the birth has the prior approval of The Party and The Church. After a child is born, the Census Taker comes back to circumcise the child, whether male or female. The Census Taker returns the sample to DNA Life Record Archive Facility. The DNA from the sample is used for whatever purpose The Party deems appropriate for the benefit of Americo.

If it is determined that the birth was unapproved the Census Taker may void some of the family's vouchers as punishment for breaking the law. For multiple offenses, the Census Taker has the right to force the father or mother – whoever is deemed least responsible – to swear on the “B.I.B.L.E.,” which almost always proves fatal.

The acronym B.I.B.L.E stands for Basic Individual Bioscopy Life Evaluator.

It is a multi-use mechanical device that members of The Church enjoy the privilege of using to judge all citizens of Americo.

The B.I.B.L.E. resembles a 1-inch thick black box with a top and bottom that measure 10 inches long, by 8 inches wide.

The main function of the B.I.B.L.E. is to store and retrieve information about laws and procedures governing the people of Americo. When opened it can be used to find data regarding current statutes, laws, or commandments. It can also be used to send data back to the master database. The B.I.B.L.E. is also used by The Church to help confused souls relieve the errors of their ways.

The top part of the B.I.B.L.E. has a groove the outline of which is shaped like a dove with its wings spread out.

Prior to swearing on it, the B.I.B.L.E. is turned in such a way as to face the accused person. In this direction, the head of the outlined dove points directly to the accused. The accused is then asked to put his or her right hand on the grooved outline of the dove, with the wrist resting on the dove's head, the palm placed on the dove's body, and the fingers firmly planted on the dove's outspread wings. Once the hand and fingers are in this position, the B.I.B.L.E. captures a reading of the nerve endings, the pulse rate, and the amount of sweat. Should an Americo citizen lie while swearing on a B.I.B.L.E., his or her punishment could be swift and painless – the B.I.B.L.E. contains a small needle that could inject a deadly dose of poison into the palm of whoever is swearing on it.

Since preserving nature was never the concern of The Party, the earth's natural resources has been depleted and teeters on a very fine balance. The natural resources that remain are guarded behind gated communities called Clean Areas.

Only the privileged elite and the highest-ranked Americo citizens can visit and see nature's wonders that are the trees and flowers. Only these deserving Americo citizens are allowed to see what beauty nature can truly be. Visiting Clean Areas is very expensive and there are no vouchers for this type of retreat.

Despite the advancements in what has been labeled the "Dawn of Humanity," it is imperative that each citizen knows his or her place in society. The Party has created mandatory work programs for each of Americo's four class levels. Americo citizens have little choice which mandatory work program to join. As an Americo citizen, you are born into a class and must accept the path that The Party has chosen for you.

The Party sees its citizens not as human beings but as resources that need to be directed and controlled for The Party's benefit. As an Americo citizen, your assigned work program is not based on what best suits you, but what best assures Americo's profits and economic balance.

Citizens who belong to Sub Parties can choose work programs but are limited to certain roles. Liberal Republicans have only two choices: to work as dump miners for the Americo Resource & Welfare Facility, or to devote his / her life to The Church of Americo.

To become a member of The Church, however, you must relinquish all your worldly goods and take the vow of castration. This applies to all who enlist, male and female. Working for The Church requires rigorous training.

This includes courses in Ethics, Spirituality, Accounting, Sexual Responsibility, and Marksmanship. Most members of The Church are drafted at a young age into their role of servitude.

Although you can apply for any position within The Church, there must be space available to be considered for the position.

Most Liberal Republicans work in the Americo Resource & Welfare Facilities. These Facilities are nothing more than forced-labor camps built around old landfill dump sites. These Facilities are rich with aluminum, paper, and fertilizers.

They are also rich with discarded coins and currency that people threw away in the 1980's. It is amazing how much money ended up in landfills since the 1980's. All these materials are what Americo depends on for its wealth.

The Liberal Republicans who work in these Facilities mine the resources from daybreak until nightfall.

There are countless dangers within these resource facilities. Disease, landslides, cave-ins, deadly methane pockets are but a few of the threats that dump miners must face at any given time. The putrid smell of the dump is so venomous that Facility Guards, dump miners, and other workers are required to wear masks to keep from gagging or vomiting. Some dump miners have grown accustomed to the smell, having lived with the reeking stench their entire lives.

Still, the smell of the rotting garbage is so maddening and unimaginable that it is impossible for almost anyone to sleep for more than a few moments. It is said that fortunate is the dump miner who passes out from sheer exhaustion.

To help resolve this problem, which cuts into Americo's production and profits, the Governmental Medical Review Board developed AM and PM pills. These pills take effect almost instantaneously.

Dump miners are to take the AM pills by 7:30 a.m. to keep the dump miners awake for a full day to work in the mines, shop at the Americo store, eat, and prepare for the next day of work. By 8:00 p.m. they are then required to take their PM pills. These pills keep them asleep until 7:00 a.m. the next day and the cycle continues.

The dump miners are reminded to take their appropriate pill by the music that is played through the loud speakers in the dumps – revelry before 7:30 AM or a lullaby before 8:00 PM – whichever is appropriate. Dump miners who neglect to take their pills and report late to work are docked a full day's pay. Food is scarce in these Facilities. Most dump miners live on rats and rodents, and other animals that flourish there. The population of rats is significant in the dumps, for it determines the amount of food vouchers to be distributed. If the rat population gets too high, then the Bishop in charge of the Americo Resource & Welfare Facility as Chief cuts down on the food vouchers.

Tram systems have been set up in the facilities that travel deep into the mines. The walls of the tunnels are covered with 3-d images, which give the illusion of fields of flowers, waterfalls, and rainbows. All paid advertisements sponsored by Americo, the signs display messages to inspire the miners to continue on and remind them of their place in society. As the tram speeds to its destination messages fade in and out of view, “Work hard and return to heaven”, “You are a creation of sin”, “You are blessed with the gift of life”, “To want is to sin”,

“Redemption sponsored by Americo”. These murals can cause a trance like effect for the dump miners.

It is not uncommon for a miner to leap out into what they believe at the moment to be a true. If this happens their bodies often are impaled on what they thought would be wonderful causing only brief flashes of distortion to the image for the rest of passing.

Resource facility maintenance workers can often be seen prying remains from the walls as the tram whisks its way.

Liberal Republicans start to work in the Americo Resource & Welfare Facilities at the age of three. As dump miners, they go to mandatory training classes to guarantee Americo’s success. Within its walls, dump miners are taught about survival inside the Facilities by The Church-run schools. As dump miners, they are taught that they have no choice, that they cannot question authority, that they are the product of sin and are therefore in hell. They are taught that they were born dump miners and will die dump miners.

Happiness does not come easy for dump miners. As a “gift” on their birthday, dump miners may keep one item they find in the dump.

Rumor has it that on his birthday, a dump miner found a huge diamond. Thus, he was able to afford a house with walls and a floor. This could never happen, of course, and is nothing more than hearsay. The Party will never allow a dump miner to be anything else but. If ever a “prize” were found, The Church would seize it immediately. The resulting wealth would then be redistributed through tax breaks back to the Ultra Republicans, who maintain Americo’s economy.

Every Saturday, Confession is held throughout Americo. Confession is taught to be of the utmost importance. As a ritual, Confession is used to keep all Americo citizens healthy and free of disease. Every Saturday, all Americo citizens must go to their local Church for confession. In The Church, an altar boy hands each citizen a mild laxative to be taken five minutes prior to confession. When citizens enter the confessional, they urinate in a large basin that is administered and watched over by the local Bishop, or in some cases, by a Priest. Confession has saved countless of souls in Americo, during which potentially deadly diseases were detected. As a deterrent, Confession also detects a pregnancy within three days of conception.

If a new disease or illness is discovered during Confession, it is reported to the Governmental Medical Review Board where a cure is designed for the specific illness or disease. Since the cost of the research and designing a medicine are very high, a cure is sometimes not produced if resources are nil.

Chatter on the streets can be heard from Moderate Republicans daily. “Those dump miners have it so easy. Do you know that The Church pays for their medical benefits?”

Stinking bastards. Why don't they try to make something of their lives? We should all have the same chances.” The upper echelons of society further encourage this attitude – blame those that cannot defend themselves.

A dump miner's average life span is 75 years. In contrast, the average life span of a member of The Church is 150.

However, both The Church members and dump miners are Liberal Republicans. This makes the average life span of a Liberal Republican to be 137. In contrast, the average life span of all Moderate Republicans is 125; the Conservative Republicans is 135; while Ultra Republicans live to be an average of 150.

As a result, both the Conservative and Ultra Republicans take full advantage of their life spans and build their pure capitalistic empires even more. The People's Free Press, a publication owned by the current Reagan, often remind the Americo citizens of their expected life spans for two reasons. These reason are: so that the Moderate Republicans' focus on what is really happening is clouded with distorted facts, and so that the horrors of working in the Facilities are not considered as harmful as they really are.

Becoming Reagan is the highest office and title a citizen can hold in Americo. When Reagan dies, only citizens within their direct bloodline can become the new Reagan.

In the past, there have been male and female Reagans, all have proven to rule with total discipline.

Losing the Reaganship is not uncommon. In the past, families have lost their rights to the name and office of Reagan through “Hostile Takeovers” or bad stock investments. The American citizen who proves to be the best provider for the welfare of all America becomes a Reagan. This is further proven by the amount of stock they own in America.

In America, voting during elections is mandatory rather than a privilege or a right.

The penalty for not voting is losing of vouchers. However, there are no choices during elections. Every American citizen must vote for the only candidate available – a candidate decided upon by The Party – the Reagan.

The Government of America has privatized every public institution. There is no public health care, no public schools, and no social security. This enables the Government to control its citizens, since the politicians are the owners of the hospitals, banks, and schools. The Government successfully lobbied to have America and all its subsidiaries convert the monetary system into a system of vouchers. This voucher system applies to anyone who makes less than a percentage decided upon by the Senate and the Reagan.

It was argued that by creating vouchers that expire, citizens of America would be forced to be productive. You have to work to get vouchers. But you have to use your vouchers or trade them within a specified period of time that is specified by the Government.

The dollar was been put back on the Gold standard monetary system. Moderate, Conservative, and Ultra Republicans only hold currency

Dump Miner - Chapter One

**Father Leo Arrives at the Americo
Resource & Welfare Facility: 4499**

The sun rises reluctantly over an encampment surrounded by high-reaching barbed wire fences. Lookout towers made from scraps of steel and rusted iron sheets dot the fence. Inside, a compound slum of makeshift shacks and shanties rise from the desolation. Muted shades of amber and gray from tarnished metal scar the landscape. Junk piles of cardboard and rotting wood fill the ground with grime and disgrace. In the distance, tiny fragments of broken glass glisten atop the mounds of garbage.

At first glance, one might think that this is a concentration camp from the 1940's that has been allowed to run itself into the ground. It is not. This is the Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499.

Outlines of humans can be seen inside the lookout towers. But it becomes apparent that these towers are not here to protect the people within the camp. They are here to protect the mounds of garbage – the dumps. Large heaping mounds of debris, refuse, and rubble reach to the sky behind the enclosed village. As the sun continues its journey and hovers over the dumps of discarded rubbish and filth, ribbons of smoke can be seen rising like smoldering incense. The air is filled with the sickening smell of decay and decomposition.

From one of the facility towers, a siren suddenly screams without warning. It is the morning signal calling the dump miners to work. Six days a week, the dump miners start their day with this siren, a painful shriek which for some foretells their harrowing death.

As the siren bellows into the distance, human shapes dressed in yellow plastic coveralls and yellow hats depart their small shacks and march wearily to the dump mines. At the gates of the dump mines guards hand out the assignments and tools needed for the day, shovels, picks, axes, and large black bags, which the dump miners carry on their backs. With these tools, the dump miners extract aluminum, steel, paper, plastic, glass, and methane gas from the mines for recycling.

A stretch limousine races up the front gates of Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 and is promptly met by two facility guards. As the guards approach, the rear passenger window of the limousine rolls down. It is Father Leo, a Census Taker for The Church of Americo.

Father Leo is tall and broad-shouldered, a strong man with a rugged face.

Behind his dark-rimmed glasses, his deep-set eyes have seen much as a Census Taker. He enjoys his work and takes much pleasure in wearing the uniform: black suit, black shirt, black shoes, and white tie. Proudly, he displays his status in society with The Church patch on his left arm sleeve. Underneath his left arm, as all priests, Father Leo carries his copy of the B.I.B.L.E.

He has uncovered much treachery and fraudulent behavior during his work, all of which resulted in the conviction of the deceivers. Of those convicted, Father Leo has witnessed and relishes a 98% mortality rate.

To get to the truth, Father Leo never thinks twice about making someone swear on the “B.I.B.L.E.”

Thus, he has snared many souls and caused them to plunge to their final destination. Father Leo revels in his job and is good at what he does. He truly believes he is doing the work of God.

As Father Leo's window lowers, he is struck by the stench created from the mines. He reaches in his left breast pocket, pulls out a white handkerchief, and covers his mouth.

Guard:

What business do you have here today?

Father Leo:

I am Father Leo. I have come to audit this Facility under the order of Cardinal Superbia. I am sure that I am expected.

The guard looks at his records, and then signals to one of the towers. The iron gates creak open and the limousine enters the facility. Winding its way, it passes primitive and unfinished-looking makeshift dwellings. Its tires rumble through unpaved streets, leaving a trail of dust as it veers to avoid dump miners who are milling around the facility yard.

Father Leo:

These people are so lucky to have someone that cares for his country as Reagan Walker does.

Father Leo's driver looks in his review mirror and nods silently.

The limousine approaches a large but oddly constructed house in the middle of the encampment. The structure is assembled from a haphazard collage of wood, stone, and steel. This jigsaw mansion-like building is strangely out of place.

This is where the Chief of Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 resides. His name is Bishop Lamb, he is known throughout The Church of Americo as a strong director who runs his facility with an iron fist. He is very well respected and is often rewarded by The Church for his excellent job of motivating the dump miners to produce more than the average yield of other comparable facilities.

Over the last several months, however, the production of facility has decreased nearly sixty percent. While decline in production is not uncommon, they do cause red flags at the Revenue Division within The Church of Americo.

A decline in production may be caused by the death or injury of miners in a dumpsite avalanche or the dump mine may be running out of resources, but that is not the case in here. Facility 4499 is in the middle of a 1980's cash vein and should be producing much more than it currently is.

The car speeds to the front of Bishop Lamb's mansion and skids to a stop. The driver jumps from the car and quickly opens the door for Father Leo. Father Leo exits the car gradually while covering his mouth with his handkerchief struggling to keep from vomiting from the smell that surrounds him. Hurrying up the front steps of the mansion, the ornate but rust-covered front door swings open to meet him.

A young and attractive man, barefoot and wearing a short tunic, stands in the doorway. He does not smile nor raise his head. He is an altar boy of Bishop Lamb's that works for The Church. With his head bowed down, he greets Father Leo.

altar boy:

His holiness will be with you shortly, Father Leo. Please have a seat and rest while you wait.

The altar boy gestures Father Leo to enter the mansion. Once inside, Father Leo is welcomed by the smell of damp and musty furniture. These furnishings are old and worn but still quite elegant. In the middle of the receiving room stands a cast-off soapstone fireplace, flanking it are two massive, high-back chairs, cracks on the heavily carved frame and legs indicating their age. These furnishings are a mish-mash of styles from no particular decade. A dated and dingy plastic touchier lamp stands guard beside another door, a crumpled piece of tattered tapestry serving as a crude curtain. Behind the half-open curtain, Father Leo can see a bare wrought-iron bronze chandelier, its one bulb feverishly flickering in the dark. It is common for the bishops of facilities to withhold some of the dump mines' finer finds for their own pleasure. Father Leo walks to a heavily stained, torn velvet high back chair, dusts it off, and awkwardly settles in. The altar boy follows Father Leo to his seat with his head still bowed.

altar boy:

Bishop Lamb has asked that I make you as comfortable as possible, Father Leo. Is there anything I can do for you after such a long journey?

Having said this, the altar boy kneels in front of the seated Father Leo and crosses his hands behind his back. This does not surprise Father Leo at all. What does make him suspicious is that this type of practice, although not unheard of, is usually presented after any business transaction that may need to be addressed.

Father Leo:

No, thank you, my child. I am fine, thank you.

The altar boy stands up somewhat confused by Father Leo's reply.

altar boy:

Would you prefer a nun?

Father Leo:

No, please let the Bishop know I am here.

altar boy:

Can I offer you some wine?

Father Leo:

No.

altar boy:

The Bishop told me to make sure you get any relief you need.

The altar boy's persistence begins to irritate Father Leo and it can be seen in his face.

Father Leo:

Just let him know I am waiting.

altar boy:

Any...

Father Leo:

Now!

Startled, the altar boy turns and hurries back toward the door.

altar boy:

I am sure that his holiness will be with you shortly.

Father Leo gets up from the chair and inspects the room looking at each piece of furniture. He takes out his handkerchief and slowly wipes his eyeglasses, puts them back on, and starts making notes in his B.I.B.L.E.

A pale hand with gaudy rings on every finger carefully opens the door to the office halfway. It is Bishop Lamb. Cautious to not allow the door to squeak, Bishop Lamb enters the receiving room. Father Leo does not notice him enter.

Bishop Lamb is a short man with no noticeable hair, the style made popular by highly influential fashion slaves.

His jet-black eyebrows are penciled in and arched very high, making him appear that he is always in shock. This eyebrow style is widely accepted by the Ultra Republican women. He is very thin and pale giving him the appearance of frailty and feebleness. He dresses in very long silk robes with extravagant embroidery that has frayed in different places. The train is so long that it endlessly drags on the ground behind him. On the upper arm of each sleeve is the symbol of The Church so heavily embellished in sequins and beads that it's hard to distinguish what it once symbolized. He enjoys wearing jewelry. On each of his fingers, he wears flashy baubles. Dangling around his scrawny neck hang pendants and necklaces made out of plastic, glass, seeds, and rosary beads. He is very effeminate and does not hide this at all. Bishop Lamb tries exceedingly hard to give the appearance of being very dainty and having excessive refinement.

Bishop Lamb:

Hello, Father Leo.

Father Leo looks up from his B.I.B.L.E. and turns to see Bishop Lamb. Father Leo can't help but to grimace at the sight of him and tries to hide his disapproval of the Bishop's appearance and the obviously flagrant lifestyle he lives. Father Leo extends a hand in friendship as the Bishop approaches.

Father Leo:

Holiness.

Bishop Lamb approaches with open arms as if to hug Father Leo, his silk robe sleeves so long that they cover both his hands.

Father Leo is not here for pleasantries; his intentions are only to find the reasons why that the facility is producing at such a low rate.

Firmly, Father Leo offers only one hand. Reluctantly slowing his stride, Bishop Lamb reaches out from under his sleeve and gives Father Leo a very limp handshake.

Bishop Lamb:

What brings such a fine specimen of a Census Taker to my humble facility?

Father Leo:

Didn't Cardinal Superbia contact you?

Bishop Lamb:

He had an altar boy call about some silly matter. But I thought I had reassured him that I had everything under control.

Father Leo:

Cardinal Superbia can see no reason why your production has decreased so dramatically.

Bishop Lamb:

This is normal in every facility. Production cannot be maintained if there is nothing to produce.

Father Leo:

Then you will not mind if I have a look around?

Bishop Lamb:

What would you like to see first?

Father Leo:

May I see your books?

Bishop Lamb:

Of course, come with me to my office.

Bishop Lamb opens the door and waits for Father Leo to step through. It is, at once, bright and dark inside; a light flickers from one chandelier bulb plays hide-and-seek with those who enter.

Father Leo follows Bishop Lamb through a long hallway. Numerous doors line the hallway walls, some to the left, others to the right, some slightly open, and some completely closed.

As they continue, Father Leo observes young, attractive altar boys or young attractive nuns, in different stages of grooming themselves or lounging in unsettling ways.

Father Leo:

Why do you need so many altar boys and nuns?

Bishop Lamb:

I have no more than necessary to accomplish the will of The Church. You do not approve?

Father Leo:

Looks more like a harem than a congregation.

Bishop Lamb stops and abruptly turns to Father Leo. The hallway is dimmer now. The flickering chandelier bulb seems so far away the two figures stand facing each other. The glint from Father Leo's eyeglasses distinguishes them. Bishop Lamb speaks sternly but in a loud whisper, not wanting to be heard.

Bishop Lamb:

Ridiculous! What are you implying, Father Leo? I only use my staff as intended, according to the 7th commandment, paragraph 12, sub-section 1a. I abide by every rule of The Church and The Party. How dare you imply such a thing! Do not question my morality again, do you understand... Father?

Father Leo retreats a few steps backwards as Bishop Lamb speaks. Father Leo knows that even though he does not like the lifestyle that Bishop Lamb chooses to live, it is still accepted within the rules and regulations of The Church and The Party.

