

Jason Rodgers returns and is thrust back into a world of shadows, suspense and intrigue as the dark international forces from Rodger's past seek retribution and to wreak havoc in this riveting sequel to Perry's national bestseller, *The Cyclops Conspiracy*. . .

The Cyclops Revenge

...will put you back on the edge of your seat and take you on an incredible, breath-holding adventure.

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PROLOGUE

Friday, October 13th

**One Week after the Christening
of the *Jacob R Hope***

“You are still distressed, Miss Lily?”

The words were delivered as a question. But they hit her with the force of a statement speaking the bold truth.

Delilah Hussein lay on the beach lounge chair with a tall exotic libation sitting on the glass table beside her, untouched. The warm tropical breeze was strong this late afternoon whipping her silk sari. The wind on the secluded, well-secured, mountaintop villa was a constant.

Hussein looked up at Oliver with a distant gaze. Despite her distraction, she could see true concern etched on her man-servant's face. They had been through a lot together. And he had stood by her without a hint of trepidation.

“Would you like a cool, wet towel?” he asked.

Hussein did not speak. She simply looked up at him with unfocused eyes. The trauma of the events of a week ago was still too painful to bear.

Oliver extended the white towel towards her. Her eyes moved lower to see it clutched in his dark-skinned hand. The fingers were long, all except the pinky which was nothing more than a stump.

Hussein had been responsible for its loss. She had snipped off both pinky fingers on separate occasions. Each time he'd let her down, failed her in a mission. And on both occasions, Oliver had paid for his incompetence with the loss of the smallest digit. The most recent failure had been not more than a few weeks ago; though his mistake had not had an effect on the outcome of their calamitous failure.

"Thank you," she replied in a whisper barely audible over the wind. "You are a good man, Oliver. A true and valuable companion."

Oliver was a tall, muscular specimen. His silk shirt was unbuttoned at the neck revealing the sculptured muscles of his chest. Adept in many forms of hand-to-hand combat, he was also deadly at medium distances with many small arms. He had killed countless times for her. And, Hussein knew, he could kill her quickly if he so desired.

Hussein sighed. "I can't believe we failed. The last three years had been planned to the smallest detail."

"It was a bold mission, Miss Lily. Very risky."

"And they're both gone now."

"Unfortunately, it does seem that is the case."

"Are you sure, Oliver?"

"Yes," Oliver replied. "Hammon sent the message twenty-four hours after the christening. Jasmine was killed. Your son was taken into custody. He does not know where he is being held or if he is even alive."

Hussein closed her eyes and tilted her head back, shaking it slowly. She pushed out a long breath. "*Mon Dieu*, I still can't believe it."

"It is not good for you to lie around like this. You must move about. It will make you feel better, get the blood flowing."

Hussein smiled. "Are you worried about me?"

The tall man-servant smiled and nodded. "We must get you back into circulation, *n'est ce pas?*"

"I suppose so."

Oliver kneeled beside her chair, looking deeply into her eyes.

"You have been despondent for a week now," he said. "We must move on. I will help you forget."

Beginning at her bare foot, he gently ran his hand along the inside of her leg. When he reached her knee and his hand had begun to disappear under the cloth of her garment, Hussein held up her hand.

Oliver's hand froze in place. She could see the confusion in his eyes. They were asking a question: *Have I gone too far?*

Hussein knew Oliver was only trying to help. He would not kill her. He would never raise a hand against her.

He owed her too much. She held a marker Oliver could never repay. One she would always hold over him.

She had saved his life from her lover and dictator, Saddam.

His four fingers remained against her soft skin, the pads of each digit connecting with the inside of her thigh, just above the knee. They were four electrodes, pulsing current into her, bringing her flesh back to life. Hussein tilted her head back again and slowly sucked the Caribbean air into her lungs. She held that position for a long time, weighing the events and trying to kill the pain.

Was it too soon?

Hussein felt her nipples become erect and a warm flush swam over her body, back and forth like a violent, storm-laden tide.

"Oliver, help me forget."

Hussein reached for him, clutching the fabric of his shirt in her clenched fist, pulling him to her. His hand resumed its trek inside her sari, inching higher.

When it reached the confluence of her thighs, Oliver spread his fore- and middle fingers gently as a cue. Hussein responded and

separated her legs, elevating her knees. The length of silk along her legs drifted towards her abdomen as the warm breeze caressed her exposed womanhood.

Slowly with the deftness of a master craftsman, his fingers crept towards their goal. His fingers dipped slightly, touching the skin just beneath the moist haven.

