

Forever Never Comes - Chapter 1

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FOREVER NEVER COMES

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"Because some things just can't wait, God created politicians and fools." Randy Crabs

"Whereas you are to carry the silver and gold" Ezra

"What man calls himself wise and yet does he not ease himself like the lowest of God's creations?"
Reverend Forrest

"If I had but one wish, it would be to get it right in the Garden of Eden." Tadam after the Fall
according to the Book of the Wise

"She was a victim of her own vanity and yet what have we learned?" Sister Mary Crow

"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him." Luke

"I could hear the passengers snorting, I envied their disporting, vainly I was courting, the pleasure of a dose"
William Makepeace Thackeray

"Mars is a funny place, with environmental domes and tubed transit tunnels, they make their
own air and grow their own food; a wise man would not dare." Astronaut Amanda Brick

CHAPTER 1

"The Lord must be exceedingly magnificent. . ." I Chronicles

Henry said as he is home early and enters his luxurious house. "Honey, I just got in. . ."

Andrea uttered as she peeks over the stairs. "All right, now this has to be a first. You actually are here.
Sweetie, I'm so proud of you for keeping your word and not allowing work to consume you."

Henry answered, "Yes. Work. About that. . ."

Andrea said, "Not now, I have to finish getting dressed. Our guest will be here within the hour."

Henry voiced, "What was this all about again?"

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Andrea responded, "Well. Itâs really a semi-business gathering. A little food, some wine, and some people want to talk to you about expanding your practice, or rather investing money into your ideas."

Henry uttered as he gets himself a drink of wine. "I thought I told you I wasnât interested in that type of expansion."

Andrea said, "Yes, you did. But I hear about some good things from time to time at work. You canât blame a girl from trying, right?"

Henry spoke, "(Henry joins his wife upstairs.) I donât need the money. We donât need the money."

Andrea said, she is a pretty lady, thin and tall, smart as they come. "You can never be too rich, honey. That is what my mother and father always said when I was little."

Henry spoke, "Your mother and father donât live with us."

Andrea uttered, "Actually, in purely psychological terms, one never divests of oneâs mother or father. We just learn to cope with our feels of regress."

Henry said, "Oh, good grief. Lord, you are not going to go off on one of your psychobabble themes are you? Not before the guest arrive."

Andrea announced, "Iâm just trying to be helpful."

Henry acknowledged, "And Iâm home, on time, so that my wife; you, wonât have a cow. Cut me some slack, doc."

The guest started to trickle in a few at a time. Included in the guest are the Paulâs own three grown children. Two of them had already graduated from college and were pursuing careers. Tadam, the oldest is a successful policeman, while Martha was a sought after motion picture animator. The youngest, Veronica, is still in college, she is studying to be a medical doctor at Yale.

Malcohm said, he is an investor that has been wanting to talk to Henry for sometime. He finally managed to get himself invited to their home. "Iâve been looking over your business portfolio, you could benefit from an infusion of money."

Henry said, "You have been looking over my business?"

Malcohm answered, "Yes."

Henry went on, "Iâm not sure I understand the need."

Malcohm stated, "Expansion."

Henry retorted, "Expansion into what?"

Malcohm said, "Where?"

Henry voiced, "Okay. Into where?"

Malcohm uttered, "The foreign market with your invention."

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Henry stated, "Doctors around the world have access to my technology already."

Malcolm said, "That is the whole point. They are using your ideas but you are not getting the full benefit of your effort."

Thomas spoke, he manages to make her way to the two of them. "I couldn't help but overhear. The military is making use of the many innovations that Dr. Paul has come across."

Malcolm said, "The military is funding some of your inventions?"

Thomas voiced, "It is all part of a bigger effort. Politically speaking the idea of having a central location to engage in military actions has gone over well throughout the world."

Malcolm stated, "I don't think I follow you. Military actions?"

Henry said, "By that, the good general means, a place where countries can make war without destroying their own cities and the likes."

Thomas uttered, "Yes. Think of it, a central battleground. For so long certain issues throughout the world have been in need of military solutions. But the politics are against it. Now imagine a place, an isolated place, where any country can send a fixed amount of troops, and engage another country. All without disrupting the advances of our civilizations."

Henry went on, "The Art of War made civilized. Killing can go on and the military economics can get richer, all while making sport of war."

Thomas answered, "Would you like those nasty conflicts to spill over into our soil?"

Plankton said, and joins them. "We are talking about a place where warfare can be contained and monitored and controlled. Imagine, no more collateral damage."