Father Leo:

Yes, I understand your holiness. May we continue to your office now? I wish to finish my work here today.

Bishop Lamb directs Father Leo into his office. The windows in the Bishop's office are covered with thick blue-black velvet sheets fashioned into curtains.

A mammoth flat-screen computer monitor takes up one complete wall of the office.

Other walls are recklessly covered with different types of art from no particular era. An oversized paper poster of the Archangel St. Michael slaying the devil hangs frameless beside the flat-screen monitor. A cracked piece of stained glass, depicting a purple passionflower, leans against one of the velvet sheets.

The Bishop then walks over to his desk and sits on an old wooden swivel chair. His chair squeaks and whines as he turns, not wanting to follow him. Striking a few keys, a large spreadsheet reveals itself on the massive monitor, the numbers on the columns and rows change constantly racing each another. This is the chart of the dump mine production from the Resource and Welfare Facility 4499.

Father Leo:

May I use your keyboard?

Bishop Lamb:

Why?

Father Leo:

I want to create a dump of all databases.

Bishop Lamb:

Why?

Father Leo:

I need it for my report to Cardinal Superbia.

Bishop Lamb:

Is that really necessary?

Father Leo:

Yes. Why are you being so uncooperative? Are you trying to hide something from us, Bishop?

Bishop Lamb:

No, of course not. I am... at your disposal, Father Leo. Haven't I offered every amenity?

Slowly, Bishop Lamb turns the keyboard towards Father Leo.

Father Leo lays his B.I.B.L.E. on the Bishop's desk and starts hitting some keys, then looks at the screen. He hits some more keys, then more keys, then more; the almost rhythmic pounding of his fingers sound like a dark symphony. The numbers and objects on the computer screen start to change, slowly, and then faster, pages flip from one to the other, trying to keep up with his pace.

Bishop Lamb looks up blankly at the monitor; the numbers and objects appear to tattoo his mask-like pale skin. After what seemed like a never-ending arpeggio, Father Leo stops typing.

Father Leo:

Your numbers are low considering this is a relatively new facility.

Bishop Lamb:

You know how miners can be. I could get more production out of them, if I could make a few examples out of the bad ones.

Father Leo:

That won't be necessary. What doesn't make sense is that your flock is in the heart of a 1980's cash vein. But it's not producing the same amount of currency as other facilities mining within the same decade.

Openly confused Bishop Lamb looks at Father Leo, then at the monitor on the wall.

Father Leo:

Statistics show that your facility should be producing at least twenty pounds a day in copper coins alone, yet you show none. We need a full audit of this facility. Cardinal Superbia will want to look into this.

Befuddled, Bishop Lamb grabs the arms of his wooden swivel chair. It squeaks and whines, as he tries to walk while seated.

Bishop Lamb:

Cardinal Superbia ...is that really necessary? You know running a facility has its advantages.

Father Leo:

What are you saying?

Bishop Lamb:

I could make it worth your while. Just fill out the report as the heavenly father expected. None would be the wiser.

Father Leo is taken back by such a request and can barely retain his disdain for such an intentional disregard for the laws of Americo.

Father Leo:

I could ask you to swear on the B.I.B.L.E. right now for such a remark, but no, with a discrepancy this large... Yes, I will be back with Cardinal Superbia. Be prepared if your books don't balance.

Father Leo leaves the Bishop's office. Bishop Lamb's has real reason to be concerned.

This is a real problem. Not knowing what to do, the Bishop walks to the window nearest his desk. He draws the velvet sheet curtain partly to one side and gazes out. Watching as the limousine driver closes the door after Father Leo gets in, the Bishop stands at the window frozen in time.

While clutching the curtain with both hands, he ponders what is to become of him. Surely Cardinal Superbia will discover the missing funds. What if he is asked to swear on the B.I.B.L.E.? The truth will surely come out.

Embezzlement. The word rang in his head. Embezzlement. Transfixed, he closes his eyes and repeats the word over and over in his head.

Embezzlement is a crime punishable by death. What if The Church does a comprehensive scan of the mansion? They will surely find the money he has stolen and hid!

Bishop Lamb softly mutters to himself and relives his wrongdoing over and over again in his thoughts.

Bishop Lamb:

So close. So close indeed.

The Bishop's plan was to embezzle enough money to purchase membership into "Heaven". He only needed \$20,000,000 more and at the rate the miners were extracting currency from the dumps, it would have taken only five to six more years.

But now there is a problem. It would only be a few days until Father Leo returned with Cardinal Superbia. It would be impossible to move the already absconded funds to a new hiding place. There was no other place to hide that much cash in time without being found out.

Thinking to himself, the Bishop quickly concocts a quite devilish plan; he will invite Cardinal Superbia to visit before Father Leo could make his report. He hastily grabs the phone and dials.

Bishop Lamb (admiring the rings on his free hand):

Yes, I would like to speak with Cardinal Superbia... Hello, your Excellency. I am pleased to announce that Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 had a tremendous blessing and have unearthed over \$520,000.00 in paper currency.... Yes, the currency is in perfect condition... It is contained in an old briefcase... You will pick it up personally, wonderful... I will have an altar boy make all the arrangements. Yes your Excellency... Bless you, your Excellency... No, bless you... I will await your arrival...

Bishop Lamb pauses.

Bishop Lamb :

Your Excellency, before I forget, I am expecting a Census Taker today, but he seems to be tardy in his arrival. For convenience, I have created a back up of the facilities database for him to bring back with him. He can show you the results of our production upon his return. This way, I won't tie up any of his and The Church's very precious resources... Thank you your Excellency... No bless you.

Bishop Lamb hangs up the phone and slumps deep into his chair.

Bishop Lamb:

Now I need to find an old briefcase... Relief. I need relief! Where is an altar boy when you need one. Relief!

Dump Miner - Chapter Two

Reagan Walker meets with the Cardinals.

An old three-story marble-and-stone building serves as the Cardinals' main office of operations. This grand faded structure has retained much of its glory. Marble slabs cover the buildings exterior; floor-to-ceiling stained-glass windows tightly nested together cover most of the walls, the ceiling boasts a glorious central dome with a bright beautiful fresco that depict the creation of Americo.

It is almost sunset, as the Reagan George Walker enters the Cardinals sanctuary, George Walker, the current Reagan of Americo, has been Reagan since his mother, Nancy Bush Walker, passed away twenty-two years earlier. Since assuming his position, the Reagan George Walker has run Americo with an iron fist. He has no enemies and no friends. His only concern is Americo, its prosperity, and how to keep alive the traditions set in place by his family and the Reagans before him.

All seven of The Church of Americo's Cardinals, the highest authorities in The Church only second only to the Pope himself, surround the Reagan in fiery debate over additional funding for Church affairs. Each Cardinal is dressed in the finest of handcrafted silk robes decorated with fanciful embroidery stitching then studded with an array of gems and rare stones. Their outfits are finished with glorious headdresses covered in complex beadwork that towers to the sky that the Cardinals seem to effortlessly balance gracefully on their heads. These are the finest garments that can be found in all of Americo or even a European Democratic State. The Cardinals vigorously churn out their arguments with passion, but each and every one lands on the deaf ears of the Reagan.

Reagan Walker:

I don't care what you have to say. None of you would even be here if it wasn't for the amendments my family had put in place during the "Dawn of Humanity."

Cardinal Invidia:

Oh your family, please.

Cardinal Ira:

You have no right to make any decisions without consulting the "Holy Father".

Reagan Walker:

Are you talking about that half-dead comatose figure head you call the Pope?

Cardinal Superbia:

Speak with humility! He represents...

Reagan Walker:

You should confess your sins before you speak to me of humility, Cardinal. I know what your Pope represents.

Cardinal Acedia:

Then you should be more...

Reagan Walker:

Enough of this! Since The Church has been in charge of collecting taxes I have watched resources embezzled from the collection plate since my late mother introduced me to your supervisor fifty-five years ago.

Cardinal Ira:

Watch your tongue!

Reagan Walker:

You all look like very fanciful peacocks for people who take vows of poverty.

Cardinal Acedia:

These were from donations.

Reagan Walker:

Is that so? What billionaire drag queen left you jeweled robes and beaded hats? You look like court jesters!

Cardinal Luxuria:

Why don't you just leave?

Reagan Walker:

Why? Do you need some relief? Do you need to break in a new altar boy?

The Reagan Walker storms out of the Cardinals refuge, leaving all in the room in a silent hush.

Cardinal Invidia sighs a large breath and clears his throat to get the attention of the other Cardinals in the room, the silence is finally broken.

Cardinal Invidia:

He thinks so highly of himself. He has to go.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Why can't he just give in to what he knows he wants.

Cardinal Superbia:

Would it be so bad if The Church had total control of Americo?

Cardinal Acedia:

He is a leach that drains the life from all he touches.

Cardinal Superbia:

I agree. He has over-stepped the framework of the former Reagans and has destroyed system of faith.

Cardinal Gula:

He is taking food from our mouths.

Cardinal Ira:

Everyone hates him! He is a truly a thorn in the crown of our glorious Americo.

Cardinal Acedia:

But who will replace him? His son is even worse.

Cardinal Ira:

Something must be done!

Cardinal Gula:

The Reagan Walker's son could be made to swear on the B.I.B.L.E. for all that he has done, no one would even question why.

Cardinal Superbia:

Yes! That could be the answer to our prayers!

Cardinal Luxuria:

What are you saying?

Cardinal Superbia:

A sacrifice to The Church would restore order.

Cardinal Invidia:

A sacrifice? What do you mean?

Cardinal Superbia:

The Second Commandment of course.

The Cardinals pause with interest and curiosity.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Go on.

Cardinal Superbia:

Paragraph Seven, Subsection 3-45 GR.

Cardinal Luxuria:

A brilliant plan! It would clear the path for our “Holy Father” to take his rightful place as spiritual leader and Reagan of Americo.

Cardinal Gula:

Yes, yes, yes, a hostile takeover, delicious!

Cardinal Invidia:

That is a brilliant plan. I wish I had thought of it.

Cardinal Ira:

Yes, our “Holy Father” will take his rightful place as spiritual leader and Reagan. Then we will show them all how to run Americo.

Cardinal Superbia:

Profits will be through the roof.

Cardinal Invidia:

I will have an altar boy draft a proposal and dispatch it to The Party for approval.

Cardinal Luxuria:

What if the Reagan refuses?

Cardinal Gula:

Refuse? He won't. He is a selfish pig.

Cardinal Invidia hurriedly strides up the flight of stairs while the other Cardinals gather in a rigid circle and continue to discuss their plan.

Dump Miner - Chapter Three

Father Leo returns to Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 with Cardinal Superbia.

A limousine pulls up to the front gate of the facility that transports Father Leo and the Cardinal Superbia. The guard at the facility gate approaches the vehicle and spies into the rear window of the limousine. Bishop Lamb is expecting them and the guard has been fully briefed prior to their arrival. It is a rare day when a Cardinal graces any facility. The guard waves the limousine through the gate without hesitation and calls ahead to Bishop Lamb's office to announce that their guests have arrived.

Guard:

Bishop Lamb, the Cardinal and the Priest have arrived at the gate... Yes your Holiness, I just sent them through... Thank you.

Sitting in his office Bishop Lamb picks up a pile of currency from his desktop, stuffs it into an old envelope, and then calls for an altar boy. The altar boy enters without haste.

Bishop Lamb:

After we show our guest to their rooms, I want you to take this envelope and put it in the good Father's luggage. It is private...a note... just for him.

altar boy:

Yes, your holiness.

The altar boy takes the envelope and puts it in a pocket under his tunic. Through the office window, Bishop Lamb can see the Cardinal's limousine pull up to the walkway of his mansion. The Bishop turns his attention back to the altar boy.

Bishop Lamb:

It is time to greet our guests.

The Bishop and the altar boy swiftly move towards the front door arriving as the bell rings. Cardinal Superbia is standing there with Father Leo directly behind him. The Bishop throws his hands in the air and then lowers himself to one bended knee. Cardinal Superbia extends his right hand and the Bishop quickly kisses several of his rings then rises and extends his hand to Father Leo who receives the Bishops gesture with reserve.

Bishop Lamb:

Your holiness, welcome to my modest abode, let me show you to your rooms, welcome.

Father Leo never breaks his eye contact with the Bishop. He can tell something is wrong.

The altar boy remains motionless keeping his eyes to the ground until the Bishop addresses him.

Bishop Lamb:

Get their luggage and bring it to their rooms, and don't forget what I told you.

Bishop Lamb returns his attention to the Cardinal and Father Leo as the altar boy dashes to the limousine's trunk and retrieves a mountain of luggage.

Bishop Lamb:

Your holiness...Father Leo, can I offer you any refreshment before we get to work?

Superbia:

That would be lovely.

Bishop Lamb:

I have a wonderfully special wine that was given to me as a gift by Cardinal Gula. This would be the perfect occasion to drink it.

Cardinal Superbia:

If it is from Gula, I am sure it is a treat.

Bishop Lamb:

Please, let us retreat to the receiving room.

Bishop Lamb waves his hand and leads Cardinal Superbia and Father Leo through the mansion. When they enter the receiving room, a nun is opening wine and fills mismatched but very elegant wine glasses to the brim.

She serves the wine on a tray in the three equally elegant but mismatched crystal glasses and gracefully serves each guest silently then whisks herself from the room.

Cardinal Superbia:

Well, that is service. Almost like "Heaven".

Bishop Lamb:

We aim to please.

Bishop Lamb and Cardinal Superbia enjoy a light laugh while Father Leo seems unwilling to let his guard down. The Cardinal and the Bishop both sip their wine. Father Leo holds his glass to the light and looks at it suspiciously.

Bishop Lamb:

Father Leo, you have been so quiet. You are not drinking your wine, is there a problem?

Father Leo:

No, the wine is just fine thank you.

At that moment the altar boy that Bishop Lamb gave the envelope of money enters the room and catches the eye of everyone. The conversation pauses.

Bishop Lamb:

Is our guests' luggage in order?

altar boy:

Yes your holiness.

Bishop Lamb:

Everything?

altar boy:

Yes your holiness.

Bishop Lamb:

You are excused.

altar boy:

Thank you your holiness.

Bishop Lamb:

Let me show you where your suites are located so we can get on to business. Please follow me.

Bishop Lamb opens the door to the hallway and directs the two men out. They follow the Bishop down a long corridor towards their quarters. This time, the doors to rooms are shut. Bishop Lamb stops in front of one of the closed doors and waves to Father Leo while opening the door with his free hand.

Bishop Lamb:

Father Leo, this will be your room.

Father Leo meticulously takes note of the location of the room as he looks through the open door and spies his luggage on the bed. He notices that one of the straps is unbuckled but does not give it much thought. Then the group continues walking, as they approach another door the Bishop pauses.

Bishop Lamb:

And for Cardinal Superbia, we have only the nicest room in the mansion.

Cardinal Superbia:

This is just wonderful your hospitality is notable.

Bishop Lamb:

Oh, thank you, your holiness. Your escort does not seem to share your enthusiasm. Is there something on your mind Father Leo?

Both Cardinal Superbia and Bishop Lamb direct their attention to Father Leo. Father Leo stands motionless, not saying a word; he keeps an intent stare on Bishop Lamb. Father Leo can tell that something is wrong, but can't put his finger on it. An Americo citizen about to face a full audit from The Church should be more fearful. Just the threat of an audit usually would cause even the most unyielding Reagan to sweat a bit above the upper lip.

Father Leo:

I am here on business not pleasure.

Cardinal Superbia:

I think he may be concerned with a conversation we had on the ride over here.

Bishop Lamb:

There is no need for concern, I am sure everything will turn out just as expected.

Father Leo:

Then may we get down to business?

Bishop Lamb:

Oh, you are so impatient. Well let's get started. Please follow me.

Bishop Lamb leads Cardinal Superbia and Father Leo to his office, opens the door, and they all enter. Cardinal Superbia and Father Leo take seats while the Bishop walks to his desk. Reaching under the desk he produces an old weathered briefcase. He sets the case on the desk and slowly unfastens the latches. After leisurely unfastening the left latch, Bishop Lamb pauses and smiles. Then he slowly unfastens the right latch, making sure that everyone in the room is aware of what he did. Right before he opens the lid of the case the Bishop abruptly pauses and pretends to think to himself.

Cardinal Superbia:

Is there a problem?

Bishop Lamb:

Oh my, I almost forgot. While tending the field, one of the flock recently came across a simply wonderful gem ring that I was saving for Cardinal Luxuria. But he never visits, and seeing you have a naked finger (pointing to Cardinal Superbia's hands) I think it should be for you.

Cardinal Superbia:

For Luxuria you say? He does have so many wonderful rings already. Leo, what do you think?

Father Leo looks at Bishop Lamb and then reluctantly gives the answer that he believes the Cardinal would like to hear.

Father Leo:

Yes, Cardinal Luxuria has many rings.

Bishop Lamb:

Well then would his holiness please follow with me? I want to be the first to see when you put the ring on.

The Bishop pauses and looks at Father Leo.

Bishop Lamb:

You don't mind, do you?

Father Leo knows better to stand between a Cardinal and a gift. He does not hesitate in his answer.

Father Leo:

I will wait here your holiness.

Bishop Lamb and Cardinal Superbia depart the room. Father Leo, now alone, opens his B.I.B.L.E. and prepares for the audit. After a few minutes of waiting Father Leo starts to become board and his interest is drawn to the briefcase on Bishop Lamb's desk. Curious he walks to the Bishops desk and looks at the briefcase. The Father stands staring at the case and then turns to return to his seat. As he turns the door to the office opens and the Bishop and the Cardinal return, both admiring the large gemstone ring on the Cardinal's finger.

Bishop Lamb:

Does this mean we are dating?

Cardinal Superbia laughs at the Bishop's joke with full acceptance, but Father Leo is not enjoying this. He thinks that Bishop Lamb is just trying to put off the inevitable. Bishop Lamb saunters past Father Leo and picks up the briefcase off the desk.

Bishop Lamb:

Now on to the main event!

Bishop Lamb opens the unlatched case and exposes that it is full of old moldy currency and empty plastic zip-lock bags. Cardinal Superbia's eyes widen with the site of the cash.

Bishop Lamb:

And not to forget this grand find of \$520,000.00 of mint United States Treasury bills circa 1982 to 1985.

The Cardinal takes the case and counts the money as he speaks.

Cardinal Superbia:

I am proud to accept the \$520,000 dollar donation on behalf...

The Cardinal stops speaking and gives his full attention to the case of money. He shuffles through the bills and then looks at Bishop Lamb with a twisted stare.

Cardinal Superbia:

Wait, wait, wait. There is only \$370,000 here. What is going on? Is someone trying to make me the fool!

Bishop Lamb looks at Father Leo with an evil grin, pauses, and then speaks slowly with purpose.

Bishop Lamb:

It must have been stolen.

Father Leo (surprised):

Stolen!?!

Bishop Lamb:

Yes, stolen. Thieves are not uncommon here in the facility.

Cardinal Superbia:

We must find who is responsible, if word of this gets out...it would not reflect well on The Church. Oh no, this would unquestionably not reflect well on me!

Bishop Lamb:

Your Holiness, we will clear your good name. Who had a chance to steal the money? Let's see... I put the case on the desk... Opened it... Nothing was missing... Then we both went to get your new beautiful ring... So it certainly was neither you nor I, your Holiness.

Cardinal Superbia:

Yes, agreed.

Bishop Lamb again looks at Father Leo with an even larger and impious grin. All his years with The Church has made Father Leo quite a good profiler and judge of character.

Father Leo did not trust Bishop Lamb as far as he could see him. His thoughts flash to his room and the image of the open strap on his luggage.

Like being struck by bolt of lightning Father Leo realizes what is happening. He is being set up.

Father Leo:

Excuse me, your Holiness, I must use the facilities.

Bishop Lamb:

Are you all right?

Father Leo:

It must be something in the air. I am not used to the smell.

Father Leo rushes to his room and starts to frantically dig through his luggage finding the planted currency just as the Cardinal and the Bishop enter the room with a facility guard. Cardinal Superbia sees Father Leo holding the currency and he starts to shake with anger. Bishop Lamb's lips curl into an enormous twisted smirk, trying to retain his joy for a plan so well executed.

Father Leo knows there is no explanation that will suffice, he has many times made others swear on the B.I.B.L.E. for lesser crimes knowing that guilty or innocent the line of questioning that is asked usually leave no other conclusion expect that of guilt.

Bishop Lamb:

Well, it seems we have caught a child in the cookie jar.

Father Leo:

No, your Holiness, I was not...

Cardinal Superbia:

Bite your tongue!

Bishop Lamb:

His guilt shines like rays of light through a broken stained-glass window. He is holding the stolen money in his hands!

