

PROLOGUE

Why does anything happen the way it does? Because a grand purpose works in everything. Unfortunately, mankind ceased long ago to trust a grand purpose. In trust's place we wanted control.

As I look back on our past achievements, I wonder why we did it to ourselves. I wonder why the bloodshed, the destruction, or the terror of war had to be. Perhaps the most troubling fact I see is that there is no single point in time that can be scrutinized and blamed. Our fate built upon itself throughout our entire race's existence, and each generation's bite of the forbidden fruit brought us closer to hell on earth. Throughout time, we strove to know too much and then to abuse what we learned. We refused to be what we were meant to be, and we tried to control our destinies by taking each moment into our own hands. The whole of our history seems to be filled with more pain than was needed, but, as a species, we fought what was meant for us and decided for ourselves how life should be. We did not appreciate that we were part of a bigger plan. We tried to control life.

On the fortunate side of things, we were never abandoned. An age once existed when miracles flowed freely to guide us, but in these latter days the miracles diminished as man grew bolder in his rebellion. Through it all the grand purpose kept ticking, and the miraculous was never taken away, only hidden. We thought we were on our own, but we never were. We were given hints and helps, but it was largely up to our finite minds as to how we interpreted their meaning. The grand design always allowed our choices of will to play a part in the workings of fate. That is the greatest blessing of the grand purpose – we are never left without a choice. Just as we are given the freedom to choose evil, so we are given the freedom to choose good. Free will can bring us to dust as a species, but it can also bring us to redemption. We are given the power to change mankind's daily fate for better or for worse, and we are never abandoned in this choice.

Despite the miracles offered to generation after generation, mankind still chose to live as we saw fit and ignore anything outside ourselves. Think back. The conduct of Cain and Abel was not a one-time occurrence, nor was that of Romulus and Remus or the Karamazov brothers. Two brothers formed into different races so that, in the end, the races didn't even remember they were of the same blood. Each man ran to his own corner of existence, forming his own world and calling all others alien. We repeatedly abused every gift given to us and yet scorned those who came before us for doing the same.

Mankind as a whole chose to continue down this road of self-destruction and ignore – no, worse than that – *defy* faith in anything beyond our control. I accept as true, also, that somewhere in the back of our minds we never really believed we would get what we deserved. But, we have always created our own destruction. However stupid we were, free will was always given. Even as our world crumbled under our pounding fists, man still had the twisted right to destroy himself. So, we were at last allowed to take life from ourselves.

I myself am not immune to man's pride, but I've been blessed with objective hindsight in ways you cannot yet imagine. This is why I am recording this history: I know that, however far we have fallen from what we were meant to be, there is always a grand purpose behind everything, and it works for our benefit if we follow its path. Specifically, this record will highlight the story of some who accepted and followed what the rest of mankind cast aside. These flawed heroes were given a choice, and the grand purpose worked itself out through them in miraculous ways. So, I hope to give you a glimpse of how and why this particular history of these particular heroes played

out as it did – there was more to what happened than what was in their hands. Learn from their lives. Above all, remember not to control life. Trust, and let whatever happens happen.