Hussein arched her back and sucked in a loud, sharp breath. The electricity of his touch arced with mounting voltage. She reached up with her other hand, desperately clutching another fistful of cloth and pulling his lips to within an inch of hers.

Oliver moved his fingers higher touching her moist mound with the gentleness of a moth landing on a leaf. Hussein's body spasmed. His lips made contact with hers as he pushed two fingers inside her.

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"Are you feeling better?"

"Yes, *mon ami*," Hussein replied. Her head rested on his bare chest as they lay naked in bed. "Much better."

Hussein ran her hand down his belly under the sheet. His skin, coated with a patina of perspiration, was taut and firm.

"Thank you, Oliver. I needed that."

"Pleasing you is my only mission."

With the blood coursing potently through her veins again, Hussein's mind began to race with more coherent thoughts for the first time in seven days.

As if sensing her impatience, Oliver asked, "You are thinking of something, Miss Lily?"

"*Oui*, I am."

"What do you need me to do?"

"Nothing yet," she answered. "I am still upset. I've lost a daughter and my son is gone. And even more, the failure was my fault."

"The pharmacist?"

"You realized my mistake was allowing the pharmacist to get involved?"

"Yes."

"And you said nothing?"

"It was not my place."

Hussein rose up and looked into his eyes. "You are right. It is not your place. And the pharmacist was the problem. It was my fault that I allowed him to come so close to our operation. I misjudged him."

"Again, what should I do?"

"Nothing. I will need your help in the coming months. Our compatriots in Washington are, no doubt, in a state of crisis. Have you been able to contact Hammon?"

"No, Miss Lily. The secure phone number is dead. I have tried each of the last three days."

"I feared as much. They are going deep underground. Word of the assassination attempts has spread quietly through the American government. . ."

"I have been monitoring the newspapers and news shows. There has been no mention of anything."

"Nonetheless, the FBI, Secret Service and the CIA are tracing all clues. And, I fear, they are torturing my beloved Sharif, trying to extract any shred of information from him."

"I fear you are correct," Oliver replied, running his fingers across her naked back.

"They will come after us."

"Yes, they will."

"I want you to contact Damascus. I will need to meet with them in the coming days. Arrange a meeting for a month from now. They are probably most concerned. I must smooth the waters and make them understand that this was only a temporary set back. We must continue with the mission. We must strike at the Americans again.

"Just as Bin Laden did after the first attacks on the World Trade Center, we will strike them once more. They will beef up their

security of all government officials. But we will hit them in a different way. . .in a way they will never expect.”

Hussein pulled herself up to Oliver’s lips and kissed him deeply as she reached for his groin. She massaged him and felt him growing firmer in her hand as her tongue probed his lips. Hussein ripped the bed sheets from his body and straddled him.

Without warning, she slapped him hard across the cheek, whipping his head to the side. She leaned in and hovered over him, her breasts caressing his chest. “Make love to me again. Then we have much to do.”

“What?”

“I will fill you in when the time is right. The details must be worked out. But, trust me, the Great Satan will feel our wrath and we will not fail. I want you to track the movements and communications of Jason Rodgers, the pharmacist. I want to know everything he does and everywhere he goes. Every aspect of his life is to be scrutinized. When we strike again, I will avenge my daughter and my son. And Jason Rodgers will know the pain I have felt and will feel for the rest of my days. He will suffer as I am suffering. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Miss Lily.”

“He doesn’t know it yet. He is, no doubt, recovering right now. When the time is right, I want him to know that I am the one who has rained down vengeance upon him.”

“Yes, *Madame*.”

Delilah Hussein slapped Oliver, once more, on the opposite cheek. With her hand still stinging from the blow, she reached down and grasped his swollen manhood.

“Make love to me, Oliver. I need to ease the pain but not forget the mission.”

She lowered herself onto him as she whispered a verse from the Quran to herself. “Help me ease the pain.”

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

Friday, April 10th

Two and a half years later

Jason Rodgers was about to implement the plan to finally bury his ghosts.

The carefully laid plans had been in place for weeks. Tonight marked their new beginning. The first step to making his life whole again. In the days to follow, he would put his past behind him and keep it there.

He leaned back, satisfied, pleased with himself. Everything was going perfectly. *Almost perfectly*, anyway.

The meal had been fantastic, the service exemplary. Everything had gone off without a hitch. Except, that is, for Chrissie's demeanor.

"Are you okay?" he asked Christine Pettigrew. "You seem tired."