Cardinal Superbia shakes his head and tries to hold on to his composure. He stares at Father Leo with contempt, than looks at the guard standing at the door entrance.

Cardinal Superbia:

Wait outside and close the door. I will call for you if I need you.

The guard exits and closes the door behind him. Cardinal Superbia sits on the bed and takes the money from Father Leo's shaking hands. Bishop Lamb can hardly hold his excitement and almost giggles to himself. His plan could not be working out better.

Cardinal Superbia:

Leo, you would steal from me? You would blatantly break one of Americo's Commandments in front of god? In front of god? In front of me!

Father Leo cowers and looks at the money in the Cardinals hand and realizes that there is no way out of this trap. He falls at the Cardinals feet weeping and begins begs for his life.

Father Leo:

Dear Heavenly Father, I beg you to see that I ...

Cardinal Superbia opens his robe and puts the currency in one of its pockets. He cuts Father Leo off mid-sentence.

Cardinal Superbia:

Who do you think you are! This is incredible! Of all people to steal from me! Father Leo you where one of my altar boys, oh Father Leo, what to do? What will the others think of me, what will they say? What will they say?

Father Leo:

Your holiness, I did not...

Bishop Lamb:

Yes, what will they say? What will they say?

Cardinal Superbia:

Leo, oh Leo, you are one of my oldest friends in The Church. I thought I had trained you better than this. I am so ashamed for you as well as myself.

Father Leo:

I am being set up!

Bishop Lamb:

Listen to his lies; caught red handed! He is no better than a dump miner. He should be made to swear on the B.I.B.L.E.

Cardinal Superbia:

That is true, you could be made to swear in this. I am so ashamed. If word of this gets out The Church will be a laughing stock, I will be a laughing stock. What to do?

Bishop Lamb looks at Father Leo and smiles.

Cardinal Superbia:

Leo, since you are one of my oldest friends I am going to make an exception, I am not going to report this, let's just say the money was never found.

With that Father Leo collapse into a puddle on the ground grovels at the feet of the Cardinal, raising his head only to kisses the Cardinals feet.

Father Leo:

Oh thank you your holiness, thank you.

Cardinal Superbia pushes Father Leo aside and adjusts his robe. The Bishop's smile droops. If the Cardinal let the Father off with just a warning then his troubles will just start anew, surely Father Leo would retaliate against him and that outcome would mean certain death.

Bishop Lamb:

But you cannot let his obvious disregard for one of America's Commandments to go unpunished.

Cardinal Superbia:

That is true.

Father Leo:

Your Holiness, if you just do a little investigation into this, I am sure that we will find the truth, the truth that will clear my name and your reputation.

Father Leo looks at Bishop Lamb with a knowing look, but he knows he cannot make unfounded accusations or the consequences could be just as dire.

Bishop Lamb:

But then they will all know, entire Party will be aware that you where made to look the fool.

Cardinal Superbia:

That is true.

Bishop Lamb:

Let me take the blame for the missing money, I will state in the report that it was stolen. You could not carry any blame for that.

Cardinal Superbia:

You are a good soul Bishop Lamb.

Bishop Lamb turns and points to Father Leo wagging his finger.

Bishop Lamb:

But this one! This one cannot be trusted! He would obviously tell the others of your weakness if you allow it.

Father Leo stands in fear and shear shock knowing that his life could be taken at any moment.

He can see Cardinal Superbia thinking about the situation, the Cardinals face contorting in pain until he slowly explodes. Father Leo knows Cardinal Superbia all too well and hangs his head waiting.

Cardinal Superbia:

You are right! Father Leo you are no better than the dregs that wallow in the mud at this facility so you shall join them. Your punishment for this crime of theft is that you will be excommunicated from The Church. You should live with the scum you emulate. Guards!

The two guards rush into the room.

Guards:

Yes, your holiness.

Cardinal Superbia:

Father Leo has decided that he does not want to live under the protection of The Church's umbrella. Strip him of his of any Church property and cast him to the dumps. That is where he belongs.

The Bishop moves very close to the Cardinal, putting his arm around him he speaks with reassurance.

Bishop Lamb:

With his fellow dump miners. You are very wise, your holiness. He will learn humility here. That is a very beautiful ring.

The guards drag Father Leo out of the Bishop's office while Bishop Lamb continues to gush over Cardinal Superbia's new ring.

Dump Miner - Chapter Four

leO and mariA meet.

The facility guards drag leO from of the Bishop's mansion and hurl him down the front steps. A dazed leO picks himself from the ground as the guards advance toward him, with all his might he tries to fend-off the facility guards' vicious attacks, but it is no relief from the nonstop blows of the guards batons. Finally submitting, leO falls limp and lifeless to the ground, the guards continue pummeling him with their batons even after he has lost all of his fight. As leO lays on the ground beaten, the guards continue with their assigned task; stripping him of any Church property. The guards strip leO of his clothing, leaving him naked, bloody, and dazed.

The guards then each grab one of leO's hands and drag the overwhelmed man to the facility tram station that will take him to the dump mines where he will now spend the rest of his days. The guards push the crushed but still defiant man onto one of the tramcars, the doors shut and it quickly speeds leO away. Badly beaten and alone, leO falls into a seat and stares out a window as the as the tram follows the tunnels deep into the heart of the dumps. leO sits motionless staring at the propaganda images that decorating the tunnel walls, larger-than-life images of a seemingly content men and a women dressed as dump miners waving signs that read "For the Glory of Americo", depictions of old weighing scales balancing an infant on one plate and food and medical vouchers on the other, still in shock from what has happened.

As the tram whizzes down the tracks the reality of what is happening engulfs leO like a thick fog and he breaks down weeping. The tram speeds leO deeper into the heart of the dumps. leO gazes blankly at the illusions of life on the walls of the tram tunnel as blood slowly drips down a wound on his head.

Staring lifelessly, leO wonders what has just happened, is there no way out of this mess, is this a test from God, and if so why? leO closes his eyes, thinks to himself, and speaks aloud.

leO:

There is no hope for me now.

As the tram slows to a stop, another guard reaches in the car and grabs the exposed leO by the arm, ripping him from the tram and thrusting him into the heart of the facility. leO stumbles and lands face down on the tram's receiving platform that leads to the mines. Looking towards the sky, he raises his fist and starts to scream. Passing dump miners and guards just ignore him except one, mariA.

A dump miner since birth, mariA, has accepted her responsibility within Americo and does not question it. She has never tried to be anything but a dump miner and knows no other life. She has never had any reason to believe she is special or that she would be anything more than what she is, a dump miner. She is known throughout the camp as a kind and considerate soul, blessed with a rare beauty that could be seen even through the layers of filth and stain that have accumulated on her body and clothing from her daily work in the mines.

mariA wears of Americo-issued garments and rags that she has found in the dump mines that could not be recycled. To protect herself from the sun's scorching rays, mariA wears a long stained sheet over her head as a veil. This also serves to ward of insects and other pests.

Having come out of the mines after a full days' work, she is still dressed in her greasy and grimy yellow plastic coveralls that's three sizes larger, the matching yellow hat tucked but sticking out of the side pocket.

mariA runs to leO after witnessing the heartless brutality inflicted by the facility guards. Seeing her approach from the corner of his eye, and disquieted by the way that she looks, leO cringes into a defensive posture on the ground trying to protect himself from what may be another assault.

mariA:

Are you all right?

leO:

Don't touch me!

mariA:

I just thought you needed some help.

leO looks up at mariA and realizes that she is not a threat to his wellbeing. Trying to regain his composure, he takes a large breath, and looks up at her.

leO:

Forgive me my child; yes I do need some help.

mariA offers her hand to leO and helps the battered man to his feet.

Taking off the stained sheet she wears as a veil, she offers it to him to cover his exposed body. leO does not hesitate; grabbing the veil promptly from her, he wraps it around his waist to cover his shame.

mariA:

You are new here? You certainly do not look like the others. What is your name? Why don't you have any clothing?

leO, still shaken from the beating, thinks to himself, who was he now? Everything he has known or believed in has just exploded in his face. His entire life's work destroyed by one malevolent man. He looks at mariA and speaks with reserve.

leO:

Fath... Uh, no, I am only leO.

mariA:

leO, I am mariA. Come with me, let's get you something to wear and something to put on treat those bruises.

mariA offers her hand to leO, her kindness overcomes and puzzles him at the same time. He is not accustomed to such random acts of compassion. He gently takes mariA's hand and unsteadily stands to his feet.

leO:

Thank you my child, thank you, thank you.

As they leave, leO looks back at the tram station realizing that this is now his life.

With mariA's hand in his, she escorts him towards her quarters. They walk towards what resembles a large makeshift barracks assembled out of cardboard, metal, and wood. Rust-covered pieces of corrugated steel in different sizes, patched haphazardly on top of each other form the roof of the structure and part of its siding. Large open cardboard boxes, with their flaps flopping in the wind, appear where windows are supposed to be, supported by old and odd-sized pieces of wood.

This is mariA's home, it is also the home for other dump miners who are part of the Americo welfare system. And now this will be home to leO as well.

mariA and leO enter the rickety structure through a low-slung wooden gate that serves as the main door; inside, it is dank and dark. The one cavernous space inside is divided into several housing and sleeping quarters. There is no coy prudishness here, as the quarters are separated only by more found items – old milk crates, an old blanket hung on a line, and dilapidated wooden shutters serve as makeshift room dividers.

mariA shows leO her sleeping quarters. She takes off the coveralls, revealing an equally dirty long-sleeved shirt and oily pair of pants underneath. She ties her long dark hair in a low bun with a piece of string she pulls out of her pants pocket. Years of working in the dump mines and living in the facility amid dirt and debris have taken a toll over mariA.

Like the other dump miners, her skin is pallid and drab; her hands and feet are grimy. Her hair is somewhat tangled. leO looks at her dirty face and weak body dressed in rags then lowers his head in disgrace.

mariA:

Now, let's get you in some clothing.

leO:

This is not right, I do not belong here.

mariA:

Why? Are you supposed to be in a different housing unit?

leO:

No my child, no, you misunderstand.

mariA walks to one corner of the barracks and pulls out a dirty cardboard box from underneath a pile of old blankets.

Opening the box, she rummages through a disarray of worn-out shirts, pants, shoes, and work boots.

mariA:

Well, wherever you are supposed to be you will need to cover yourself. bettY had an Americo-issued jacket that might have fit you, but the guards burned all of bettY's clothes. Let's see what we have. There are some old pants and a shirt here that you can wear. I don't think there are any extra shoes right now though. You will have to find or get an issued pair, but don't hold your breath.

mariA tosses several different items of clothing to a still perplexed leO. He hides his disdain at the smell of the garments, anxiously gathers them, and puts some on.

mariA:

I'm thirsty. Can I get you some water, leO?

leO:

Yes, thank you.

mariA walks over to a rust-covered sink that is attached to a wall of the barracks. Inside the sink, a large plastic jar brims with brown-colored water trickling from the faucet above. She takes a dented tin cup from a makeshift wood shelf, fills the cup with water from the sink, and carries it back to leO who takes it with a shaking hand. The water is the color of deep rust. Trembling, leO lifts the glass slowly to his mouth but stops immediately when he is able to smell it and lowers the glass from his lips.

leO:

Thank you mariA, I am not thirsty right now.

leO hands the cup of water back to mariA who takes it with a puzzled look. She drinks the water, washes the cup, and puts it back on the shelf. Suddenly, the door to the barracks swings open. It is weaseL. He is a shifty-eyed man who looks far older than his years, but none the wiser.

His body is deformed and bent from all the time he has spent in the deep recesses of the mines, causing him to walk with a limp. Covered with dirt and holding a dead rat, he walks up to leO and stares at him.

weaseL:

Who is this? Why is he here?

mariA:

Go away weaseL.

weaseL:

Why? Who is this?

leO temporarily forgets his new place in within the world of Americo and speaks from habit.

leO:

I am father leO.

mariA:

You are a census taker!?!

leO:

Ah, no, please wait, I am no longer with The Church. I was excommunicated. I am only leO now.

Several more dump miners enter the barracks from their day in the mines. Their bodies contorted from the life of labor that has been inflicted upon them for the good of themselves and Americo. One by one, each of dump miners notice that there is a new face in their barracks. Cautiously, the group gathers around mariA and leO.

jacK:

mariA, who is this?

weaseL:

He's a Census Taker!

saraH:

mariA! You brought the devil into our home?

rogeR:

What's he doing here?

saraH:

He doesn't look like a census taker.

leO:

I am no longer affiliated with The Church or the State.

weaseL:

Maybe he is a thief. He looks like a thief!

One of the dump miners walks to him slowly, squints, and gives leO a one-eyed stare.

rogeR:

Are you a thief? We have nothing.

weaseL looks at the rat in his hand, then back at leO, and quickly hides it behind his back.

weaseL:

Let's take care of him! You'll get nothing from us!

The worked up crowd starts to advance towards leO.

mariA:

No! What is wrong with all of you? This man is hurt. It doesn't matter where he came from; he is one of us now for whatever reason. We must help our own, no one else does.

MariA's statement stops the advancing mob in their tracks.

rogeR:

That is true, we must work to help each other or we are no better than the dogs that keep us here.

leO watches with bewilderment as the crowd gently disperses. mariA approaches leO and offers her hand. leO looks up in her to mariA's eyes and instinctively takes her hand without thinking.

Beneath the filth and grunge and all the despair, leO senses that there is something pure about her. She is a rare flower.

mariA:

You are home now; there is an open bed next to mine. Please come and get some rest.

She and leO walk across the barracks to a row of old cots lined up against a far wall. Each cot is covered with old ragged sheets, stained over the years by urine, filth, and neglect. mariA leads leO to a dirty bunk and he sits unenthusiastically on a small corner.

mariA:

Do you have your PM? You are going to need to take it soon.

leO:

No, I do not have a PM, I have never needed a PM.

mariA:

You have never needed a PM? How do you sleep at night?

leO:

I never had a need for them.

mariA:

I do not know anyone who does not take AM's and PM's here, but you will need to take them if you are planning on staying here. The toxicity in the facility is too high to work without them.

mariA lifts up the pillow on her bunk and produces a balled-up soiled paper napkin. She carefully opens the napkin to display several pills, some red, some white. She reaches into the napkin, takes one red pill from the bunch, and offers it to leO.

mariA:

I do have some of bettY's that she left behind. Take this, it will help.

leO:

Who is betty? Won't she need them?

weaseL sees mariA retrieve the drugs and is drawn to them like child to candy. He barges into the conversation, while never taking his eyes off the drugs in mariA's hand.

weaseL:

bettY doesn't need anything anymore; she's got out easy.

weaseL reaches out and attempts to grab a few pills from mariA's hand but she quickly turns her back and swats at him with her free hand, trying to shoo him away like an annoying mosquito.

leO:

I don't understand?

mariA:

bettY passed two days ago. That is why you have a place to rest. On Saturday, we are going to have a wake for her.

weaseL:

Ya, if you take a bunch of AM/PM's together they make you forget about this place for just a while and lucky for us, bettY just got a refill before she kicked.

leO looks up at mariA and the pills in her hand, then to a very excited weaseL.

leO:

Shouldn't those have been turned into the Bishop or a guard to be redistributed?

leO's words echo throughout the barracks and the room becomes very quiet. Everyone in the small divided rooms turn their attention on leO again, he can feel the tension build that he inadvertently triggered.

mariA:

We told the guard that they where destroyed when they burned her clothing. You are not going to inform on us, are you?

weaseL:

He is going to turn us in! I told you he was trouble, he has only been here a couple of minutes and already he is going to turn us in for stealing.

This again stirs the sentiment of the small crowd and they begin to chatter amongst themselves about the potential problems that would surely be caused by being turned in to the Bishop for stealing.

leO:

No, no, I am not going to say anything.

weaseL:

He is lying; he is going to turn us in for a reward!

leO:

What!?!

The crowd becomes more and more frantic with each word; a whirl of heated emotions start to take over the room.

jackK:

Are you going to turn us in?

saraH:

Is this true?

rogeR:

Someone could be made to swear on the B.I.B.L.E. for this!
That would surely mean death!

leO looks at the crowd of miners how are progressively getting overly agitated and worked-up, some starting to cry, some hitting themselves on the head with their on hands. They should not be getting so upset for something as trivial as turning in a prescription to the Bishop for redistribution. Bishop Lamb is truly worse than leO could have ever imagined.

mariA:

leO, are you going to turn us in for stealing?

leO stands up and addresses the frantic miners, trying to calm their fears.

leO:

Everyone, please, I am not going to turn anyone in. I am no friend of Americo. I am no longer obligated by any codes or commandments. I am not a thief, a snitch, or a representative of Americo.

leO pauses and looks to the floor.

leO:

I am... only leO.

leO's words reassure the tattered group and they slowly melt into a sad calmness, little by little dispersing to different sections of the barracks. When leO becomes conscious that he is out of danger by attack from the crowd, he turns his attention back to mariA remembering what she said.

leO:

mariA, so why did the guards burn bettY's clothes?

mariA:

She had bugs. You should try to get some rest now.

mariA approaches leO and has him sit on the side of his cot. She gently cleans the wounds on his forehead with a towel she wrung with water from the sink.

She then leaves leO and goes back to her cot.

leO looks at the dirty sheets on the cot, not knowing what to think or do. But gradually overcome by exhaustion and the pain inflicted by the guard's beatings, he lowers himself on the cot, pulls the sheets, and drifts off to sleep.

Dump Miner - Chapter Five

Life goes on.

Several months pass in the dumps, leO has started to become accustomed to working as a dump miner. His status as the spiritual leader of the facility becomes accepted by most of the other miners and resented by the Bishop Lamb. He has been known to almost incite riots during his impromptu sermons where he touts what has become his version of faith. His views have become skewed by his anger and jealousy of what he once had and what he has become.

The sun blazes down on the camp as all the miners slowly toil to find anything that can be recycled on the heaping mounds of garbage. The miners pick up one piece of refuse at a time, inspect it, then place in their collection bag to be brought back and sent for recycling or to be disposed of in the facility's incinerator. leO, not really paying attention to his work, walks around the dump kicking trash and removing only the cleanest of the refuse. In the distance, a piece of cardboard flaps and flutters from side to side catching his attention. What he is not aware that what's causing the cardboard to dance so freely is a much prized methane gas leak. Never having been trained to recognize these leaks, leO meanders to what he believes is an anomaly to investigate. The closer he gets to his diversion, the more methane leO inhales, and the cloud of the gas finally overtakes him. A very dizzy leO falls backwards and tumbles down the mountain of garbage. His lungs full of methane, the heat of the sun, and the sheer exhaustion of the work cause leO to hallucinate.

Still lightheaded, leO looks back up to the mountain of garbage he just tumble down and at the piece of still-flapping cardboard, which gradually takes the shape of a glorious angel dressed in pristine white floating in the sky.

Messenger:

leO.

leO looks at the sky, everyone around him just ignores his actions. This is not the first time leO has spoken to himself.

leO:

Who are you?

Messenger:

I am a messenger, sent here to deliver the word of God.

leO:

What is his message?

Messenger:

You must take a wife and have a child.

leO:

Why?

Messenger:

This child is the Son of God and will be the Savior of the Lord's kingdom.

leO:

Who shall be the host to carry our savior?

Suddenly one of the guards notices that leO is starting to act in a bizarre way. He shouts at mariA to help leO.

Guard:

mariA!

mariA does not hear the guard calling her at first.

Guard:

mariA! Hey mariA!

leO incorporates the guard's shouts into his hallucination.

Messenger:

mariA. Aye mariA.

leO:

mariA.

The guard picks up his bullhorn and screams into it.

Guard:

MARIA!

Messenger:

MARIA!

leO:

Yes, mariA.

mariA turns and looks at the guard.

Guard:

Bring leO to the infirmary, he is freaking out again.

leO continues to stare at the sky for a moment and then collapses to the ground and passes out. mariA sees leO fall to the ground and quickly runs to his side. She gently slaps his cheeks trying to revive him. leO awakens after a few seconds of her coaxing. Trying to give leO some relief from the heat, mariA holds him in her arms turns her back to the setting sun to keep its rays from glaring on leO's face. Still groggy from inhaling so much methane gas, leO slowly regains consciousness. Opening his eyes, he gradually focuses on mariA's face, the setting sun behind her gives the impression of a halo around her head.

leO:

mariA?

mariA:

leO, are you alright?

leO:

We have been chosen.

mariA:

Chosen? For what leO?

leO:

The savior, he is coming.

With that breath leO, passes out again, falling limp in mariA's arms. Other miners start to gather around them. A guard pushes his way through the cluster of people and stares down at mariA and leO.

Guard:

mariA, bring him back to his barracks and put him to bed, he is going to be useless for the rest of the day.

mariA:

I will lose my vouchers if I do not work.

Guard:

I will write you a pass for the day. This should take care of it for you.

