

DARK WIND IN EDEN

Also by Roy E Edwards

Celtic Sunset
A Trace of Blue
Brotherhood of the Book
Pierced by the Sun
The Egyptian
In Shadows Fall

DARK WIND



IN EDEN

ROY E EDWARDS

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Stories often begin as little more than an idea, or a few scribbled lines on a grubby piece of paper, and then something magical seems to happen as words slowly but surely take on a life of their own leading somewhere, and not always in the direction one intends, and for a while time ceases to exist. When finally it begins ticking away again, usually some few months later, you end up with a story. That's the easy part, and without the help of some wonderful people it would probably end right there; that it does not and most likely never will, is due in part to my lovely wife Julie, who tirelessly translates my scribble, handling innumerable textual changes, additions, deletions and what have you along the way with nary a murmur of complaint. And sometimes along the way bonds of friendship are formed, such often comes about slowly, blossoming as the years go by. The artist who handles the cover artwork for my books is one such friend. His name is Nathan Thomas and a finer person you could not wish to meet. Our eldest son Steve serves in the Australian Armed Forces and has done so for many years. Even so when needed he takes time out and makes many an on line problem (to do with my work) go away. Finally it would be remiss of me if I did not extend my heartfelt thanks to all those wonderful people out there who purchase the finished product. And there you have it. A writer, writes (yes, I know it's self evident) but writers, as I am sure you appreciate, seldom, if ever, have much of anything to do with the actual publication of what he or she may write. Therefore it is needful that one should acknowledge those who assist you, so to speak, as you walk your chosen path. And I do so thank you all. I thank you most kindly.

Roy E Edwards

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CHAPTER ONE



*What is a secret
If not a friend unrevealed?*

Segovia's Signature

*Art thou witless to come here?
To knock on my door like some unsepulchred haunt
Begging for bones at the door of lost souls.
Know you not who I am?
You who stand here like a fool
In the Court of the Midnight King.*

The Court of the Midnight King

RICHARD COYNE 1999
SOUTHERN FRANCE
SUMMER/AUTUMN

Done and double done, he thought wearily. The eyes of him bruised looking and dull from lack of sleep and sheer bloody exhaustion. He surveyed the result of almost twelve months intense research moodily, all eight hundred foolscap size pages of it. The strange story had revealed itself incrementally, layer by layer, offering up secrets and mysteries hitherto unguessed at, as he delved deeper and deeper into what turned out to be a bewildering maze of blind alleys and astonishing revelation. A tired smile deepened lines etched in his flesh, lending a strained, shadowed look to his woefully thin, ascetic features. He turned slightly, eyes lifting as he gazed off through the pool of light spilling down onto his desk. The old fashioned lamp humping like a raptor above his work space as it battled valiantly to push back the ever encroaching gloom pervading the cavernous, musty room. Shadows backed up by the raptor's light shivered in every nook and cranny, pooling in corners like spilt ink, sooty fingers clawed at the walls. And in his head, vague half seen images echoed centuries past, along with the muted rustle and murmur of ghost voices incessantly clamouring to be heard. And he loved it, every memory, real or imagined, every stone and shadow, each and every indrawn breath of the musty air pervading the high, vaulted subterranean complex that housed the Brotherhood's main library, the whole of it hewn out of bedrock long centuries ago. He eyed the stack of papers piled neatly on his desk top with a vague sense of unease. The *Adversary*, he thought darkly, was alive and well, even in that distant age. Coyne had not expected to find him, but on reflection realised such was a fool's notion.

Indeed thwarting the machinations of the Adversary and whatever misguided minions he used was after all part and parcel of why the Brotherhood was formed. Coyne sighed, oh yes indeed, notion of the greater enemy, was very much part of the Brotherhood's cognisance. And will the good work ever be done, he thought wearily, or are we all just so many loose cannons firing random salvos? He didn't think so, but then again, that was something else he was never quite sure of. Good like evil, he thought with a sigh, has an addictive quality about it that sometimes blurs the line between right and wrong. "And God save us all," he whispered to himself "from the maudlin thoughts of a weary man with a head full of haunts and windy moonlight shadows."

