

The woman's flight across Ireland felt endless. Only her determination sustained her in escaping the men chasing her. On the edge of the seaside village of Gaelach she'd concealed her car behind a barn. From ditch to alley to doorway she ran, watching for anything or anyone behind her. Dogs barked from small whitewashed cottages. Soaked to the skin from the pelting rain, she thanked Gaia for the weather that helped hide her and surely slowed down the men pursuing her. The information in the waterproof package she carried held the key to the fate of one of the world's largest trading conglomerates.

The small shop, located on a side road, had a "Closed" sign in the window. She paused, appreciating the welcoming roar of the angry ocean nearby. She listened for hints of danger, then knocked. Inside, an old woman held her waterproof packet as she shed her sodden clothes, leaving her naked except for an arm holster holding a Gerber combat knife. She tied her long wet hair into a knot, and the old woman strapped the packet tight to her back. Once outside the back door, she melted into the sheets of rain and raced for the sea.

Just yards away from the waves, the men hunting her closed in. One man was upon her as she pitched herself into the waves. She took him down with her, driving her knife deep into his side.

A strong swimmer, she dove deep. Her strokes strengthened as webbing spread between her fingers and a fish tail blossomed behind her. Crisp chirps guided her to a series of waterworn pillars far under the sea. She was joined by another woman who

swam next to her. They exchanged high-pitched greetings, but her focus was on getting her package to the ultimate security of the Tethys.

As they passed through the pillars, the blackness of the ocean dissolved and a glorious city, shimmering in a soft light, unfolded in front of them. All around were plants and marine animals glowing in rich hues. It was no longer nighttime along the Irish coast. It was now midday of the day before—a time differential which helped secure the city's inhabitants.

At last she could relax. She was home. The precious information she had brought was safe and would soon be transferred into the hands of those who would exact justice.

Retribution for the conglomerate of predatory commodity traders was swift. The markets came alive in ways that proved devastating to the avaricious Overlords. Traders and their greedy investors were brought to their knees. The battle for the world was taking on a new dimension.