The guard takes out a pad, rips a piece of paper out of it, and gives it to mariA.

Guard:

Now get him out of here, he is distracting the workers. The rest of you get back to work. These dumps are not going to mine themselves.

The guard pushes and prods the miners as they gradually disperse, while mariA drags leO to the facility tram. Finally arriving at the station, she plops leO in a seat, and sits next to him. She looks at his broken body then at the pass the guard gave her and sighs.

Dump Miner - Chapter Six

leO convinces mariA to apply for a child.

mariA leads a very woozy leO into the barracks, sits him down on his cot, and gets him some water in an old plastic cup. Familiar with its taste by now, leO drinks it and looks at mariA.

leO:

mariA?

mariA:

Yes, leO.

leO:

God has sent a message to me today.

mariA looks at him with a confused look; she has heard his rants in the past.

mariA:

What did he tell you?

leO:

The messenger told me that you where to bring the savior to us in the form of a child.

mariA stares at him in shock. She has heard him utter many nonsensical things in the past but nothing like this.

mariA:

leO, I am flattered that you would think that, but I am not with child, nor have I been approved to have a child. It is the fumes from the mines talking, not a messenger.

leO:

No mariA, you are to bring the savior to us!

mariA:

And who is this savior's father?

leO:

The messenger said it was to be me.

mariA:

But you were a priest; you gave up your seed when you joined The Church.

leO:

We can always petition to have my sample sent from the state archive and you could be inseminated.

mariA:

This is ridiculous leO. I am not the mother of a savior. I am a dump miner.

leO:

The savior will be born a common man, it is written that the meek will inherit the earth and we are the meek!

mariA:

leO, I do not know if bringing a child in to this world is a good thing.

leO:

Not a child, the savior. The messiah! You have no choice. You have been chosen by God, this is your destiny!

mariA:

leO, even if I did agree, getting approved for a child is highly unlikely.

leO:

If approved, then you agree that you will carry our savior?

mariA thinks to herself and reluctantly agrees.

mariA:

Yes leO, if approved, I will take this responsibility.

leO jumps up and runs around the room with excitement.

leO:

He is coming! He will smite all evil!

As the sun sets over the dumps ending another day, miners exit various caverns carved out of the sides of the heaping mounds of waste. leO bursts from the barracks into the facility's common yard and forces his way through the crowd to the top of a mound of garbage yelling and screaming.

leO:

He is coming; don't give up hope! He is coming to save us! Rejoice! Rejoice!

The sound is all too familiar to the camps residents; they have heard leO's rants before. The miners stop and look at leO and then continue home from a hard day in the mines. A loud bang can be heard, leO knows what is coming, he crouches to his knees and a large net knocks him to the ground. The net tangles around him and throws his body to the ground. Four guards run to leO, unsheathe their nightsticks and beat him ferociously, leO just takes the abuse thinking, knowing, that they will be judged for their sins soon enough. His body bounces with each blow.

A whistle blows two sharp blasts and the guards stop their attack, pick up leO from the ground, and drag him into a facility vehicle. The guards drive the again bloodied leO to the Bishop's office and throw him on the floor. The Bishop looks up from his desk, then to leO laying on the floor, then looks at the guards.

Bishop Lamb:

What did he do now?

Guard:

He was trying to incite a riot.

Bishop Lamb:

Thank you, I will take it from here, please wait outside until I call you.

The guards carelessly take the net off leO's body, throws him back to the floor, then leave the room.

Bishop Lamb:

leO, why do you think that your actions are going to do anything but cause a false hope in your fellow dregs of humans? Have you forgotten what we were taught in seminary school?

leO:

He is coming; the truth will be revealed!

Bishop Lamb:

Who is coming?

leO:

The Savior!

Bishop Lamb:

Have you gone completely mad? Why would you say such a thing?

leO:

An angel came to me in a vision with word that a child will be born in the dumps and that child will bring truth!

Bishop Lamb:

Truth?

leO:

You can't stop it! It will happen, the truth is coming!

Bishop Lamb:

The only truth is that you are the ones that keep yourselves here, you are the sediment that that will never amount to anything more than dirt.

leO:

The savior is coming! He will smite you!

Bishop Lamb:

Insanity is taking over your mind, leO. I thought you where stronger than that.

leO:

The savior is coming!

Bishop Lamb:

leO, only you can save yourself by accepting who you are and that you will always be just that, a dump miner. The Party offers the chance for you to better yourself, redemption for your sins, but you never try. Always waiting for someone else to make your life better. I have no idea what you are talking about with this savior business, but it obviously is making you upset.

leO (muffled and whimpering) :

He is coming.

Bishop Lamb:

leO, accept what is offered by The Party. This is your only salvation.

leO:

LIES!!!

Bishop Lamb:

Lies no, the truth, yes! Our Supreme Reagan Walker offers you the chance to better yourself; it is completely up to you. No one holds you here, if you don't like it you are always free to leave.

leO:

That is not true! I believed that in the past, before my excommunication, but I know now that it is not true.

Bishop Lamb:

It is true.

leO:

Then why is the camp surrounded with barbed wire?

Bishop Lamb:

To protect you from the evils that wait outside.

leO:

Why must we survive by eating rats and scavenge like animals for scraps of food?

Bishop Lamb:

The vouchers you receive are enough to sustain you.

leO:

Why do you believe that man is supposed to live like this?

Bishop Lamb:

Not all man, just dump miners. Now get out of here, you sicken me.

Bishop Lamb pushes a button on his desk and the guards return.

Bishop Lamb:

Bring him back to the facility. I am done with him.

The guards take leO by the arms, drag him out of the office, and throw him into the compound. They turn and head back to return to the Bishop's home. leO picks up his battered body and look back at the Bishop's home and screams.

leO:

You cannot stop him from coming!

The guards turn and look at leO, leO stands defiant. One of the guards waives his hand in the air as to brush him off and they continue to their posts while leO continues his outburst.

leO:

He is coming!

Dump Miner - Chapter Seven

marIA and leO apply to have a child.

mariA and leO walk towards the Bishop's office.

leO:

mariA, we need to be strong. The Bishop will surely try to talk us out of this.

mariA:

Why would he do that, what we are doing is a beautiful thing.

leO:

I don't talk too much about when I was active as a Priest, but one of the things we were taught in seminary school was to talk miners out of reproducing.

mariA looks at leO, shocked to hear what he just said.

mariA:

Is that true? Why?

leO:

There are so many dump miners already and barely enough food to feed them all.

They walk to the Bishop's mansion and pause at the door.

leO:

Are you ready?

mariA:

Yes, I am ready.

leO knocks on the mansion door and it is answered by an altar boy. The altar boy opens the door and stares at the couple as they stand waiting.

alter boy:

What do you want?

Father leO:

We are here to see Bishop Lamb.

altar boy:

I will let him know you are here.

With that, the altar boy tries to close the door, but leO is on a mission and no one is going to stop him from his divine right to sire the messiah. leO pushes the door open knocking the altar boy back a few feet and grabs mariA's hand. They work their way through the mansion towards the Bishop's office, with the altar boy trying desperately to stop them.

altar boy:

You can't do this...Please stop...I am going to get in trouble...Please stop...

LeO and mariA ignore him and continue to the Bishop's office. Once there, the altar boy throws himself in front of the office door and makes one final plea.

altar boy:

Please I beg you...

leO pushes the altar boy to one side, opens the door, and barges into the Bishop's office followed by the pleading altar boy. Bishop Lamb, sitting at his desk with his B.I.B.L.E., appears to be unhappy. The altar boy runs to the Bishop desk and tries to explain while leO enters the office with mariA following.

Bishop Lamb:

What are you all doing in here? Did I call for any of you?

altar boy:

Forgive me, holiness, I tried to stop them but they were able to force their way past.

Bishop Lamb looks at the altar boy with disgust.

Bishop Lamb:

I will deal with you later. Eight o'clock tonight, my quarters. And bring your cilice. I don't want you to forget this lesson. Now go!

The altar boy grabs his right thigh. Trying to keep his composure, he turns and leaves the Bishop's office occupied with anxiety and fear.

leO walks up to the Bishop's desk as mariA skittishly follows behind. The Bishop turns his attention to mariA and leO.

Bishop Lamb:

Should I save us some time and just call the guards now?

leO:

We are here to apply for a child in accordance with the laws of Americo. You may not deny us this right.

Bishop Lamb:

You are joking, right? You are just trying to make my life miserable, right? If that is the case, then you are doing a pretty good job. Too bad, you can't put this much effort when you mine the dumps.

leO:

You can say what you want, but you have no choice in this matter.

Bishop Lamb:

You really want to go through with this? The chances of being approved for a child are very slim. Why don't you take a couple more months to reconsider this? The processing alone is going to take forever. Why get your hopes up for nothing? mariA?

mariA:

Yes, I would like to apply.

Bishop Lamb:

This is a huge waste of The Party's time as well as mine. You like to waste people's time don't you, leO?

mariA moves behind leO as if to hide.

leO:

It is our time.

Bishop Lamb:

Right, your time. Well let's get this over with.

Bishop Lamb extends the B.I.B.L.E to mariA.

Bishop Lamb:

mariA, please place your right hand on the B.I.B.L.E.

Maria reaches out and slowly places her hand on the mechanical device and a loud beep emits from the device.

Bishop Lamb:

leO, now you.

leO does not hesitate and swiftly, with confidence, places his right hand on the B.I.B.L.E and a loud beep emits from the device. leO starts to remove his hand from the B.I.B.L.E and the Bishop quickly grabs it and holds it down.

Bishop Lamb:

Don't remove your hand quite yet. While I have you like this, I have a question to ask you.

leO:

I am not afraid, ask your question.

mariA:

leO, don't! It's a trick.

Bishop:

No tricks, just one question. Do you really believe that you and mariA are going to sire the messiah?

leO pauses and takes a breath. mariA stares at leO's eyes and can see a tear well up.

leO:

I do.

A loud beep emits from the B.I.B.L.E. Bishop Lamb looks at the device, then at leO, then at mariA.

leO:

Were you expecting a different result?

The Bishop just stares at leO with a very pained look over his face.

Bishop Lamb:

I will call for you when your results are returned. Now get out and get back to work!

Dump Miner - Chapter Eight

The Cardinals petition Reagan Walker.

Reagan Walker enters as all the Cardinals are seated in their high back chairs, forming a circle.

Cardinal Superbia:

Reagan Walker, please enter.

The Reagan Walker enters the circle and stands directly in the center.

Reagan Walker:

What is this about? I am very important and don't have time to waste.

Cardinal Ira:

It is about your son, he is out of control.

Cardinal Acedia:

His embarrassments cannot be overlooked, it reflects upon all of us.

Reagan Walker:

My family's standing in Americo and our actions are beyond reproach. You know that.

Cardinal Superbia:

No one individual that resides under the flag of Americo is beyond reproach.

Cardinal Luxuria:

If we cannot be held responsible for our actions, then it is the responsibility of the educated community to help guide that soul in the direction of salvation.

Cardinal Avartia:

We have ways of getting what we want.

Reagan Walker:

I don't have to stand here and listen to this.

Cardinal Ira:

Yes, you do.

Reagan Walker :

Are question my authority?

Cardinal Luxuria:

No one is questioning your authority. We are concerned about how your son's uncontrollable actions and how they are affecting Americo.

Cardinal Superbia:

He is setting a bad example for everyone.

Cardinal Gula:

He is a drug addict!

Cardinal Superbia:

He is a common hoodlum, a thug on the streets, robbing this great Party of its respect and standing among the people of Americo.

Cardinal Acedia:

He is a pariah that feed on the good fortune of others.

Cardinal Gula:

He disgusts me.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Dear Reagan Walker, please understand we have debated and considered all options.

Reagan Walker:

What are you asking me to do?

Cardinal Acedia:

You just need to do what is necessary.

Reagan Walker:

And what would that be.

Cardinal Superbia:

A sacrifice will show your allegiance to The Party.

Reagan Walker:

You want me to take my only son's life to prove my allegiance to Americo?

Cardinal Ira:

Did we say to take your son's life? Although that would be in the best interest of all, wouldn't it?

Reagan Walker:

I refuse! You are all mad. How can you even suggest such a thought?

Cardinal Superbia:

6th Commandment subsection 92.9, paragraph 54, in conjunction with the 5th Commandment subsection 32, paragraph 2. It is all spelled out.

Cardinal Luxuria:

If you cannot stomach the responsibility, then we can send a servant of The Church to reintroduce him to god.

Reagan Walker:

There is no other way?

Cardinal Ira:

No.

Reagan Walker:

Are you trying to start a holy war? I still do control the armed forces.

Cardinal Invidia:

And we control the IRS. It would be tough to send your soldiers into battle if they were all being audited.

The Cardinals and the Reagan stand silently as the Reagan slowly decides.

Reagan Walker:

I want something in return for this.

Cardinal Invidia:

What could we possibly have that you want?

Reagan Walker:

I want one hundred million shares of The Church of America stock transferred to my family's account in tribute.

Cardinal Superbia:

But then you will have majority control of America and The Church of America.

Reagan Walker:

Do you have a problem with that? You get what you want and I get what I want. This is supposed to be for the good of Americo, not personal gain, correct?

Cardinal Acedia:

So be it.

Cardinal Superbia:

We will call The Church controller and have him transfer the certificates to your account.

Reagan Walker:

I will take care of this within the month. You people make me sick.

The Reagan Walker leaves the room angrily and slams the door.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Well, he took that better than I thought.

Dump Miner - Chapter Nine

leO and mariA are approved to have a child.

leO is called into Bishop Lamb's office. As he enters Bishop Lamb is waiting for him behind his desk with his chair turned to the window.

leO:

Why did you call me here?

The Bishop turns his chair leisurely to face leO as he speaks.

Bishop Lamb:

I don't know how, but you have been approved to procreate with that piece of trash.

leO is shocked but tries not to show his surprise, but can not. His excitement overwhelms him.

leO:

He is coming! You cannot stop it now. He is coming!

Bishop Lamb (to a guard) :

Shut him up.

The guard takes his nightstick and strikes leO on the back. leO falls to his knees in pain.

Bishop Lamb:

You have been a thorn in my side since the day I met you. I am disgusted that such a waste of life is going to be created in god's image with your spoiled seed.

leO:

There is nothing you can do, he is coming and he will smite all the moneylenders and heretics...

Bishop Lamb:

Shut up or you will taste more penance from my guards. Your seed will arrive tomorrow. Your whore will receive this gift after the workday is over.

Bishop Lamb (to the guards) :

Take him back to the dumps.

The guards drag leO out of the office and put him on one of the trams to the depths of the mines. As the train speeds down into the depths of the dumps, leO stares out the window, and watches the illusion of life that has been so carefully erected on the walls. Images of fields of daisies, children playing, and family sitting down to thanksgiving dinner. He thinks to himself, "Now there is hope. I will bring hope."

mariA is working in the dumps leO runs to her and tells her the news.

leO:

mariA we have been approved! They are going to let us have the child.

mariA:

Oh leO, that is wonderful!

leO:

He is going to save us all. The Messiah is coming!

mariA:

Oh leO, do you really think he will be a leader?

leO:

Not a leader, our savior! He is coming to save us! He will smite those who enslave us.

The dump miners stop and look up at leO. leO continues his rant with more and more intensity.

leO:

He is coming and the meek will inherit the earth!

mariA is laughing and trying to contain herself. All this screaming attracts the guards' attention.

Guard:

Get back to work!

leO and mariA keep celebrating.

One of the guards lifts a large bazooka-looking object and aims it at leO. The guard fires, a large net hurtles towards leO. leO crouches abruptly as if he knows what is about to happen.

A net tangles around him and throws his body off the mound to the ground below. Four guards in full combat gear run to him, unsheathe their nightsticks, and beat leO ferociously. He does not resist, his body bounces with each blow. mariA tries to stop them and is pushed to the ground. Finally, a siren blows two sharp toots, the guards stop and lift leO's limp body and drag him to the Bishop's office.

The guards throw leO onto the floor of the Bishop's office.

Bishop Lamb:

You can't stay out of trouble for one minute. Why do you think that what you say is going to do anything but hurt the morale of the flock? Stop making waves, leO.

leO looks up from the floor and stares at the Bishop coldly.

leO:

You cannot contain the truth, we will...

Bishop Lamb:

Enough about this "truth"!

Bishop Lamb smacks leO across the face with the back of his hand.

Bishop Lamb:

The truth is that no Messiah is coming from your seed or that bitch you associate with the Madonna. If your child survives, it will be just another dump miner, nothing more.

leO:

No! He will be the King of Kings and the Reagan of Reagans! He will free us.

Bishop Lamb:

You keep talking about the truth, but you are too blind to see the truth.

leO:

So what is the truth?

Bishop Lamb:

You are ones who keep your selves here, you are the dregs that never amounted to anything, never tried to better yourselves, never caring about anyone but yourselves. The Party offers the chance for you to help yourselves.

leO:

LIES!

Bishop Lamb:

Lies no, the truth yes. Our supreme Reagan Walker offers you the chance to better yourself, but it is up to you. We don't hold you here; you are always free to leave.

leO:

That is not true, why are we surrounded with barbwire fences? Why aren't we given enough food to grow strong? Why do you believe that this is the way that man is supposed to live?

Bishop Lamb:

Not all men just dump miners. You are always free to leave.

leO:

To live like animals in the city; with no vouchers we would starve.

Bishop Lamb:

You work for your vouchers and I believe that the Reagan Walker offers more than a fair deal for the scraps you retrieve from the facility. You people sicken me! Wait a minute... Didn't we have this same conversation recently?

leO:

And we will have it again until things change.

Bishop Lamb:

No, we are not! If I hear one more report of you acting up I will take matters into my own hands, then only the Reagan himself will be able to save you. Do you understand?

leO stares at the Bishop an reluctantly speaks trying to control his passion and fervor.

leO:

Yes.

Dump Miner - Chapter Ten

`mariA` finds ten dollars.

Meanwhile in the mines, mariA is digging with her hands, removing bottles, cans, and paper, anything that could be reused. She moves a pile of dirt to one side and something catches her attention, it is a ten-dollar bill. mariA looks around quickly to see if she is being watched, grabs the bill and frantically tries to decide where to hide the money. Her frantic movements catch the attention of a guard.

Guard:

Get back to work!

mariA takes the bill, crushes it into a ball, sticks her hand in her pants and forces the bill into her vagina.

Guard:

What are you doing there!

mariA:

I have crabs.

Guard:

Work now; go to the infirmary to have that taken care of later. God I hate this job.

mariA goes back to work with a spring in her step. Finding the ten dollars is surely a sign from God that he is coming. A siren blows signaling the end of the day. All the miners gather their equipment and slowly return to camp except for mariA. She runs to the tram station and can hardly repress her joy of finding the money.

The tram makes a stop near the Bishop's mansion. mariA sees leO in the courtyard and jumps out of the tram. She grabs his arm and asks him to follow her.

mariA:

Come with me quickly.

leO:

mariA you look happy, would you share your thought?

mariA (whispers into leO's ear):

I want to tell you, something wonderful, I can't tell you here, wait till we are alone.

leO (with a suspicious look):

I can't wait.

mariA holds back her smile as they make their way back to the camp. All the miners struggle to get back to camp before their AM pill wears off. mariA is practically dragging leO to the barracks. A guard notices her odd behavior.

Guard:

What is going on here, what is the rush?

mariA and leO pause, leO looks at mariA, mariA stops short.

Guard:

Are you trying to sneak contraband into the camp?

leO:

I have nothing to hide.

Guard (to mariA) :

What about you?

mariA pauses, the guard starts to get suspicious.

Guard:

Do I have to scan you?

mariA:

I am sick.

Guard:

From what?

The guard starts to walk towards mariA and leO. mariA quickly grabs her stomach, bends over, and forces herself to fart as loud as she can. She can feel the ten-dollar bill pinching the inside of her vagina, which brings a tear to her eye. The Guard backs away from them.

mariA:

Please, I have run out of stool hardener and have no med vouchers, please don't make me explain more.

The guard looks at mariA and leO and with a little disgust waves them on.