Chrissie sat across from him on the balcony level of the restaurant, looking uninspired and melancholy for most of the evening. Jason had noticed a change in her in the last few weeks. She had been working very hard lately. But tonight, she seemed particularly bothered.

She has no idea, he thought, sipping his coffee. She will be pleased and surprised. That will change her mood! It will change everything.

They had just completed an exquisite dinner. Jason had had a thick, moist steak with a baked potato and asparagus while Chrissie had barely touched her shrimp scampi. Jason had insisted that they cap it all off by with mountainous dessert of chocolate cake dripping in thick fudge.

The Freemason Abbey in downtown Norfolk, Virginia had been one of the premier dining establishments for decades. Nearly a century and half old, it, as the name suggested, began as church, changed hands numerous times throughout history, and had finally been converted into a beacon of fine dining, sating the appetites of Hampton Roads residents ever since.

Jason had chosen it because they had never eaten there together.

This was a special occasion. It was going to be a night neither one of them would ever forget. It demanded the perfect ambiance of the old cathedral.

Chrissie looked over the half-eaten dessert they had shared, pressing her lips into a thin line. Jason had scarfed down most of it. Chrissie had only tried a small forkful, maybe two.

"Yeah, I am," she replied in a lifeless tone.

"Chrissie, something's been bothering you all night. I can tell. You should be excited. You finally got the partnership you been shooting for. The firm is exploding with business. The Colonial ownership has transferred back to you. That process is finally over with. And we are filling more prescriptions than we did last year. This year is going to be a very lucrative one. And I'm talking about in more than just dollars."

"What is that supposed to mean?"

Jason turned to look for their waitress. She was standing of to the side, waiting for his signal. He made eye contact with her and winked so Chrissie couldn't see it.

"I said," Chrissie asked again, "what's that supposed to mean?"
"You'll see."

The waitress appeared pushing a narrow cart on which sat a large bottle of champagne and two flutes. She showed the bottle to Jason and began uncorking it.

"Jason, I've already had three glasses of wine. I don't need any more."

"Just a small taste," he replied. "Just take a sip."

The waitress poured a small sample into Jason's glass. He placed his nose over the glass and inhaled, pretending he knew something about champagne. He sipped it and nodded his approval. Then the server poured two glasses and placed before both of them.

"A toast," Jason said, lifting his glass. "I love you, Chrissie. To you and me, we are a great team."

The waitress had her back to them. Just as Jason finished making his toast, she turned around to face them. She placed a round, white bread plate on the table between them.

On it rested a small velvet box.



"You've been acting like an ass all day, Michael?" Jenny asked her son. "Do you want to talk about it?"

She was sitting on the edge of Michael's bed. Michael was lying on his back staring at the ceiling. His face was a palate of frustration and worry.

"My life sucks," he hissed.

"I know it seems that way," Jenny counseled. "But your father getting remarried isn't the end of the world."

Michael rolled on his side and propped himself on an elbow. "You knew and you didn't tell me?"

"I'm your mother, Michael. Your father told me what he was going to tell you yesterday. It was the proper thing to do."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because it wasn't my place."

"I don't like her."

"Chrissie? I've met her several times. She seems like a nice person. Why do you say you don't like her?"

"Because she's making him move. When they get married they're going they're going to live at her house."

"I know your father. She's not making him do anything. If he's moving, it's because he thinks that's what's best for them."

"I didn't like it when you moved us out here to the Salt Ponds. What was wrong with the house in York County?"

"There was nothing wrong with it."

"Then why did we move?"

"It was just time," Jenny replied, looking away.

"Bullshit!"

"Watch your mouth!" Jenny slapped his leg as he lay there. "I don't want to hear language like that again."

"You put the house up for sale a week after whatever happened to dad. What happened that night?"

Jenny sighed.

"I know it was something bad. And don't tell me it was a car accident. Because I know you're lying."

Jenny looked out the window into the darkness shrouding their oceanfront home.

"Aren't you going to tell me?"

"I'm not having this conversation now," Jenny declared. "Your father loves you very much. You're still going to see him, Michael. He has a right to live his life. These are the types of issues we all deal with as adults."

Michael got up from the bed and walked to the window. It looked out on the waves of the Chesapeake Bay crashing in the dim wash of light. He studied the line of rotting pilings disappearing into the water.

"I still don't like it!"

"Your father's told me that you really haven't given Christine a chance. You've been distant since the first day you've met her. Has she treated you badly?"

Michael stared into the darkness as his mind wafted back to the night. He'd heard her voice before he'd ever met her. And the words he'd heard spoken that night between his father and *that* woman had stung him to his core.