Father O'Sullivan uttered while he comes over. "Now there is a novel idea. Sanitized killing. . ."

Henry voiced, "Everyone, you remember Father O'Sullivan and Sister Rankan."

Plankton said, "Yes of course, from the protest. Well tell us, what would you have the civilized world to do? Issues have to be resolved? It is only logical to have a place of war."

Rankan asked, "Don't you think that the world has had enough of wars and rumors of wars?"

O'Sullivan stated, "I think what the good sister is trying to say is that if all we ever do is practice war, what will come of the world? What will come of our children?"

Thomas said, "Read the Good Book for yourself, Father. Isn't there a chapter in it about the end of the world and all that stuff?"

Rankan voiced, "It isn't a chapter it is a book and yes, the end of all things is accounted in it. That alone seem to me would make you want to think twice about your little experiment with human lives at the hands of war machines and military computers."

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Plankton said, "Ah, but that is where you seem to misunderstand it all, Sister. The General and myself are not trying to undo the Lord's creation. We are trying to lessen the severity of a world that seeks to blow itself up."

Father O'Sullivan uttered, "How? By sanitizing war? Making it a game that gamblers can place wagers on? If you get your way and the world agrees on a place of destruction. A staging area for sanitized warfare, can't you see its immoral applications of the act?"

Plankton answered, "So you would have the world do things the way that they are done."

With civilian casualties and priceless monuments destroyed. Ancient lands turned into heaps and modern wonders reduced to nothing. All because you can't stand the idea of the more intelligent scenario?"

Henry spoke, "Look everyone, this is a party. A time to just relax and enjoy your host's wine and eat my food. To be honest if I can put my two cents in. . ."

Thomas said, "By all means, Henry. We didn't mean to dampen the spirits. I hear that you three wonderful children are here. Even the youngest on Spring Break."

Henry uttered, "Yes. The kids are here. But let me say this. As a doctor who has served in the military and in fact still has a commission as a reservist, I've seen my fair share of military wounded."

Rankan chimed, "Yes. I'm sure you have."

Henry countered, "If there is a way to contain the carnage that war produces, I think it is worth taking a look at. Let's face it. War has been going on ever since mankind learned how to pick up a stick. And what over? Land. What's on that land or under the land or in the deep?"

Father O'Sullivan announced, "You speak well, Henry. Even as a man of the cloth, I must admit that out of the lesser of the two evils, if the world can agree on a place to practice war, while leaving the rest of us alone, perhaps there might be something to it."

Rankan interjected, "Father, I'm surprised to hear that coming from your mouth. What God seeks in us is His perfect will. How can encouraging military infidels."

Father O'Sullivan said, "Historically, mankind is not going to stop practicing war until God declares a time. And from the many responses to the political proposal to create a military staging place, so that society can move forward without having cities and towns and counties destroyed. The idea has caught on and does seem to be moving in a direction that seems to suggest that it will become a reality."

Lopolo said, "Seems like an investment waiting to happen."

Rankan voiced, "Lopolo Casini! Of course you'd think that way. All you want to do is figure out new ways to make an illegal dollar."

Lopolo spoke, "I resent that. I'm nothing more than a businessman trying to make a living. My original interest in coming to this party was to discuss investing in Dr. Paul's marvelous medical inventions."

Rankan asked, "Which one, there are so many? Or are you interested in the military applications of his more lucrative endeavors?"

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Plankton stated, "The military is interested in the full body prosthesis that seems to show so much promise. I mean just imagine, a soldier gets hurt in combat, and in the past, with what might seem to be a life threatening injury can be corrected by the body prosthesis."

Thomas uttered, "It does seem to be one of your more interesting inventions, Henry."

Henry spoke, "Yes. But I had intended it for civilian use. Not to remove the obligations of war."

Rankan voiced, "So you admit that war is immoral and that you are being used by people like the General and Admiral to further a cause that is unjust. Why don't you walk away from it?"

Thomas stated, "Because Henry's project is being funded by the Pentagon. We've long since seen the military applications of a full body prosthesis."

Plankton said, "Soldiers that can never die."

Father O'Sullivan said, "The very concept is immoral. Imagine what it might be like for the poor soldiers. Killing and being killed, only to have to go back and face the horror and trauma all over again. It would be like hell!"

Thomas uttered, "Ah, but whose hell, Father? Ours or the enemy's?"