Guard:

All right, move along.

mariA grabs leO by the hand and they make their way back to the barracks.

leO:

Quick mariA, get to a stall before you soil yourself.

mariA:

No leO, I lied.

leO looks at mariA and shakes his head.

leO:

It is written that the path to damnation is paved with....

mariA:

Forgive me I have more to confess.

leO looks at the ground and shakes his head, mariA turns from him and sticks her hand into her pants, making a twisted face and retrieves the wadded-up ball. She unravels it to reveal to leO that it is a ten-dollar bill.

leO:

mariA?

mariA:

I stole today.

leO looks at the bill astonished.

leO:

Where did you get that?

mariA:

I found it while mining. I have been thinking about this since I found it. I am going to sneak out of the camp tonight and go to the black market, and then tomorrow we can have fruit and bread after Sunday service.

leO:

No mariA, it is not right. If you are caught you will surely be punished and then all our efforts will be in vain.

mariA:

I will not be caught.

leO:

You will never make it, you will pass out from the exhaustion before the night has ended.

mariA:

I still have an extra AM pill that was willed to me by bettY. I will feel wonderful!

leO stares at her and pauses.

leO:

Fruit would be nice. An apple...that would be delicious. I have not had an apple for what seems to be an eternity.

mariA:

An apple, I have never had an apple, if you say they are good.

leO:

Oh yes, very tasty.

mariA:

Then I will get apples.

leO:

I cannot stop you, so say three Hail Mary's and go in peace.

mariA:

We are blessed today.

weaseL enters, catches sight of the money, and rushes over to mariA and leO.

weaseL:

What is that?

leO:

This is none of your concern.

weaseL:

Where did you get that?

weaseL grabs the money and leO slaps his hand.

weaseL:

If I don't get mine, I will tell the Bishop. What is it?

mariA:

This is a gift from God to celebrate the coming of the savior.

weaseL:

It looks like money.

weaseL again lunges toward mariA and grabs for it. This time leO forcefully pushes weaseL and weaseL falls to the ground hard.

leO:

You will not say a word. If you do, I will crush you with my bare hands.

Other dump miners start to enter the barracks after their day is complete. The commotion caused by leO and weaseL draws their immediate attention to see what is happening. A fight is always entertaining and every miner in the small run-down barracks would surely agree that weaseL probably has whatever is going to happen coming to him even though the other miners have no idea why.

toM:

What is happening?

juliE:

Kick his ass!

suE:

Fight!

leO:

Everyone calm yourselves, there will be no violence. We are to have a secret celebration tomorrow.

weaseL gets up quickly and moves away from leO.

leO:

Tomorrow we will have fruit after the service.

juliE:

How? We have no vouchers for fruit.

toM:

I have never had fruit, where is it coming from?

The crowd starts to talk amongst themselves.

mariA:

It is a gift from God.

leO:

Yes, a gift from God, but the guards cannot know of this or they will take the fruit from us. Do we all agree?

All the members agree with the exception of weaseL, who just stands in the back. leO walks to weaseL

leO:

We must all agree.

weaseL:

I agree.

It is nightfall and mariA sneaks out of the camp and goes to the black market. Using the facility's back gate that the massive dump trucks use to collect bulk items for recycling, she crawls under the fence and evades the guard's attention as he goes through a checklist with one of the dump truck drivers.

Dump Miner - Chapter Eleven

The black market.

mariA arrives at the black market. She puts the long stained sheet she uses as a veil across her face and ties it behind her head, to become less recognizable. There is nothing unusual about this as others cover their faces, too, to avoid inhaling the gases and fumes that permeate the market. Tents made of tarp and vinyl, supported by wood or discarded steel poles serve as storefronts for some vendors. Other vendors have their wares spread on old blankets or cast-off stained rugs, or in large baskets and boxes. Dump miners from other welfare facilities can be seen buying leftover food or expired medicines. Facility guards and police officers can also be seen, selling vouchers or exchanging them with goods from other guards.

Later, mariA walks up to a fruit vendor. He has several different types of fruit displayed but all the fruit is old and rotting. mariA looks at the fruits as if each piece is perfect. She picks three apples from an assortment of fruit and the vendor puts them in a dirty paper bag.

mariA:

How much are the apples?

Vendor:

How much do you have?

mariA:

I am not going to just give you all my money. How much are they?

Vendor:

\$5.00 a piece.

mariA:

\$5.00 a piece! That is too much.

The fruit vendor pause with a sigh and motions for mariA to give back the paper bag with the apples.

Vendor:

If you don't like it then go to a Regulated Store. Apples are \$18.00 apiece there.

mariA:

I can't afford that, don't you have anything cheaper?

The vendor looks around and pulls out a small bag out from underneath the counter. Looking around to making sure that no one is looking he lowers his voice and speaks as if he is telling mariA a secret.

Vendor:

I was going to take these apples home for my family but you can have all of them all for five dollars.

mariA looks in the bag and sees several old rotting apples.

mariA:

I will take these.

mariA hands the vendor the ten-dollar bill and he puts it in his pocket and then goes about his business.

mariA:

You owe me some money back.

Vendor:

What money?

mariA:

You owe me five dollars.

Vendor:

You only gave me a five. Now take a hike or I will call a cop.

mariA starts to scream and everyone in the market looks in her direction.

mariA:

Give me my money!

Vendor:

OK, ok, calm down.

mariA:

Thief! This man is a thief!

The vendor reaches in his pocket and hands her a old five-dollar bill.

Vendor:

Here take it. Just shut up!

mariA:

Thank you.

Vendor:

Don't come back here or I will report you to the authorities.

mariA:

Don't worry about that.

mariA leaves with the apples. She hurries to get back to the camp in time for the next dump truck collection of recyclable items. If the guards catch her with fruit, there would surely be an investigation and she would surely be found out. It would be hard to explain where she got the money for the fruit, it would be hard to explain why she didn't report it, and the consequences would surely be very grave and probably cost her life.

mariA moves quickly past the black market, keeping to alleys and dark streets, she does not want to take any chances in being seen. She cannot help but smell the apples in the bag; even in their rotting state, they give off a perfume-like aroma.

As mariA walks down a dark deserted alley, with only the faint glow of the moonlight shining on her face. She lifts the bag closer to her face to take full advantage of the wonderful scent. “So this is what a real apple smells like” she thinks to herself. The only fruit scents she or the other miners experience are that of their pre-packed “dessert like snacks” given out on holidays at the camp. As she walks, mariA takes an apple from the bag, puts it right under her nose, and takes a big whiff. It smells so good. She raises the apple above her head as if offering it to the gods. The moon approves and shines a dull glimmer on the fruit’s spoiled skin. She puts the apple back in the sack and continues. “If I have just one bite of the apple, no one will notice.” She thinks to herself. mariA stops and takes a small apple out of the bag and looks at it.

mariA:

No.

mariA puts the apple back in the sack with the others and continues to walk.

Earlier that night, in another part of Americo, John Walker, the only son of the Reagan Walker, is out with his friends and decides to go slumming. He gets wasted on designer drugs and alcohol. John Walker becomes his obnoxious self again and his friends leave him, especially when he announces that he wants to have his way with a dump miner.

Patiently, like a crazed wild animal released from the cage, he waits in an alley for a woman to come by. Any woman will do, for that matter anything he can molest. The mix of AM/PM pills greatly distorts John Walker's sense of reality. While he is on this drug cocktail, life is far better than he could ever imagine. His perspective of what he is, becomes very sharp; he is the future leader of the world. He is truly a king among the human sediment that seeps through the streets. And to spite his father and the Reagan name, and to prove to himself and to Americo that he is untouchable, John Walker has committed every crime conceivable.

mariA hurries from the black market back to Resource Facility 4499 with all the food she has bought with the found money. She cannot help but feel triumphant in getting such a great deal with the apples, and still have some money left in the process. Temptation almost takes over mariA, she reaches into the bag and takes an apple. She ponders to herself if she should eat the apple or wait to share it with the rest of the miners. She has never had an apple before. She keeps taking out an apple and looking at it, smelling it and contemplating on eating it, and then putting it back in the bag. As she walks, she keeps opening the plastic bag to look at the apples. Taking one out now and again and smelling it.

She is so preoccupied with the fruit that she does not notice the dark figure in the shadows of the alleyway. It is John Walker, the Reagan Walker's only son, who hides in the dark.

No longer in control of her will, mariA stops and takes an apple from the bag, smells it slowly and then takes a bite. The sharply rancid juice from the rotting fruit drips down her chin as she chews it very slowly. It is the most wonderful thing she has ever tasted. She starts to take another bite.

The almost soft crunchiness of the fruit makes her close her eyes and she surrenders herself to the euphoric experience. Just then, the shadow reaches out of the alleyway, grabs her and pulls her in. As mariA takes another bite of the apple, John Walker explodes from the alley and grabs mariA from behind. Startled out of her bliss, mariA does not even see his face; John Walker throws her to the ground. When mariA hits the unpaved alley, the bag rips and the fruits spill everywhere. Instead of fearing for her life and thwarting her attacker, she concerns herself more with the spilled fruits. In the dark, she grabs for the spilled fruits and yells.

mariA:

Oh my God!

John Walker moves around behind her, he raises his fist into the air and speaks.

John Walker:

I am your god!

With that said, the future leader of Americo thrusts his clinched fist into in the back of mariA's head. mariA falls face first flat on the deserted alleyway. Her head hits the cement with a dull thud, it bounces once and then comes to rest. A small trickle of blood flows on to the sidewalk, the crimson color reflected by the moonlight. mariA's world fades black.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twelve

maria awakens in the emergency room.

Nurse:

Can you hear me? Hello, anyone in there?

mariA regains consciousness in the emergency room. There are two police officers standing next to her and a nurse shining a light in her eyes trying to get her attention. mariA slowly becomes aware of her surroundings.

Nurse:

Can you hear me? Hello?

Police Officer One:

Is she going to come out of it?

Police Officer Two:

Is this going to take much longer? We are supposed to be taking lunch soon.

mariA starts to come around.

Nurse:

Can you hear me?

mariA:

Yes.

Nurse:

Do you have an insurance voucher?

mariA:

Ummm, no.

Nurse:

She is fine.

Police Officer One:

What happened to you?

mariA:

I don't remember.

Police Officer One:

Were you attacked?

mariA:

I don't remember.

Police Officer Two:

Do you remember anything?

mariA:

I heard the word "God."

Police Officer One:

What?

mariA:

Yes, I heard someone say “God”.

Police Officer Two:

So you think god beat you?

mariA just stares at the police, confused from what has happened. These officers have heard all kinds of stories in their days which causes them to give mariA the same respect.

Police Officer One:

We better put out an APB for god. This deity could be anywhere.

Police Officer Two:

Shut up.

He turns back to mariA stares at her for a moment and continues.

Police Officer Two:

What do you mean you heard someone say god?

mariA’s thoughts drift to the apples and the money and she become conscious that the bag is no where to be seen.

mariA:

Where are my apples?

Police Officer One:
Maybe god stole them.

mariA:
My money!

mariA grabs to at her clothing to check and see if she still had the five dollars.

Police Officer Two:
What money?

mariA fiddles around in her pocket and feels the five dollars.

mariA:
Nothing.

Police Officer One:
You have money?

mariA:
Ahhh...I...ahhh...no...I...

The nurse overhears the conversation and returns to mariA's side.

Nurse:

Do you have a medical voucher?

mariA:

Where is the fruit?

Nurse:

What fruit?

mariA:

I had a bag of apples.

Police Officer One:

Where did you get apples?

MariA, awakening from her unconscious state finally starts to become aware of the police behind her for the first time.

Police Officer Two:

Where did you get money for fruit? Well?

mariA looks at them, puts her head down and does not answer; the nurse cuts in.

Nurse:

Hey miner, Do...You...Have...Any...Medical...Vouchers?

mariA:

No, I don't have my journal with me.

The nurse looks at the two police officers.

Nurse:

I have wasted enough time on this one. Please escort her out when you leave.

Police Officer Two:

You got it.

The nurse walks away.

Police Officer One:

Where you attacked?

mariA:

I don't remember.

Police Officer Two:

What do you remember?

mariA:

A voice.

Police Officer One:

Who's voice?

mariA (stops and thinks to herself):

I think it was...

Police Officer One:

Well come on.

mariA:

God, I think it was God.

Police Officer One:

Come on lady, we don't have time for this. Who hit you?

mariA:

It was God.

Police Officer One:

So god hit you? Maybe god took your fruit?

Police Officer Two:

Oh, this is not going to be worth the paperwork. Let's get something to eat.

Police Officer Two:

Maybe this girl can get god to give us some donuts.

The Police officer pretends looks to the sky almost laughing to himself in mock prayer he blurts out.

Police Officer Two:

Hey god, a dozen jelly-filled. Pleasssse.

Police Officer One:

Stop goofing around, let's go.

Police Officer Two:

You can find your way home, right?

mariA:

I don't know where I am.

Police Officer Two:

Well then, it's settled, off you go.

The Police officers turn and leave. mariA gathers herself and exits the hospital in a rush.

Dump Miner - Chapter Thirteen

mariA returns to the Resource & Welfare Facility 4499 from the black market.

mariA is able to sneak past the guards and returns to the barracks from the hospital, beaten and confused. She cannot take her PM because she will miss almost three-quarters of the day if she does. The other miners lie asleep in their beds, their PM pill will not wear off for another few hours. mariA has no choice except to wait until the morning and take the AM pill like planned.

mariA lies in her bed and goes over what has happened to her that night. The words “I am your god” swim in her head. The lack of food, sleep, and an over abundance of toxins in the air cause her to hallucinate. The violence of the night mixed with the joy of finding the ten dollars in the dump starts to confuse her. mariA slowly fades in and out of consciousness from the sheer exhaustion of what happened during the night and from the concussion she received when her head hit the ground. Her hallucinations guide her to a trusting sweet voice saying “I am your god,” that slowly melts together with revelry and the words “mariA, can you hear me?” The revelry is a bittersweet sound in the back of her dreams. “I am your god. mariA, can you hear me. I am your god.” mariA comes out of her stupor slowly. Everyone that lives with her in the makeshift shack is standing around her. A fuzzy outline of a face comes into view.

mariA (says with a crack in her throat):

Lord, is that you?

The form comes into view; it is leO standing over her. mariA slowly regains consciousness, and notices a crowd of people around her. The question is; where is the food?

leO:

mariA, what happened? Are you alright?

jacK:

Did you get the fruit?

saraH:

Don't play games mariA, where is the fruit, I have never seen an apple up close.

rogeR:

mariA did you eat everything? Where is the fruit?

Dazed, mariA pulls herself to her feet and falls to the ground.

mariA:

I don't know what happened. It is all a haze.

leO grabs her face and looks in her glazed eyes.

leO:

mariA, try to remember what happened.

mariA:

I don't know, I don't know.

mariA starts to weep.

saraH:

Where you attacked?

jacK:

Were you robbed?

rogeR:

What happened?

The group starts demanding to know about the fruit they were promised.

mariA hangs her head:

I don't know.

weaseL:

No, no, no, no! No! No! mariA ate the food, and now we have none!

He runs out the door, mariA starts to follow but leO grabs her arm.

leO:

Let him go, he will cool off.

mariA starts to weep:

No, leO he won't, he will run right to the Bishop. Let go of my arm.

mariA wrestles out of leO's grip and runs out to the shared yard. She sees weaseL running towards the direction of the Bishop's office. Realizing that she can't catch him in time, she falls to her knees and begins to cry. leO comes out of the quarters, followed by others. leO kneels next to mariA. The group from the barracks follows. leO looks at the group and tries to get them to disperse before they catch the guards attention.

leO:

We all need to go to mass or we will be docked for the day.

mariA returns to her bunk and starts crying. This was too much trauma for one person to be able to put into coherent words. mariA can think of nothing else to do but cry. The rest of the miners exit the barracks and make their way to The Church located at the center of the compound.

LeO goes back for mariA:

Come, mariA. We need to go to mass.

The miners enter The Church one by one and take their seats in the pews and wait for mass to start. leO and mariA make their way to their seats. A loud organ plays in the background with music that is toneless and wearisome to listen to. weaseL comes in last, limping. He sits across from mariA and leO and looks at them with contempt. mariA looks at leO.

leO:

They cannot hurt you here. Let us pray.

The droning music stops. The precession music starts, five altar boys enter followed by Bishop Lamb. They walk to the Altar and proceed with the rituals of the mass. Bishop Lamb looks directly at mariA as the organ music comes to a slow stop. Bishop Lamb starts his sermon staring directly at mariA.

Bishop Lamb:

Thief!

mariA looks shocked, knowing that weaseL has told the Bishop about the money and what she had done.

Bishop Lamb:

You are a thief!

Bishop Lamb pauses and mariA starts to cry. leO grabs her hand and squeezes it. Bishop Lamb looks at the entire crowd and continues.

Bishop Lamb:

You have all stolen from the Lord. You are all thieves; you steal god's love and offer nothing back...

mariA looks at leO and breaths a heavy sigh. The mass continues as usual. At the end of the mass, leO and mariA exit The Church and are greeted by two guards.

Guard:

The Bishop wants to see you in his office.

They take mariA by the arm and lead her to the office, leO follows. When they arrive in the office, weaseL is there as well. The Bishop looks at leO.

Bishop Lamb:

leO? I did not call for you. Why are you here? Leave.

leO:

No! She is the woman I am going to have a son with, I will stand by her side.

Bishop Lamb:

No bother, stay. mariA, did you find a ten-dollar bill in the dump mines yesterday?

weaseL:

Admit it!

Bishop Lamb:

weaseL; please hold your tongue or I will have a guard hold it for you.

mariA:

No Bishop, I found a five-dollar bill yesterday.

Bishop Lamb:

Where is it!

mariA quickly pulls the bill out of here pocket and hands it to him. The Bishop looks at it.

Bishop Lamb:

Are you sure it was not ten?

mariA:

No, only five.

Bishop Lamb:

Will you swear on the B.I.B.L.E.?

leO:

This is not necessary, you have the money.

Bishop Lamb:

Guards, restrain this miner, and if he says another word cut out his tongue.

The guards grab leO. leO just stands and watches knowing it is out of his hands.

Deep in mariA's womb the unborn daughter of mariA and John Walker grows.

Bishop Lamb holds out the mechanical B.I.B.L.E. and a trembling mariA places her right hand upon it.

Bishop Lamb:

Swear to me that you found only five dollars and nothing will happen. The B.I.B.L.E. will bring salvation one way or another.

mariA places her shaking hand on the B.I.B.L.E..

mariA:

I gave you five dollars.

Bishop Lamb:

That was not the question.

mariA:

Dear Lord, please forgive me.

Bishop Lamb:

I ask you again, did you find ten dollars?

mariA:

No, it was only five.

leO:

Noooo!!!

mariA closes her eyes but nothing happens. The Bishop, weaseL, and leO are all somewhat shocked.

leO (in a demanding voice):

Can we leave now?

One of the guards strikes leO across the back with his baton.

Guard:

Quiet!

There is a moment of silence. If she was lying, the B.I.B.L.E. would have surely taken the sinner to hell, but the B.I.B.L.E. cannot take an innocents life.

The unborn child in mariA was the only person in the room that was truly innocent. The Bishop slowly turns and walks to his desk. Everyone in the room is stunned and silent.

Bishop Lamb:

Well, it seems you have not lied, so why didn't you turn this in at a station?

mariA:

Thieves. There are thieves everywhere. Like in your sermon today. And I was hoping there might be a reward if I turned it in.

Bishop Lamb:

A reward? There is no reward for not turning The Churches property over to The Church. Although you did not lie, your reward is that you will not be punished.

leO:

The B.I.B.L.E. has cleared her name, now may we leave?

Bishop Lamb:

leO, you are lucky you still carry some privilege from The Church or I would make you swear on the B.I.B.L.E. as well. Now get out.

leO:

You unholy...

leO mumbles under his breath and then turns to leave with mariA. Bishop Lamb hears the comment and stops them.

Bishop Lamb:

One moment.

The Bishop turns and picks up a small package.

Bishop Lamb:

leO, this arrived for you today, it is your seed.

leO:

Thank God. When is the scheduled insemination?

Bishop Lamb:

Your punishment for being so insolent is this – it is not going to be injected in your whore.

The Bishop throws the package to the ground and steps on it, completely destroying the contents. Inside the package, the muffled sound of a glass vial can be heard as it shatters.

Bishop Lamb:

Now, get out of my sight, you vile miners and get an altar boy in here to clean this up.

Bishop Lamb turns and walks to his desk. leO falls to his knees screaming.

leO:

Nooo! What have you done!

leO stands up and starts to charge the Bishop. The guards grab leO, subdue him and drag him out of the building. mariA follows crying and trying to help leO.

weaseL (to the Bishop):

So, is there a reward?

Bishop Lamb:

Out!

weaseL turns and runs out.

The guards throw leO out of the building and he falls weeping, insanely crying. mariA tries to comfort him but to no avail.

mariA:

It must not have been God's will.

leO looking into the sky starts to scream.

leO:

Why do you mock me! Why do you come to me only to mock me!

weaseL walks past leO and mariA.

weaseL:

I don't know how you fooled the B.I.B.L.E., but you still have me to deal with. You better watch your backs in the barracks tonight. I always get mine.

leO's sorrow quickly turns to rage. He springs to his feet with vengeance in his heart and hatred in his eyes, and approaches weaseL.

weaseL:

Don't look at me like that. You brought this upon yourself.

weaseL realizes that he is in trouble and starts to run. He is at a disadvantage since leO can run faster. leO chases after him screaming. weaseL knows that he must get away but has no allies in the camps. weaseL has hurt everyone he has met in his life one way or another. He runs to a guard.

weaseL:

Help me!