Rankan retorted, "The young people you send into combat. They go thinking that they are serving their country. Only to be turned into some kind of cyborg, some military abomination. And for what? So you can have your little war games on some remote land. Televised and reported like a sport. Oh how far has technology led us down that dark and hollow path."

Plankton stated, "Soldiers that can never die means that new one will not be needed. You only see the darkness of the issue because that is the light you seek. War has always been a way of life for mankind. Hell. It is seen in the lower primates and monkeys. If the animals war and the angels wars then who is mankind not to?"

Henry vented, "Well spoken like a true admiral. And you, General, you pride yourself on finding new ways to exterminate the human race. But you all are my friends because I know you better. I know a decent side to each of you. You all are so much better than this."

Father O'Sullivan said, "You make a good point, Henry. We all have ideas and opinions about the subject of war. It is not pretty and never solves an issue. For war always leads to some sort of compromise and then with diplomacy is an issue really put in order. But like children that seem to have short memories and even shorter tempers, the human race seems to ever be engaged in repeating the history it tries so desperately to record."

Lopolo uttered, "And what about the cost?"

Rankan spoke, "There you go talking about money again. . ."

Lopolo said, "That is not the cost I was referring to, Sister. I was talking about the cost to our moral structure. When war become sport and death becomes a thing to tinker with. Don't get me wrong, I'm an investor and seek the greatest gain. But even I have my limits on what I can gain from."

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The party has been going on until the wee hours of the night. We can hear voices occasionally coming from outside the room. The room is a fancy study. Filled with fine books and a few choice high-end copies of famous works of art. Behind the desk is Henry and across from him sits Father Oâ Sullivan and Gen. Thomas along with Malcohm Chest and a thief named Skip Hopkins. They are all drinking fine brandy and smoking fine Cuban cigars.

Skip said, "I know that these parties are just excuses to network and have a good time. But I have to say, out of all the ones Iâve been to this year, yours is the most interesting."

Tadam uttered, "Mom wants to know if she can break out one of the finer boudoirs?"

Rosa said, "Mrs. Paul want to open a bottle. . ."

Henry spoke, "Thatâs fine. How many guest are still here?"

Rosa said, "I think all of them. In fact some more have just arrived."

Tadam voiced, "So whatâs on everyoneâs mind? Did I interrupt some secret meeting?"

Father Oâ Sullivan answered, "If you did, lad, it is for sure that I shouldnât be here."

There is light humorous laughter.

Thomas said, "I havenât seen you in awhile, Tadam. Howâs the police department?"

Tadam answered, "Oh. Itâs coming along. Made a nice promotion last year and looks to be as good this year."

Skip spoke, "You have your fatherâs touch. Anybody that can do well in this economy is really talented."

Tadam said, "Either that or lucky."

Father Oâ Sullivan voiced, "And luck can be quite an ally. The Good Book says that the rich man and the poor man have one thing in common. . ."

Henry retorted, "Oh, are you sure that rich people want anything at all in common with the poor?"

Skip said, "You got a point there, Henry!"

Father Oâ Sullivan spoke, "Probably not but the word of God extends our own. Anyway, what was I saying? Oh yes. The rich and poor, chance happens to them both. So a loser can become king and a king a loser."

Tadam chimed, "Now that is quite profound, donât you think, dad?"

Henry answered, "Well, Tadam, I think if that is the case, and no one in their right mind is going to argue scriptures with our good father here, then we all best be minding our savings."

Skip said, "Or maybe people like me will be minding it for you all."

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Light hearted reaction.

Father Oâ Sullivan went on, "Tell me, Skip. Does a rotten no good thief like yourself feel the recession, like the rest of us?"

Skip answered, "Well, Father, to be honest I have kind of cut back because so many are hurting. Donâ t get me wrong, I still as no good as you say, just not feeling the moment like when things are going well economically."

Thomas said, "Finally, a thief with a conscience! Skip, you are going to give your profession a bad name!"

Skip spoke, "Well, letâ s see. There was this guy named Robin Hood. . ."

Tadam said, "Oh, well, then we all must be getting ready to open up the checkbooks and write a check for one of momâ s favorite charities."

Thomas uttered, "A little late, your mother got me when I was going for another piece of that chocolate cake sheâ s been serving up to everyone."

Henry voiced, "Yeah, thatâ s Andrea. Sheâ ll sweeten you up and then sink her teeth into you. You know, she always seems to help out those charities, and in the most unusual ways."

Tadam said, "Momâ s good at that. Did you manage to speak with Veronica?"