Guard:

I'm on break.

The guard turns and leaves. leO catches up to weaseL, punches him in the face, and breaks weaseL's nose. Blood explodes from weaseL's face. weaseL regains his balance.

weaseL:

What are you doing! You can't do this.

leO:

According to the first commandment, paragraph 8, subsection 7, I can do this.

And leO hits him again this time so hard that leO loses his balance and falls to the ground as well. weaseL staggers and falls to the ground at the feet of another guard who is positioned at the gate of the compound. The guard just looks at him. mariA tries to hold leO back.

weaseL:

You have to help me.

Guard :

Aren't you the one that turned me in to the Bishop for smoking during work?

leO pushes mariA away and she stumbles backwards. leO picks up a large rock from the compound's ground and stands up. Breathing intensely, he walks towards weaseL. weaseL looks at the guard and pleads.

weaseL:

I am sorry, please help me!

Guard :

With what? I see nothing wrong here.

The guard turns away and lights a cigarette. weaseL backs up to the gate and cowers.

weaseL:

Please, no.

leO walks past the guard and raises the stone above his head and screams.

leO:

He without sin cast the first stone.

The stone strikes weaseL's head with all of leO's rage. Blood splatters everywhere.

leO falls to his knees and weeps as mariA just stands and stares in shock from what has happened. The guard looks at weaseL on the ground and at leO who walks away. No one seems to care. weaseL is dead.

Dump Miner - Chapter Fourteen

Reagan Walker has a talk with his son.

It is late afternoon in the middle of a marsh like forest. A low-lying fog covers the ground, still wet from the rainfall earlier in the day. Other than the sound of an occasional bird, making its nest in one of the nearby trees, only the tall grasses and cattails make murmuring sounds.

The peaceful serenade is broken with the arrival of determined steps squishing through the moist forest floor. Today, the supreme Reagan Walker and his son John Walker are out in the woods on a hunting trip. These yearly trips have been a Walker family tradition for generations. Several secret service agents stand guard around them.

John Walker (raising his rifle and pretending to shoot in the air):

This is so boring. Do we have to stay out here all night?

Reagan Walker:

Just until necessary.

John Walker:

What does that mean? And why did you force me to go on this stupid hunting trip? I could be out with my friends.

Reagan Walker:

Your so-called cohorts are nothing more than leaches.

John Walker:

Well, at least they are there when I need them, unlike you.

Reagan Walker:

Watch your tongue.

The Reagan Walker looks at his son intently. Other than the fact that they have at least thirty years between them, his son is indeed his spitting image. They both have ashen blonde hair; his carefully parted to one side, and his son's, much longer and tousled in the wind. They both have steel blue eyes, a "gift" from the Walker lineage. They both have high cheekbones, aquiline noses, and thin lips.

Their broad foreheads denote the wisdom passed down from generations; and their almost square faces have strong jawlines, commanding respect. But that's where the comparison stops. While he has a broad shoulder, his son's are weak and narrow. While his gait is always military-like, his son's are languid and feeble.

Wearing the signet ring that bears the Reagan coat of arms, he always dresses in the Reagan tradition of formality and decorum. His son, however, chooses to garb himself entirely different, and as such, has been looked down upon by the Ultra Republicans, much to the shame of America.

John Walker:

Let's get the hell out of here. If you want to do something together, let's go to a club. It could be fun.

Reagan Walker (to his secret service men):

Would you please give us some private time? I would like to talk to my son alone for a moment.

Secret Service:

Where would you like us to be?

Reagan Walker:

We will meet you back at the camp. Just meet us there. I think this trip will soon be over.

The secret service agents start to walk back to the camp.

John Walker:

Man, I thought they would never leave.

John Walker pulls a small vial out of his coat pocket and sniffs it. The Reagan Walker slaps it from his hand.

Reagan Walker:

What the hell do you think you're doing?

John Walker:

The same thing I do every night.

Reagan Walker:

Where did you get that?

John Walker:

Your private stash, where else? Was I supposed to offer it to you first?

Reagan Walker hangs his head and slowly raises it.

Reagan Walker:

Do you realize how important your place in society is?

John Walker:

Duh. I am the son of the C.E.O. of the World.

Reagan Walker:

And what does that mean to you.

John Walker:

I am bullet proof, what else? I am untouchable. I can do what ever I want; I get whatever I want; I am god. Damn that is good shit.

Reagan Walker slaps his son across the face.

John Walker:

Hey!

Reagan Walker:

Look at me, a great responsibility comes with being Reagan and when I am gone you will have to carry on the legacy.

John Walker:

I am ready.

Reagan Walker:

I don't think you are.

With that the Reagan Walker points his rifle at his son.

John Walker:

Stop joking around. Come on dad, what are you doing?

Reagan Walker:

This is too important; I have to know that you are willing to change. Are you willing to rise to the position and be the man I know you can be? Are you man enough to do what has to be done!

John Walker quickly raises his rifle and points it at his father, the Reagan Walker, and pulls the trigger. "Click," no bullets.

Reagan Walker:

Did you think I was going to put live ammo in a drug addict's gun? Goodbye, John. I love you; I wish you could have made me proud.

The Reagan's secret service men are almost near the camp when they suddenly hear a loud bang. It is a gunshot. The secret service men stop in their tracks, turn and rush back. They find the Reagan standing over his dead son. The Reagan looks at them. His face shows no emotion.

Reagan Walker:

Hunting accident. Call for air support.

Dump Miner - Chapter Fifteen

maria finds out she is pregnant.

The dump miners wait their turn for the monthly confession in a long straight line. One by one, with their heads bowed, they wait outside the confessional. A door opens and as one miner exits, the next in line, mariA, walks up to the trough. The Bishop sits in a velvet chair behind a splatter guard. In front of the Bishop is a panel with three lights colored green, red, and yellow, much like a traffic light. mariA walks up to the trough, lifts her clothing and urinates into the receptacle. The light changes yellow and flashes.

Bishop Lamb:

Are you not feeling well?

mariA:

I am fine, your Holiness.

Bishop Lamb:

Stop by the infirmary and have a scan done.

mariA:

Yes, your Holiness

mariA exits and another miner enters and drops his pants and starts to urinate. The light turns greens and he leaves, the next miner walks in.

mariA shows up at the infirmary. She walks up the desk to Bill who is the technician on duty.

mariA:

I need to have a scan done. The Bishop sent me.

Bill picks up a thick paddle with a handprint on it.

Bill:

Place your hand on the outline.

mariA places her hand on the paddle. Bill looks at a monitor and reads from it.

Bill:

You are actually doing pretty well. Here is why the light was yellow, you are pregnant.

mariA:

That is impossible!

Bill:

Well, let's do the scan again.

Again, mariA places her hand on the paddle. Bill looks at the screen.

Bill:

This confirms it. Your record states that you have been approved for a child. Is this unexpected?

mariA:

Oh my, yes.

mariA stands motionless and stunned with one hand over her mouth.

mariA:

You are sure?

Bill:

Yes.

mariA starts to cry and laugh at the same time.

Bill:

Are you all right?

mariA:

Yes.

Bill:

So this is good news?

mariA:

Yes. Yes. Oh Yes! It is a miracle!

mariA turns and exits the infirmary. She runs back to leO.

mariA:

It is the miracle you asked for.

leO:

What is that?

mariA:

I am pregnant.

leO stands and stares at mariA

leO:

mariA, are you sure you did not have intercourse with someone else? I would understand if you did.

mariA:

No leO, I have never been with any man. I have been by your side every conscious and unconscious moment.

leO:

Don't lie to me!

mariA (starts to cry):

No leO, it is a miracle.

leO:

Don't mock my pain mariA!

mariA:

leO think. Why would I do this with? God must have touched me that night. "I am your God" that is what the voice said; "I am your God." We prayed for a sign, this is a sign.

leO stares at her for a moment. And then drops to his knees.

leO:

Father, thank you, for answering our prayers; thank you for sending us our messiah. Amen.

leO looks up at mariA.

leO:

That must be it. He has answered my prayers it must be the second coming. Yes, the second coming from the depths of the bottom. The meek will inherit the earth.

leO starts to jump around the room. He runs over, grabs mariA, and hugs her.

leO:

mariA, he will deliver us from evil.

Two guards enter.

Guard:

mariA, the Bishop wants to see you. Let's go.

leO starts to follow but one of the guard stops him.

Guard:

Where do you think you're going?

leO:

With my wife and child.

mariA smiles at leO as the guard nods his head in frustration, then looking at his partner the guard speaks.

Guard:

It is not worth trying to figure out what he means, just let him come along.

The guards escort the two back to the Bishop's quarters.

Dump Miner - Chapter Sixteen

The Bishop ponders maria's predicament.

Bishop Lamb is laying on a chaise lounge, eating a large perfect apple; he barely acknowledges anyone's presence but his own.

Bishop Lamb:

So mariA. How is it that you are pregnant?

mariA:

It is an act of God.

leO:

It is the second coming. You did this to yourself and your kind when you threw me in this hole.

Bishop Lamb:

Shut up, you blithering, egocentric, pathetic, and might I add a smelly man. No one cares about what you think, not anymore.

leO:

It is true!

Bishop Lamb:

Not very likely, leO. It seems a more plausible answer would be your Madonna is a whore.

Bishop Lamb starts to laugh to himself.

Bishop Lamb (under his breath) :

Your Madonna is a whore; that is so funny... leO, you are not laughing.

leO becomes enraged with the comment and charges Bishop Lamb. The guards move quickly and grab him before he can get anywhere near the Bishop. One of the guards unsheathes his nightstick and repeatedly strikes leO across the back.

mariA:

Stop!

mariA rushes to help leO, she raises her hand and strikes a guard. Another guard intercepts mariA's attack with a blow to her ribs with his club. mariA falls to the ground. Seeing this, leO stops fighting with the guard and starts to cry shamelessly.

leO:

No! Oh, my Lord! No!

leO falls limp in the guard's arms weeping; the guard drops him. mariA rolls in pain on the floor. leO crawls to her and holds her as he weeps.

Bishop Lamb:

Get these two out of here.

Guard:

Your holiness, she looks pretty bad, maybe she should go to the infirmary?

Bishop Lamb:

Fine, I am going to hold you responsible for the vouchers. And while they are there have the lab run DNA matches to see whose bastard this girl is really carrying.

Guard:

Yes, your holiness.

The guards escort mariA and leO to their truck to take them to the infirmary. mariA tries to hold leO's hand but leO is too preoccupied with his own rage.

mariA:

We have no vouchers.

Guard One:

What about him?

leO:

Neither of us have any vouchers.

Guard One:

Well, I'm glad I'm not the one that has to cover the tab.

Guard Two:

Oh, come on man, let's split it.

Guard One:

No way!

Guard Two:

Why not?

Guard One:

I need them.

Guard Two:

For what? How many did you use last year?

Guard One:

Three.

Guard Two:

So what did you do with the rest?

Guard One:

Sold them on the black market.

Guard Two:

What do you get for them if they are expired?

Guard One:

Before they expire, you go to the black market. Usually right before Christmas, you get the best deals and you can trade for gifts for the family or food.

Guard Two looks at mariA and leO then back at the Guard One.

Guard Two:

Bring me with you next time.

Guard One:

You got it.

They drive off to the infirmary.

Dump Miner - Chapter Seventeen

mariA's child's DNA turns out to be a match with the Walker bloodline.

An altar boy arrives with records about mariA's pregnancy. The bishop takes them and opens the packet, pulls out a long strip; looks at it slowly and speaks to himself. The Bishop picks up his B.I.B.L.E. and slides the strip into the side like a disk into a computer. The cover of the tablet displays the information almost instantaneously. The images are of DNA strands with names next to them.

Bishop Lamb:

All right, let's see who is the father of this young soul.

He taps the images of the DNA with his middle finger. The screen converts and displays a picture of mariA and John Walker. The word "deceased" is prominently displayed below John Walker's picture.

Bishop Lamb:

This must be broken. (He looks at the B.I.B.L.E. and says whimsically) Reboot.

The same images come up. The Bishop picks up his phone and speaks.

Bishop Lamb:

Lab.

Lab Technician:

This is the lab.

Bishop Lamb:

I just received the records you sent, how accurate are these?

Lab:

It is a 99.9% match.

Bishop Lamb:

Really? Do you still have the cultures?

Lab:

Yes, they are on file.

Bishop Lamb:

Test them again and make it your priority. How long do you expect this to take?

Lab:

I am doing it now and... I have the same results. I would safely say that you have the names of the mother and father.

Bishop Lamb:

Bless you.

The Bishop takes a long pause.

Lab:

Excuse me, your holiness; is there something else that you need?

Bishop Lamb:

Oh... ah... no. I will call if I need you. Bless you.

Bishop Lamb looks out of his window. In the distance, he sees mariA and leO making their way back to their barracks, celebrating the miraculous and seemly impossible conception.

leO:

mariA, this is wonderful. A miracle!

mariA:

I am so happy as well.

leO:

He is coming. He will smite my enemies and deliver us from evil. Amen.

leO looks at mariA.

mariA:

Amen.

mariA and leO continue to the barracks and start to spread the news to the other miners.

Bishop Lamb turns his chair back to his desk picks up his phone and dials.

Bishop Lamb:

I would like to speak to the Reagan Walker please... I am sending some data for him to review; I believe that his life depends on it. Yes, I will wait...

The Reagan picks up the line.

Reagan Walker:

Who is this?

Bishop Lamb:

Reagan Walker, I am Bishop Lamb of the Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499. And I have a miner here that has come to my steps with the news of a beautiful new soul.

Reagan Walker:

What does that have to do with me?

Bishop Lamb:

Didn't you look at the DNA strip?

Reagan Walker:

Yes.

Bishop Lamb:

Then it is obvious. Dear Reagan Walker, please don't be confused; I don't want to extort anything from you, I just want riches, good food, and luxury, nothing more.

Reagan Walker:

That is extortion.

Bishop Lamb:

Whatever.

Reagan Walker:

Meet my assistant at the "Ground Zero" monument in two hours and bring everything with you.

Bishop Lamb hurries to the monument to meet with his destiny. Reagan Walker's assistant meets him as planned and escorts him to the Reagan in a secure hidden room deep within the monument. The guards leave the Bishop and the Reagan inside the protected room and secure the room from outside.

Reagan Walker:

Did you bring everything?

Bishop Lamb:

Not even a hello?

Reagan Walker:

Don't fuck with me. Let me see the DNA strip.

The Bishop inserts the DNA strip in his B.I.B.L.E., taps the cover and hands it to Reagan Walker.

The Reagan looks at the B.I.B.L.E.; he looks at his picture first then his eyes drift to the picture of mariA and the Reagan Walker pauses. He hears his son's voice in his head. "I am god. I can do what ever I want." The Reagan breaths a heavy sign, takes the strip from the B.I.B.L.E. and puts it in his pocket.

Reagan Walker:

Is this the only strip?

Bishop Lamb:

Of course not, I have back-ups in the central database at the compound.

Reagan Walker:

What do you want?

Bishop Lamb:

Heaven. I want to be sponsored into heaven.

Reagan Walker:

Done. But if I ever hear your name or of any of this again, that will be your last confession.

Dump Miner - Chapter Eighteen

Bishop Lamb adjusts maria's records.

The Bishop returns to the facility and immediately makes arrangements to conceal the records of the father of mariA's child. Bishop Lamb calls the lab technician into his office.

Bishop Lamb:

Bill, how long have you worked in the lab?

Bill:

For about five years now. I enjoy the opportunity to be employed by Americo.

Bishop Lamb:

What if I told you that you could retire, oh, let's say in a week.

Bill:

How could I do that?

Bishop Lamb:

I need you to change some information for me in the main database.

Bill:

Your holiness, that is a big deal, morally and ethically.

Bishop Lamb:

But can you do it? That is the question.

Bill:

If you're asking if it's possible to change the files, the answer is yes, but it is not permanent.

Bishop Lamb:

Why?

Bill:

The records would need to be refreshed, say if there was a change in Reaganship.

Bishop Lamb:

Go on.

Bill:

It is highly unlikely, but since the death of the Reagan Walker's son, if something were to happen to the Reagan Walker, a new Reagan would need to be elected and a DNA refresh would be called for to find the closest heir within seven degrees of separation.

Bishop Lamb:

Yes, right, that is correct.

Bill:

But what are the odds of that happening? Nobody would probably find out.

Bishop Lamb:

My child, what if I told you that I can make it that you never have to work again.

Bill:

I am listening.

Bishop Lamb:

I have a Grand Cayman bank account with roughly six million dollars in it. If you do this you can have it. I am not going to need it where I am going.

Bill:

Six million, I could buy a house. What do you need done?

Bishop Lamb:

I need you to change the results of the DNA test for the dump miner mariA.

Bill:

That's it?

Bishop Lamb:

Yes.

Bill:

Who is the lucky father of the child?

Bishop Lamb:

There was a miner that was taken from us about a month back, he had a name like, ferret, or...

Bill:

weaseL?

Bishop Lamb:

Yes, weaseL, that's him, make it look like he is the father.

Bill:

Can I ask why?

Bishop Lamb:

No. When it is done I will release the funds to your account. You can leave now.

Bill leaves the Bishop's office and returns to the lab to start on his task. Soon after Bill exits, Bishop Lamb receives a phone call from the Reagan.

Reagan Walker:

Bishop Lamb.

Bishop Lamb:

The honorable Reagan Walker.

Reagan Walker:

Arrangements have been made. They are waiting for you in France. Did you cover your end?

Bishop Lamb:

Yes, the new father is a dead miner.

Reagan Walker:

I don't want to know who it is. There is no way that this can be tracked back to me?

Bishop Lamb:

Not in your lifetime.

Reagan Walker:

I will have a car pick you up to bring you to the airport; tickets will be waiting. And don't ever contact me again.

Reagan Walker hangs up. On the Bishops B.I.B.L.E., there comes a message. An electronic voice from his computer announces, "You have mail." The Bishop taps the face of the tablet and it is an e-mail from HEAVEN letting him know of his arrangements. The Bishop quickly scrambles to call the lab to see if the job is done, another lab technician answers the line.

Bishop Lamb:

Bill?

Ted:

Your holiness, this is Ted.

Bishop Lamb:

Well, find Technician Bill!

Ted finds Bill in another part of the lab, just as Bill hits the delete button. Bill is startled.

Bill:

Hey, Ted. What can I do for you?

Ted:

What are you doing?

Bill:

Ah, routine maintenance. What do you want?

Ted:

The Bishop is trying to get a hold of you.

Bill:

Thanks.

Bill calls the Bishop while Ted hangs around and tries to find out what is happening.

Bishop Lamb:

This is Bishop Lamb

Bill notices that Ted is within hearing distance, he lowers the phone and stares at Ted for a second before speaking.

Bill:

Ted, I'm talking to the Bishop, get out of here.

Ted leaves the room suspiciously eyeing Bill. Bill just smiles and waits for the door to shut behind Ted before he continues his conversation.

Bill:

You called for me, your holiness.

Bishop Lamb:

Did you complete your task?

Bill:

Almost.

Bishop Lamb:

Almost is not good enough.

Bill hits the delete button on his keyboard one more time.

Bill:

Yes, it is done riiiiight...now.

Bishop Lamb:

Then like we agreed.

Bishop Lamb strikes some keys on his B.I.B.L.E. A green light flashes three times.

Bishop Lamb:

Almost done. Do you know of a quite place where we could meet? I will give you the account information then. Where shall I meet you?

Bill:

The incinerator. I can meet you at the incinerator.

Bishop Lamb:

I will be there in fifteen minutes. Make sure no one follows you.

Bill hangs up the phone and turns to finish his job. Ted returns.

Ted:

What the hell is going on? Why are you and the Bishop speaking in code, and what the hell are you doing with the records? You are screwing with our jobs. What where you doing?

Bill:

Fuck you man, I don't need this shit.

Bill turns off his machine.

Bill:

I am out of here.

Ted:

What?

Bill:

I have to meet the Bishop; later days buddy.

Bill exits and Ted just stands there with his jaw open.

Bill walks down a long hallway to the incinerator room and waits for Bishop Lamb to arrive. Bill waits patiently, standing in front of a gothic pit of fire deep in the floor of the ground that is the facility's incinerator. The incinerator is an open pit with hot lava-like matter swirling in its belly. Sweat drips from Bills head. Carts carrying waste run along a track and dump unusable waste into the pit.

Small puffs of smoke emerge with each cart that is emptied. The Bishop enters and approaches him.

Bishop Lamb:

Did you take care of the matter?

Bill:

Just as you requested.

Bishop Lamb:

And nobody witnessed this act?

Bill:

Nobody is the wiser.

Bishop Lamb:

Good. Then as we agreed, I would move the funds into an account, they should be available for you tonight.

Bill:

About that.

Bishop Lamb:

About what?

Bill:

If this is so important, then maybe I should...

Bishop Lamb:

You should what?

Bill:

Get more. Surely you have a few more dollars stashed away that you can spare. Six million will barely cover the cost of a small cottage.

Bishop Lamb walks closer to him. The heat of the incinerator is now making them both sweat.

Bishop Lamb:

You do not think my offer is generous enough?

Bill:

I am just saying...

Bishop Lamb:

You are going to extort a man of my stature?

Bishop Lamb slowly advances towards Bill. A nervous Bill backs up, not noticing the conveyor belt behind him that brings the carts to the incinerator.

Bill:

I am just saying that...

With those words, Bishop Lamb lunges at Bill and pushes him into a cart.

Bill sloshes around in the toxic muck that is being delivered to the pit. Bill struggles to get out of the cart but cannot get a foothold in the toxic goop that fills the cart. The more Bill struggles, the more he keeps slipping back in.

Bill (choking in the sludge):

Help me!

Bishop Lamb just watches. As Bill gets closer to the pit, he starts to scream, the heat of the incinerator is intense and his body starts to cook before he reaches the end. Bill finally stops screaming and his hair bursts into flames, then his skin starts to melt, the cart finally comes to the slide and dumps his burning body and the boiling waste into the pit and the fires below, the fires consume him quickly. No sound is heard, no crackle of his body, nothing, Bill has been eaten by the fires of the facility. Bishop Lamb stands back and takes a deep breath.

Bishop Lamb:

Forgive me, father, for I have sinned. All better. It is too hot in here and the smell, how do they stand it.

Bishop Lamb retreats from the room.

Dump Miner - Chapter Nineteen

Reagan Walker sends a car to pick up Bishop Lamb to bring him to Heaven.

A limousine speeds towards the gates of the Americo Resource and Welfare Facility 4499. The car holds Bishop Magnus, the man that will replace Bishop Lamb as the new chief of the facility. Bishop Magnus is a simple man with simple robes. He joined The Church because of a call to serve man; he takes pleasure in the compassion and empathy he has for his fellow man. His type is rare but not unheard of in The Church.

This car not only is Bishop Magnus's ride into the camp but also Bishop Lamb's escort to Heaven. The driver is Father Templar, a Census Taker for the Church of Americo. As they approach the gate of the facility, Father Templar and Bishop Magnus see leO on a mound of garbage preaching that the Messiah is coming, that mariA is pregnant. Father Templar directs the car to the front gate of the facility and comes to a stop, a guard walks to the passengers window.

Guard:

What is your business today?

Bishop Magnus:

I am the new Facility Chief. I am here to replace the current facilitator Bishop Lamb.

Guard (looking at his clip board) :

You have arrived early. Welcome, your holiness; I will announce your arrival.

Bishop Magnus (pointing to leO) :

Guard, why is that man making such a ruckus?

The Guard looks at leO and rolls his eyes.

Guard:

Oh that one, his wife is pregnant but the kid isn't his and she convinced him it was an immaculate conception.

Bishop Magnus:

Really?

Guard:

She is a whore.

Bishop Magnus:

Is she a whore?

Guard:

Aren't they all?

The Guard backs away from the car and directs Father Templar to continue to the facility's mansion. The limousine pulls to the front entrance of the building. Father Templar leaps from the car and opens the door for the facility's new Bishop. The Bishop steps from the car and is immediately met by an altar boy.

altar boy:

Your holiness, welcome to the Resource and Welfare Facility 4499, please follow me, Bishop Lamb was not expecting you until tomorrow.

Bishop Magnus:

Yes, that is true, but plans change. What is your name son?

altar boy:

Andy.

Bishop Magnus notices the altar boy only wearing a short robe. His face shows his disapproval but he says nothing. He follows the altar boy up the steps and enters the mansion while Father Templar goes back to the car and waits for his next assignment, to deliver Bishop Lamb to Heaven.

The altar boy leads Bishop Magnus towards Bishop Lamb's room. The door is open and Bishop Magnus can see that Bishop Lamb is preparing for his departure with the assistance of a nun. He also notices that the nun is dressed somewhat like the altar boy, in a revealing manner with nothing more than a short robe as a garment. As the altar boy turns to leave, Bishop Magnus asks him.

Bishop Magnus:

Andy?

altar boy:

Yes, your holiness?

Bishop Magnus:

Do you have any pants?

altar boy (with a confused look on his face) :

Yes.

Bishop Magnus:

Can you please put them on?

altar boy:

But Bishop Lamb said...

Bishop Magnus:

Well, things are going to change around here. So now, go put some pants on and please let the others know that I expect them to put something on, other than their robes.

Bishop Magnus knocks lightly on Bishop Lamb's open door and then enters. His presence in the room is not noticed. Bishop Lamb has piles of old clothing and robes lying about covering every inch of open space.

Bishop Lamb (holding up a very flamboyant robe and showing it to his nun):

Does this look like Heaven to you?

nun:

It is very beautiful.

Bishop Lamb:

That is not the question. Now listen to me, do you think that this is worthy of bringing to Heaven with me?

nun (shrugging her shoulders) :

I don't know.

Bishop Lamb:

Why am asking you anyway, you obviously have no fashion taste at all. Here you take it. I am not going to need it anyway. Did you know that Heaven is all-inclusive?

The nun shrugs her shoulders again and Bishop Lamb throws the robe at her.

nun:

Thank you, your holiness.

Bishop Magnus clears his throat, but to no avail, Bishop Lamb is in a world of his own. Bishop Magnus clears his throat again, this time very loudly. Bishop Lamb and his nun turn abruptly.

Bishop Lamb:

Oh, I didn't know you were here. You must be Bishop Magnus.

Bishop Lamb stops his packing and walks to the new Bishop and extends his hand.

Bishop Magnus:

Yes, it is pleasure to meet you. I have many questions about the operations of the facility that should be addressed as soon as possible.

Bishop Lamb (speaking while he packs) :

Oh, I am sure you will catch right on. There is nothing out of the unusual here to concern you. I have taken care of that.

Bishop Lamb goes back to his packing and holds up another of his many robes towards the new Bishop.

Bishop Lamb:

Bishop, does this look like it would work for a casual event like brunch with royalty?

Bishop Magnus:

I do not concern myself with such thoughts. All your robes look like they are all of the finest quality. I am sure that you would always select the proper garment for the proper event.

Bishop Lamb holds the robe in front of him and blurts out.

Bishop Lamb:

Cocktails anyone!

Bishop Lamb laughs to himself as his nun continues stowing items in the open luggage.

Bishop Magnus:

Bishop Lamb it is imperative that I'm able to gain the inner works of this facility if I am to be an effective facilitator.

Bishop Lamb:

Oh, you are one of those. Oh yes, well I am done packing anyway; whatever I don't have I am sure that I can just pick up when I get there. I heard they have fabulous shops in Heaven. Have you ever been there?

Bishop Magnus:

No. I have never had the pleasure. Bishop Lamb it is imperative that we concentrate on the transfer of responsibilities within the facility.

Bishop Lamb:

Imperative? Imperative!?! Please, the only thing that is imperative for me is leave this abyss of a pothole as quickly as my little tootsies will take me.

Bishop Magnus:

I beg your pardon?

Bishop Lamb (ignores Bishop Magnus' concerns and leaves the room):

Don't beg, it isn't becoming.

Like a cat chasing after the aromatic herb, Bishop Lamb scurries down the steps followed by his nun and a frustrated Bishop Magnus. The nun stumbles behind trying to carry far more of the Bishop's luggage than she can handle.

Bishop Lamb:

Hurry now, I don't want to be late.

Bishop Magnus:

This is unacceptable.

Bishop Lamb:

Not my problemooooo.

Bishop Magnus stops and watches as Bishop Lamb and the nun rush towards the manor's exit.

Bishop Lamb approaches the waiting car and sees Father Templar standing by the open rear passenger door. Bishop Lamb looks at Father Templar and slows his stride. He enters the car while keeping his eyes on Father Templar.

Bishop Lamb:

Have we met before?

Father Templar:

No.

Bishop Lamb:

You look very familiar.

Father Templar closes the rear passenger door and takes his place in driver's seat, and looks up at Bishop Lamb from the rear view mirror.

Father Templar:

Your holiness, are you ready to be delivered to your destination?

Bishop Lamb:

I have been preparing for this all my life. On to Heaven!

Father Templar continues to look at the Bishop from his rear view mirror, which irritates the Bishop.

Bishop Lamb:

Well, what are you waiting for... lets go? I am a very important man.

Bishop Lamb and Father Templar's eyes lock in the reflection of the limo's rearview mirror. Bishop Lamb is sure he has met this Priest before. Bishop Lamb is the first to divert his eyes from this staring contest and thinks to himself. Father Templar looks away from the mirror and puts the car in gear. The car slowly pulls from the front of the mansion, its tires crunching the hot gravel road.

Then it starts to come to Bishop Lamb, he slowly remembers where he knows the Priest from, and it is from his reputation throughout The Church and America.

Bishop Lamb:

Ohhh goodness. I wasn't expecting that such a notable census taker would be escorting me on my way.

Father Templar:

Yes, your holiness.

The limousine picks up at an almost unstoppable speed as it exits the gates of the facility, churning a cloud of dust behind its tracks.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty

The Cardinals hear rumors from the dumps of the coming birth.

Cardinal Superbia calls a emergency meeting to discuss Father Templar's findings.

Cardinal Luxuria:

What is so important that I had to be called from my bathing?

Cardinal Superbia:

There is a rumor going around the facilities that a Messiah is coming.

Cardinal Invidia:

I have not heard this. Has any one else heard of this?

A rumble starts among the other cardinals.

Cardinal Superbia:

Father Templar's responsibilities brought him to a welfare facility and he mentioned that he heard an insane man saying that a Messiah is coming. It was causing quite a disturbance.

Cardinal Gula:

An insane man, many souls that live in the facilities have mental illness. This is nothing new, so what is your concern?

Cardinal Invidia:

I think we should send someone. I would be more comfortable.

All cardinals agree with him.

Cardinal Luxuria:

You should send Father Templar. He is already familiar with the facility.

All cardinals agree.

Cardinal Acedia:

We need to move on to real business. We need to discuss the Reagan. He is making this world so distressing.

Cardinal Superbia:

It is true! We are losing profits every day.

Cardinal Gula:

And it is making us look bad! I feel fat.

Cardinal Luxuria:

What can we do about it though?

Cardinal Superbia:

He holds more stock than any American corporation combined. The Walker's will be the Reagan for years to come.

Cardinal Acedia:

But the sad and recent loss of his only heir leaves a lot open to the imagination.

Cardinal Superbia:

But what if he was to pass.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Of what, he looks good enough to eat.

Cardinal Ira:

We must eradicate him from our glorious Americo.

Cardinal Gula:

It is the only way, he does not have children now, and he has no other relatives that we know of.

Cardinal Superbia:

And with no heir to inherit the Walker estate, The Church would receive all of the Regan's holdings by default.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Giving The Church the control it needs to get this company back on the path of the righteous.

Cardinal Invidia:

But what if there is a sibling or a family member we do not know of?

Cardinal Superbia:

We will have to take that chance, what is truly the worst thing that could happen?

Cardinal Acedia:

Yes, I agree. They couldn't be worse than John Walker.

Cardinal Ira:

I will handle the arrangements. So this meeting is adjourned?

The Cardinals all agree and go about there regular business.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty-One

The Cardinals sends a census taker to verify the rumor of a messiah.

Cardinal Ira and Father Templar meet in the Cardinal's office.

Cardinal Ira:

I need you to return to Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 and find out what this talk of a Messiah is about.

Father Templar:

Why don't you call and have the facility lab just confirm the parents?

Seemingly irritated at his response, Cardinal Ira looks at Father Templar and speaks slowly.

Cardinal Ira:

I need you to go back to the facility and find out what this talk of a Messiah is. I do not want the chief to know why you are there.

Father Templar:

How long should I stay?

Cardinal Ira (explodes at Father Templar):

SHUT UP! Or I will cast you to the hounds of hell! You stupid piss-ant of a man! What is wrong with you!?! You know your job more than I do. How long have you been a Templar?

As quickly as he raises his voice at Father Templar, the Cardinal breathes deeply and pauses.

Cardinal Ira:

You have to excuse me, it is my sin.

There is a pause. Then the Cardinal explodes again.

Cardinal Ira (commands Father Templar):

Forgive me! Say it!

Father Templar:

I forgive you, my holiness. I forgive you.

Cardinal Ira:

You will stay as long as needed. Use whatever means necessary to accomplish this task or squelch this rumor. I do not want to say it again. I will call Bishop Magnus. You have met him before?

Father Templar:

Yes, I was his escort when he took over command at the Facility.

Cardinal Ira:

Excellent. Then go under the guise that you are just conducting a random survey of the facility's data. Then find out as much about this as you can and report back.

Father Templar:

If I find this Messiah should I bring them back to you, your holiness, or do you have alternative orders?

Cardinal Ira:

You ask too many questions. Just follow protocol, find out what the ruckus is, and let's try to put an end to all this Messiah business.

Father Templar:

I will leave immediately.

Cardinal Ira:

Excellent.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty-Two

Father Templar finds the discrepancy in the data.

Father Templar arrives at the Resource and Welfare Facility 4499 and makes his way to the facility Lab.

Father Templar:

I am here to survey the database.

Technician Ted:

Be my guest.

The technician steps to the side and lets Father Templar enter, he sits in front of the monitor and plugs in his B.I.B.L.E. Numbers and letters scroll past the screen. Suddenly, the scrolling stops and it displays mariA's picture.

Father Templar:

There seems to be a flag in the DNA field of one of the Welfare recipients. When was this data refreshed last? Was this data was altered recently?

Technician Ted:

Last confession. Which recipient is it?

The Father Templar shows Ted his tablet. It is mariA.

Technician Ted:

I know her. She has the miners in frenzy.

Father Templar:

How?

Technician Ted:

Those poor saps think that she is carrying the Messiah.

Father Templar:

Why do they think she is carrying a Messiah?

Technician Ted:

The miners believe that it was an immaculate conception, that God touched her.

Father Templar:

Artificial Insemination?

Technician Ted:

No. What I think is that some guy knocked her up and then she made up the story so no one would call her a whore. Due to the law, she can't be tested again until next confession. So the rumor is growing.

Father Templar:

Thank you for your time.

Father Templar leaves the lab and proceeds to visit Bishop Magnus. When Father Templar enters the Bishop's office, Magnus is behind his desk reprimanding a guard.

Bishop Magnus:

They are still people; treat them as such and save the force for when it is necessary. Now get back to your post.

He recognizes the Father Templar.

Bishop Magnus:

My son, please sit. I am afraid my predecessor left rather hastily and left me at a disadvantage.

Father Templar:

Your holiness, can you please tell me what these rumors are of a Messiah?

Bishop Magnus:

One of the technicians explained to me that there was power surge during confession and some of the data was damaged. We are doing a complete back-up and expect to have clean data by next confession.

Father Templar:

Do you know who the father is?

Bishop Magnus:

My staff has told me that it was a miner who is back in the womb now. We should have a definitive answer soon enough.

Father Templar:

I will have to inform the Cardinals of this.

Bishop Magnus:

I understand. Any assistance you require, my staff is at your disposal.

Father Templar:

But I will wait, I will return after confession to view the results and if the data is in order then I think we can just forget about this.

Bishop Magnus:

Bless you my son. Will you join me for dinner?

Father Templar:

No, my work brings me elsewhere now.

Bishop Magnus:

Go in peace.

Father Templar leaves the office and Bishop Magnus goes about his duties.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty- Three

The hostile takeover of the Americo.

The high Reagan Walker enters the Cardinal's library. The walls are completely covered from floor to ceiling with volumes of cloth-bound books. At one end, there is a spiral staircase that leads to the open second floor, for easy access to the more rare editions. Some of the Cardinals are seen already enjoying their glasses of wine, while others are coming down from the spiral staircase. They greet the Reagan with the accolades of his position as he enters.

Cardinal Gula:

Here is the man of the hour. Would you like some wine, is it delicious.

Cardinal Luxuria (offers his goblet):

Take this goblet, please, I just filled it.

Reagan Walker:

Thank you.

He takes the goblet and sips some of the wine.

Reagan Walker:

Very good, thank you.

Cardinal Superbia:

Yes, very good.

Reagan Walker:

May I ask why you requested my presence; is this a social visit?

Cardinal Ira:

We need to talk to you about your sins.

The president pauses, there are many sins they could be talking about, and he does not want to give himself away.

Reagan Walker:

What sins?

Cardinal Ira:

Don't play with us. Your sins are so monumental that there is rumor of a second coming in the dumps.

The president pauses and takes a breath.

Reagan Walker:

I can't be linked to that.

Cardinal Acedia:

It is true? You are linked to the rumors.

Reagan Walker:

I am taking the fifth commandment, sub section 35c ladies, and there is nothing you can do about it.

The Reagan finishes his wine. The Cardinals quickly start to encircle the Reagan, badgering him for what he knows. They have plotted for this moment.

The Cardinals know that they poisoned the Reagan's wine and the drug will take effect in a matter of minutes. They need to extract the information with haste.

Cardinal Superbia:

How are you involved?

Cardinal Ira smacks the president.

Cardinal Ira:

Tell us how you are linked to this.

Reagan Walker (taken by surprise by the Cardinal's behavior):

What is going on here?

The poisoned wine starts to take affect and he stumbles a bit, dropping the glass to the carpeted floor.

Cardinal Superbia:

What did you do?

Reagan Walker (raises his voice):

What did I do?!? What the fuck did you freaks do!

Cardinal Acedia:

It is the poison taking effect?

Reagan Walker:

What!

Cardinal Superbia:

We are exacting a 10th Commandant subsection 91.6as

The Reagan Walker looks at the Cardinals with a blank stare; he is all too familiar with this law.

Cardinal Gula:

Hostile takeover. So just tell us what you know and we will absolve you of your sins before you pass to a better place.

Cardinal Superbia:

You will be with your son and your wife.

Reagan Walker shouts at the Cardinals:

This doesn't have to happen! I am asking for the review from The Church.

Cardinal Luxuria:

It is too late for that.

Cardinal Ira:

Shout all you want. The volumes of books surrounding us make this room quite soundproof.

Reagan Walker:

I sacrificed my only son to appease your god! You were going to send a Census Taker because his sins where so monumental!

Cardinal Invidia:

That was your decision, we just asked you to get him under control. Murder is a great burden; we would never ask you to kill. That was a decision you made.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Have more wine, your passing will be less traumatic.

The Reagan looks at the glass of wine in his hand, starts to laugh, and then throws it at the Cardinals. The Cardinals jump back, but some are splashed on their faces.

Cardinal Acedia:

I think some went in my mouth.

Cardinal Acedia spits several times and frantically wipes his face with his robe as the other Cardinals look on equally frightened for him.

Reagan Walker:

You screwed yourselves, your new messiah is my grandchild; it is my heir. This is too sweet; all right, here is my last confession. I found out that my son fucked that dump miner, she got pregnant, and that piece of shit Bishop Lamb, blackmailed me out of a ticket to Heaven.

Cardinal Luxuria (startled at what he hears):

You were the benefactor; we assumed he had a lover in the New Vatican.

Reagan Walker:

So now when I drop dead, my medic-alert implant is going to go off and a call will go out to refresh the DNA pool. This is too rich!

Cardinal Acedia:

What have we done?

Cardinal Superbia:

God is our only witness. We will answer to him for our sins and no other.

The Reagan falls to his knee and then slumps to the floor dead. All the Cardinals look at the dead Reagan with pause.

Cardinal Acedia:

Oh, this is not good at all.

A loud alarm goes off and several guards run in to the room. This is the same alarm that is going off all over Americo to let its citizens know that the Reagan has passed on and the DNA pool needs to be refreshed. The Cardinals and the guards look down the ex-Reagan lying on the floor.

At Resource and Welfare Facility 4499, the same alarm causes a slow confusion and raises heads from the miners. They stop what they are doing and look to the P.A. sirens. They are familiar with the sound; they are being called to confession. A reminder of who they are, the wretches that they are, dump miners. The miners put their tools down and start to move towards the facility's confessionals, they do not question that the alarm has rung several days too early. No one questions why, the miners just get in line and wait for their laxatives.

Bishop Magnus hurries to put on his robes and prepare for confession while an altar boy assists him. Suddenly, a call comes on his office phone. It rings several times; the altar boy just stands there ignoring it. The phone continues to ring. The ringing starts to annoy Bishop Magnus.

Bishop Magnus (indirectly to the altar boy):

Answer that now. Put it on intercom please.

altar boy:

Yes, your holiness.