Henry stated, "Yeah. We spoke for about an hour. She said that she had something important to tell me and your mother, but things came up. Iâ m going to get around to her before the night is over. Why? You know something?"

Tadam uttered, "Maybe I should let her tell you."

Henry voiced, "No. Go ahead, if you know what the big deal is, say it."

Father Oâ Sullivan spoke, "We can all use some juicy gossip."

Tadam uttered, "Okay. But she is going to kill me. She is planning to join Doctorâ s Without Borders after medical school. From what I can gather, one of her professors is associated with the organization."

Father Oâ Sullivan said, "And just when I think I canâ t be more surprised. Henry, this is great news. You and Andrea should be very proud of your youngest."

Tadam said, "I know I am."

Lopolo uttered, "Only thing is that there is no money in it."

Oâ Sullivan said, "Money isnâ t everything, Lopolo. You have to get past the accounting books are start to see what really matters."

Lopolo voiced, "Oh, donâ t get me wrong. I think it is a grand thing that Veronica is planning to do after medical school. But most kids go in a different direction. Nowadays, doctors just want to make lost of money. They are not in it for the betterment of the society. Thatâ s all Iâ m saying."

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Tadam announced, "You know, Lopolo has a point. But Iâm still proud of her."

Henry said, "Me too. . ."

They all toast Veronicaâ s decision.

Skip uttered, "I heard some strange news about the world governmentâ s decision to go forth with that military staging area. You know, the war zone, where disputing counties can go and battle it out without messing up the rest of us."

Oâ Sullivan said, "Yeah, we were discussing the subject earlier, before you arrived. Sanitized warfare I believe it is being called."

Thomas stated, "You make it sound so droll, Father Oâ Sullivan. Which would you rather have, beautiful historic monuments destroyed. Sacred lands pillaged and innocent lives destroyed. Or would you rather like to have it all contained. All the violence and horror, controlled and televised!"

Lopolo uttered, "There is money to be made from war."

Skip said, "And you all thought my profession was a bit taxing. What, we all gather on Monday nights and watch a new episode of one country trying to eliminate another, and for sport?"

Tadam spoke, "People will be allowed to gamble on the winner each week. It is suppose to be the ultimate reality show. War!"

Thomas said, "It has everything in it. Love. Hate. Sex. Violence. Greed. . ."

Lopolo said, "Please. It sounds like my second marriage!"

They all react lightly.

Tadam went on, "It would all be fine if it was just fiction. No real human life was lost."

Thomas spoke, "There was this man who ran a red light because he was trying to get his sick relative to the hospital. A policeman stopped him and began to harass him, completely ignoring the obvious fact that there was a life hanging in the balance. Well, the relative died. We all watched in horror as this cop just went on and on, not listening, not caring. But it made for good television. We all watched. . ."

Skip stated, "Exactly! We will all watch as the staged war goes on. Itâ s is like warfare has entered into a new phase, it is trying to be elevated to the level of entertainment!"

Henry uttered, "Entertainment? Never! War is too immoral!"

Tadam said, "What she said, Gen. Thomas, is right, it will make for good television. Ratings, advertisement. Products sold. Up until now, warfare has been morally and politically objectionable. But with this plan brewing, the military will take something that was once awful and make it palatable."

Father Oâ Sullivan uttered, "Yes, lad, but at what cost to our human souls? And Iâm not just talking about our eternal soul Iâm also talking about our collective conscience. What happens when war becomes sport? A commodity to be sold for ratings and advertisement? When children grow up thinking that war is a game to be played and emulated?"

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Thomas spoke, "Someone has to pay for it, gentlemen. Iâ ve been at this for a long time.

Few women have risen to the rank that I hold. And yes, while I do have some in trepidation about the whole process. The ways of the old are making way for the new. From now on, when one hears about wars and rumors of wars, it will come with popcorn and a soda."

Henry said, "It does leave one to wonder what this world is coming to."

Father Oâ Sullivan voiced, "Mankind keep on doing those things that God Almighty warned him not to do. And is there any wonder if things like this crop up?"

Lopolo told, "And all we can seem to do is worry about out 401Ks. Maybe in some strange way the future is a good thing. Gone is the draft. The need to destroy homes and damage lives. I mean, if technology has grown to the point were we no longer have need of borders in order to make war. If the whole world can agree on this one point. Maybe it is progress."

Father Oâ Sullivan uttered, "Progress. Yes. But progressing towards what? That is the question."

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