The altar boy walks to desk and hits the intercom. Cardinal Ira comes on screen.

Cardinal Ira:

Where is Magnus!

altar boy:

He is preparing for confession, your holiness.

Cardinal Ira:

Get him.

altar boy:

Yes holi...

Cardinal Ira:

Now!

The altar boy turns and runs.

altar boy:

Your holiness, Cardinal Ira requests to see you immediately, he is waiting online.

Bishop Magnus turns and huffs loudly, calms himself before he replies.

Bishop Magnus:

Thank you, Andy. Meet me at the confessional; this should not take too long.

The Bishop turns and enters the office.

Bishop Magnus:

Holiness.

Cardinal Ira:

Your Church needs you to make a cooperate decision. Under the 9th commandment subsection 15.c article 12, because of a mix up in the life record sort last Thursday at central processing, you are going to show a, sort of, false positive today.

Bishop Magnus:

I will bring it to your attention immediately.

Cardinal Ira:

No! You will ignore it!

Bishop Magnus:

I don't understand?

Cardinal Ira:

You don't have to understand, this falls under The Blind Faith act of 115 GR. So just be aware, we would like to keep this quite. Do you understand?

Bishop Magnus:

Your holiness, I am sure I can just draw from the archive to show the proper DNA match.

Cardinal Ira:

No! Just ignore it or I will have the IRS crucify you! Do you understand!

Bishop Magnus just stands shaking his head slow and confused.

Cardinal Ira:

Do! You! Understand!

Bishop Magnus looks to the sky as for guidance then answers.

Bishop Magnus:

Yes.

The screen goes blank.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty- Four

The last confession of mariA.

As the incessant alarm plays its droning melody, lines form at the confessionals throughout the incorporated American countries for the DNA refresh. The shuffling of weary feet is all that is heard at Resource and Welfare Facility 4499, as an altar boy makes sure that the miners stay orderly. Carefully avoiding any physical contact with the miners, he gives each of them a mild laxative to take to induce urination. Too weary from work and too exhausted to complain, they all get in line, among them mariA and leO.

Bishop Magnus shows up in a smudged white robe and sits on the confessional monitoring throne. The miners start to walk single-file into the confessional, while mumbling a phrase, "Forgive me father, for I have sinned" over and over and drink their laxative. leO enters the confessional first.

leO:

My only sin is thinking that it is I who would father the savior.

The confessional light turns green on the Bishop's control panel. The green light reflects on the Bishop's robe giving him an alien hue.

Bishop Magnus:

leO, there is no savior. Go in peace.

mariA enters the confessional and urinates into the bowl. An alarm sounds and the red light flash on and off in Bishop Magnus's cabinet. Bishop Magnus looks at the light and bows his head.

Waiting in line, the miners can see the reflection of the flashing light against the Bishops plain white robe and they start to talk.

jacK:

It is true?

rogeR:

mariA is carrying the messiah?

Bishop Magnus exits the confessional booth and is swarmed by the dump miners.

saraH:

Is it true?

Bishop Magnus:

Ah, well, ah, excuse me.

rogeR:

It is true? Is he coming?

Bishop Magnus fights his way through the crowd and returns to his office and contacts the Cardinals immediately.

Bishop Magnus:

Get me Cardinal Invidia. I have important news.

Cardinal Invidia:

Did you do as requested?

Bishop Magnus:

I couldn't.

Cardinal Invidia:

Why not?

Bishop Magnus:

According to the report, a dump miner is carrying the heir to the Reaganship.

Cardinal Invidia:

We told you to ignore that.

Bishop Magnus:

I can't ignore that, what is going on here?

Cardinal Invidia:

Stop asking such stupid questions, we don't answer to you!
That information must be squelched! Do you understand!

Bishop Magnus:

I will not lie for in the name of the party! I will not commit a cardinal sin so The Church can become more corrupt. I will not do it!

Cardinal Invidia:

Do not take that tone, The Church needs you; we must not let this information out.

Bishop Magnus:

It is already out. When the alarm went off, it just confirmed what the flock had already known.

Cardinal Invidia:

Father Templar is on his way to take care of this matter. He will be able to sweep up this mess. Now go and isolate that miner, and when Father Templar arrives, turn her over to him immediately.

Bishop Magnus:

What will happen to her?

Cardinal Invidia:

That is not of your concern. Now follow orders and do your job or you will be bunking with leO, do you understand?

Bishop Magnus:

Yes, I understand.

Bishop Magnus looks out the window of his office and sees that the miners are starting to fight with the guards. Magnus quickly exits and tries to calm the situation down.

Bishop Magnus:

Please! Stop! Stop this!

Bishop Magnus catches the attention of the miners and they all turn to him.

saraH:

The alarm went off. The alarm indicated that mariA is the heir to the Reagan's throne.

Bishop Magnus:

No, not mariA.

Bishop Magnus lowers head and regains his composure.

jacK:

Then why did the alarm sound!

Bishop Magnus hangs his head in shame for what he is about to do. He swallows slowly, he knows what he has to do, he knows what is right.

Bishop Magnus:

mariA's child is the heir. She is carrying the future Reagan of America.

leO looks at mariA. His eyes get very wide and teary.

leO:

You were touched by God!

Maria just stands there shocked. Suddenly, a thunderous roar is heard from the vicinity of the facility gate. Barreling through the dust cloud and engine smoke, Father Templar enters the gates of the camp riding an issued motorcycle. Several other Priests on similar motorcycles follow him. They tear through the crowd, nearly knocking over anyone in their path. The miners part quickly as not to get run over. Alerted by the commotion, facility guards rush to the scene.

Father Templar pulls his motorcycle into the middle of the crowd and stops next to Bishop Magnus.

Father Templar:

Do they know?

Bishop Magnus:

Yes.

Father Templar:

Which one is it?

Bishop Magnus:

I cannot tell you.

Father Templar:

You do not have a choice.

Bishop Magnus:

I will not let you take that girl. I am sure that there is a logical explanation for this.

Father Templar:

That is not my decision to make. Nor is it yours. I am here to carry out the will of The Church and Americo; now comply or it will be considered treason.

Bishop Magnus:

I will not comply.

With the calm of a lion spotting its prey, Father Templar coolly and coldly pulls out a gun, points it at Bishop Magnus, and shoots; the Bishop staggers, falls to the ground and dies. The miners and guards are stunned at what they had just witnessed. Threatening them with his gun, Father Templar addresses the crowd.

Father Templar:

Which of you believe they are carrying the heir to the Reaganship?

No one answers.

Father Templar:

If I do not get an answer there will be a purification of this entire camp. I am giving you to the count of 5. (Instructs the other Priests.) Men, un-holster your side arms. As ordered. One.

The crowd stands stunned; the Priests un-holster their pistols and point them to the crowd of miners and facility guards.

Father Templar:

Two.

leO looks at mariA, bends over, and picks up a sharp rock from the ground, without anyone noticing. Then with all his might, leO hurls the rock at Father Templar.

Father Templar:

Thr..

Thwomp! The rock hits the Father Templar in the head, causing him to drop his weapon and stumble to one knee. In a frenzy, the miners take this opportunity and a riot breaks out. An alarm is sounded from one of the towers. The miners know that this means more guards will be arriving shortly, with more firepower. This stirs their already-heightened emotions and provokes a bigger melee.

During the confusion, several dump miners take the opportunity to disarm some of the guards. The miners then turn their newfound weapons against the other guards and Priests and start to fire. Knowing that they are outnumbered?, the guards flee for their life, some of them shot in the back while trying to seek cover. The Priests create a barricade with their motorcycles around Father Templar to protect him.

Father Templar, his head covered in blood and still trying to recover from the initial shock caused by the rock thrown at him, looks up to see the blurred image of a man staring at him. It is leO.

Total chaos breaks out in the camp courtyard. Pulling himself up, Father Templar regains his control and stands. Templar screams amidst the havoc.

Father Templar:

I want the woman that caused this! I want her now! I do not want to hear another sound unless it is from someone pointing her out!

leO:

You will never have her! You are powerless against the will of God.

The crowd cheers in agreement with leO's remarks. Father Templar raises his gun and points it at leO, who stands defiantly and tries to stare down Father Templar. Father Templar takes aim and fires. leO drops to his knees, eyes still glaring in protest, hits the ground and dies. mariA screams in horror and falls next to him crying. For a few moments that seem like an eternity, the stunned and shocked miners are paralyzed to move. Father Templar raises his gun again.

Father Templar:

I ask again, where is the woman I seek!

Aimlessly pointing his gun at the crowd, Father Templar shoots miner rogeR, with that he drops to the ground screaming in pain, it is not a fatal shot. Realizing all-too-well that Father Templar and the other Priests will carry out their orders, the miners, except mariA, try to flee for their lives running in every direction, bumping into each other, screaming. mariA is still on the ground; whipped left and right by the stampede of miners trying to get away. mariA, trying desperately to hold on to the lifeless body of leO, is beaten and falls victim to the insanity that is going on around her. Grief stricken and mournful at the death of leO, she is totally oblivious to the upheaval that is happening around her. In the end, mariA is knocked one too many times and fades out, and lies lifeless on the ground beside leO.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty-Five

Maria wakes up in the Cardinals' guest room.

The sparsely decorated room is bathed in pure white light from arched glass-pane windows, as the sun's rays filter through the sheer curtains. With the gentlest of warm breeze, the curtains' gossamer shadows gently dance on the veined marble floor. The room's vaulted high ceiling, with its ornate crown moldings and wall corbels flanking the windows, at once gives the space a feeling of openness and comfort.

A large sculptural wall frieze depicting the coronation of the seven Cardinals grace the wall directly above a four-poster bed. By its side, a mahogany side table displays a crystal vase with one single red rose. Swaths of fabric curl like ribbons from the top of the bedposts to the bed itself, softly floating on the satin sheets. Here is where we find a sleeping Maria. No longer the unkempt and disheveled dump miner, she has been bathed, her skin cleaned and her hair washed and groomed. Sighing perhaps in a dream while she sleeps, we see an almost new woman in her prime, with glowing tawny skin and silken ebony hair.

Maria slowly awakens from a deep, restful slumber. As she regains consciousness, she is both startled and pleasantly surprised to feel the satin sheets enveloping her. She reaches behind her head and gently squeezes the soft pillows she rests on. She scrunches a lock of her hair and breathes in its clean fragrance, like a child first discovering the bouquet of wildflowers. She spreads her arms out and, underneath the quilted sleeves of a thick robe, notices that they are clean and that her nails have been trimmed.

Maria looks around the room and sees a nun in a traditional habit, wearing a black veil over a soft crown band, a white wimple, a long black tunic and scapular.

Sitting in a cane-back chair, the nun puts down the book she is reading when she notices that Maria is awake.

Nun:

Oh, you are awake. I will get the Cardinals. They are very anxious to see you.

The nun leaves the room and Maria slowly regains her faculties. Maria rubs the clean new clothing she is wearing and smells the sheets of the bed. She explores every object around her; she has never had clean clothing in her life. Slowly, she looks around the room like a child about to be discovered for doing something bad. She reaches out to the bedside table, carefully takes the rose from the vase, and savors its sweet fragrant smell. The Cardinals enter the room quickly with Father Templar following them. Frightened once again upon recognizing him, Maria recoils at Father Templar's sight and drops the rose to the ground.

Cardinal Acedia:

Do not be afraid. We would never harm the mother of our newest Reagan Walker.

Maria (pointing at Templar):

What is he doing here?

Cardinal Invidia:

He is your personal servant of god. Aren't you so lucky? We don't all get a personal servant who would die for us.

Father Templar (bows slightly in respect):

I am here to serve my Reagan.

Maria stares in stunned silence and, realizing that she is the only woman in a roomful of strange-looking and strangely attired men, attempts to hide behind the bed sheets and pillows.

Maria:

Where am I?

Cardinal Superbia:

You are where the mother of our future Reagan Walker should be after such a horrible ordeal.

Cardinal Luxuria sits on the bed next to Maria and slowly parts the hair from her frightened face.

Cardinal Luxuria:

You need your rest; if you feel uncomfortable here, you can sleep in my room tonight, just until the shock of all this wears off.

Maria pulls away from him, all the Cardinals laugh.

Cardinal Acedia:

Oh, poor dear, you must be exhausted, the horrors you must have seen, the horrors.

Cardinal Invidia (to Cardinal Luxuria):

Get away from the girl!

Cardinal Ira (to Maria):

You rest now.

Cardinal Superbia (screams out the door) :

Nurse! Get in here now!

The nun runs back into the room.

Cardinal Acedia:

Maria, this is your nurse. (To the nun.) Cater to her every whim. If she is cold, get her a blanket. If she is hot, get rid of the blanket. Do you understand?

Nun:

Yes, your holiness.

Cardinal Ira:

Father Templar, stand watch outside and protect the mother of our glorious Reagan. Protect her and do not let anyone in. Do you understand?

Father Templar:

Completely.

Cardinal Luxuria (to Maria):

We will be back for you tonight.

The Cardinals and Father Templar leave the room, the nun looks at Maria.

Nun:

Can I get you anything, Maria?

Maria:

Some water, please.

The nun walks across the room to a console table with a pitcher of water and two glasses resting on a silver tray. She fills one glass with water and brings it back to Maria. Puzzled and not knowing how to react, Maria looks at the glass.

Maria:

What is this?

Nun:

Water.

Maria:

It does not look like water.

Maria lifts the glass to her nose and smells it.

Maria:

It does not smell like water.

Nun:

I assure you it is water.

To satisfy Maria's curiosity and disbelief, the nun pours some water into the other glass and drinks it in front of Maria.

Nun:

Water.

Maria straightens herself on the bed, sits upright, takes the glass from the nun and lifts the glass to her lips. She drinks some of the water, slowly at first. But when she discovers its fresh, clean taste, she drinks it in gulps until the glass is empty.

Nun:

Slow down, Maria, don't drink so fast.

Maria (wiping her wet lips with the back of her hand):

May I have some more?

Nun:

Of course you can.

Maria extends her glass out with both hands and the nun retrieves the pitcher and refills Maria's glass. Maria drinks the water slower this time but still drinks it all.

Nun:

Would you like another glass?

Maria:

No, I am fine, thank you.

Nun:

Would you like me to read to you?

Maria (settling back in bed):

No, thank you.

The nun brings the cane-back chair closer to the side of the bed, sits next to Maria, picks up book, and starts to read silently. Maria piles the pillows around her, lies back in bed and, pulling the soft satin sheets to cover her, slowly melts back to sleep.

Dump Miner - Chapter Twenty-Six

The new Reagan is introduced to America.

Maria enters the Cardinal's receiving room just behind the balcony. She smells of light perfume and wears new clothing. A long, flowing veil with hues of gold, silver, and bronze wraps around her head and trails her footsteps. Underneath, she wears a dark tunic that seems to envelope her in shrouds of velvet. On her neck, she wears a necklace with a gleaming pendant, symbol of the Reagan. All the cardinals gather around her as she walks towards the balcony, each cardinal trying to convince Maria why it is so important to keep the politics of Americo and The Church way they are.

Cardinal Superbia:

It is our job as the lawmakers of Americo to make sure that all get the opportunity to be a positive member of society without disturbing the natural balance of selection.

Maria:

But how can that be achieved?

Cardinal Invidia:

We need to do this by control. No one should have more than another, unless he has earned it by inheritance or birthright. This is not an easy task to achieve. The best way to achieve this is to collect all that is valuable and distribute it fairly.

Maria:

What is considered fair?

Cardinal Ira:

By making sure no person has more than they have a right to by their standing in Americo.

Cardinal Invidia:

By making sure that every person knows his or her place.

Maria:

But this has proven not to work.

Cardinal Superbia:

That is not true! Our system works better than any other in history, and has worked well since its conception. I must say that this is mostly due to my efforts.

Cardinal Acedia:

Our efforts.

Cardinal Superbia (after a brief pause):

Our efforts.

Maria:

But I have seen what your efforts have done. You use people to better the lives of only a few while justifying it by living an extreme life. People die working to better their life, knowing that they will never achieve their dreams, hoping that someday things will get better.

Cardinal Gula:

Those who live those lives have chosen that life.

Cardinal Ira:

If you allow everyone to have the same then, those that have had it will want it again. If those individuals never have the opportunity to achieve sins of the flesh, then they will not want them in the future and remain pure.

Cardinal Invidia:

Wanting is the only true sin.

Cardinal Superbia:

If you remove the want, you remove the sin.

Cardinal Superbia:

Life without want is life without sin.

Maria (looking somewhat confused):

I do not know what to think.

Cardinal Gula:

So it is up to you to travel the path that god has in placed in front of your feet. If you follow your destiny, the citizens of Americo will follow.

Maria pauses and thinks to herself with a pained look. What the Cardinals are saying does not make any sense to her.

She knows what life is like in the dumps and she now knows what life is like for the privileged.

Cardinal Acedia:

Do you want to take away all hope?

Maria:

Oh goodness, no.

Cardinal Superbia:

Then you must do what you know needs to be done.

Cardinal Luxuria:

Your responsibilities start today. You must address the citizens of Americo, denounce your old life and tell your people that you will carry the burden of social order.

Maria walks out to the balcony, as thousands of people cheer. Maria is not used to such attention; she looks at the Cardinals who stand by her side with their back to the crowd.

Cardinal Superbia:

You must address your public. They serve you and await you.

Maria looks down at the audience from the balcony, takes a deep breath, and tries to speak with confidence.

Maria:

I do not know why I have been chosen to hold this position, but I will do what I believe is best for all. Many have nothing to eat and starve while few indulge and get fat, and that is wrong.

Maria looks down at her feet; obviously shaken, and turns away from the balcony.

Cardinal Ira:

You must continue, but think before you speak. Think!

Maria:

I can't.

She turns and runs back into the receiving room, Cardinal Ira trying to control his temper follows.

Cardinal Ira:

You must!

Maria:

But I can't, there is no way that I can save them all.

Cardinal Superbia:

Maria, then you will need to save yourself and in doing so, you will save them.

Cardinal Superbia leaves Maria alone in the receiving room. Outside, she can hear the deafening cheers of the crowd, shouting her name in resonating bravado. Turning towards the balcony, she catches a glimpse of her reflection on a life-sized gilded mirror by the balcony door. How strange this seems to her now, whereas days ago she was unkempt and raggedly dressed in frays and tatters. Whereas days ago, all she heard was the sound of anger and despair around her.

Moments later Maria walks back to the balcony and looks at the crowd. A tear comes to her eye as she speaks.

Maria:

I will do my best to serve you. Life is not a choice, it is something we are forced into and must accept. I will do what I can to stop the corruption in the mines. I will do what I can. We must take every opportunity to make all our lives better.

Maria pauses and looks at the Cardinals. They all give her an approving nod.

Maria:

No one person should be able to put themselves as better than the next and no person should stand before another as his God. If we don't work together to make things better, things will surely remain the same.

Maria starts to cry, turns and runs back through the balcony doors. She falls to the floor sobbing. The Cardinals rush over to help her up.

Cardinal Acedia:

You must not push yourself too hard.

Cardinal Gula:

Maybe something to eat will make you feel better, tonight we will have a feast in your honor.

Maria:

I would like that.

Cardinal Invidia:

Can I get you some wine to calm your nerves? It is very delicious.

Maria:

I cannot have wine. I am with child.

Cardinal Superbia:

Oh yes, of course; then we will find something you can enjoy.

Cardinal Avaritia:

Is there anyone other than the right people you would like to share your food with?

Maria thinks to herself, the people she knew or cared for are now dead. She is carrying the child whose destiny is to rule Americo.

This was a larger responsibility than she thought would ever happen. She would have to do what she knew was right.

Cardinal Invidia (asks Maria again):

My dear? Is there anyone other than us?

Maria pauses, then looks back towards the audience behind her. She then turns and surveys the pristine palace that she now calls home. Maria looks at the Cardinals, thinks and then answers.

Maria:

Yes, I will make a list.

Cardinal Superbia:

And we are on that list, of course?

Maria pauses and smiles as she is now totally awake and fully aware of her position in Americo.

Maria:

We will see.

The end.

About the author

J.V. Errichetti is an American artist, poet, and author.

Born in Philadelphia Pennsylvania J.V. Errichetti traveled the country eventually settling in Sacramento California where he continued his education at the California State University Sacramento where he graduated with a degree in studio art.

J.V. creates an art that he calls “Abstract Realism”. This being something based from reality that is distorted to allow the viewer to include their life in the imagery and words.

J.V. started working on Dump Miner in the year 2001 as a political satirization of the George W. Bush administration. The story holds truth as well as fiction within its pages with an almost prophetic vision of what is to come, but is actually about what is happening and has happened to our society.

J.V. Errichetti has currently finished working on the storyline to the sequel to Dump Miner, “Jane” which has no real publishing date and has moved to writing love poems under an assumed name.

www.dumpminer.com