Some sixty feet beneath a sprawling monastery like complex, Coyne sat within a huge, vaulted chamber giving access to a vast subterranean library complex housing artifacts and written records spanning more than 14,000 years of humankind's recorded history. Agents of the Brotherhood had scoured the lands of the Earth for thousands of years, searching out so called lost works. Removing the entire contents of many an ancient library even as the town or city that housed it, fell to invaders. The Brotherhood was familiar with strange histories. Even as they were familiar with narrations concerning events taking place during eras so distant, few scholars deigned to even acknowledge man walked upright or was the master of his own destiny let alone having acquired the ability to read and write. The hidden fraternity knew otherwise, and were custodians of an almost embarrassing wealth of evidence to the contrary along with specialised knowledge we today unknowingly inherit. With an effort he pushed his dour ruminations aside, thinking, not for the first time, of taking a much needed long, long vacation. His body ached, don't you know, his joints full of stinging, streaky fire. Sometimes his muscles and limbs jittered and jived for no good

reason he cared to dwell on. Not that he was overly concerned or even thought much about what was wrong with him, but it was always there, crouching like some dark malevolence waiting to be recognized. He had carried the fire in his bones out of the desert long years ago, before the enduring strength of him had began to leak away, leaving an ache of ruin behind that insidiously stole something from inside him. Sometimes he viewed himself from a distance, dispassionate and cold, castigating himself for what he viewed as his weakness. Such mental flagellation however was more the result of shock than anything, a physic shock that is, resulting from the following and immediate awareness of just how close he trembled, now and then, on the edge of the abyss, and when one day the last hour finally held him, he would rage and scream down to his final heartbeat. He could do no other, he didn't know how, other than to acknowledge with a twisted smile, his voice husky and soft like a whisper leaf wind, "Sometimes I think the good doctor is right, don't you know," adding in a self mocking tone, "sometimes I think there is indeed something wrong with me." Even so, for all of that, he did what he could to quiet the sometimes uneven beat of his heart, and simply live each day as it came, and thankful to do so. Yet did Christina worry that the long hours he so profligately spent buried in ancient secrets and mysteries, ever claimed their awful toll of his uneven sparking strength.

It was his passion. Christina understood that and the love she bore him would never permit her to persuade him to let his passion go. Unable to return to the desert, it gradually become the way of his life, and like his grandfather before him, in whose footsteps he followed, he would continue researching the Brotherhood's history, culling out mysteries and secrets from their incredibly ancient past, until the day he died. It was after all, his passion, a consuming one it is true, but laudable for all of that, though sometimes she was hard pressed to think so.

As always his research had not progressed exactly as planned. He had thought to discover the history of Dunnorix, who claimed to be both Druid and King, only to be distracted by Rahn the Egyptian and the enigmatic Nafraya who introduced the worship of Isis into Celtic lands. He smiled slightly, thinking nothing much had changed over the years. What began as an investigation of the 13th Century Knight of Dark Renown, Morgan de Montfort, and his retrieval of letters written by Jesus the brother of James had indirectly led him deep into a very different kind of investigation concerning an ancient race some 14,000 to 16,000 years old, who seemingly birthed the forefathers of both Celt and Egyptian. A common bond, Coyne mused, unguessed at by the world, and don't you just love it, he chuckled, when you discover something others have not.

It hadn't been easy, it never is, and months had merged into months as he tenaciously hunted down every scrap of information stored within the gloomy labyrinth like library, until finally a vast panoramic picture began to emerge. The odd thing was, when he finally lay the last piece down, it all seemed so obvious he wondered why no one had uncovered the connection before. Perhaps someone had, but could not believe what they found. More likely, Coyne mused, the evidence lay buried and forgotten in some musty museum vault, he thought with regret. Dealing as it did with an ancient, almost unknown race who birthed the forefathers of two separate cultures that actually began as one: until darkness came calling; darkness in the guise of a lean, raggedy man with fanatical, burning eyes.

“Dear God in heaven,” he whispered reverently “don't you just love it when it all comes together like this?” A shiver of excitement coursed through him, tightening his belly as he thought there was nothing quite like the soul swelling thrill of discovery, of unearthing ancient secrets and forbidden mysteries.

The downside was, that he could never let go once he came across even a hint of some dim, remote mystery, such instantly fuelling him with an urgency he could never deny, pressing a start button inside his head, the problem being of course, that he could never find a button marked stop. Small wonder then Christina worried, yet she knew his passion was a part of him. It was a part of what she loved about him, and if she said stop, she knew, for love of her he would. Only she also knew if he stopped something would die inside him, something would fade and he would never be quite the same again whilst ever he lived. No, she would never ask him to stop. All she could do was try and slow him a little, and for that, though he never actually said so, he was truly thankful, aware he could no longer remember how to stop. And yet for all his body was no longer what it was, for all the desert had claimed a fearful price in return for revealing its secrets, he was nonetheless well content.

For this he was born, this very passion. And like his grandfather (Bernard Coyne - Archaeologist) before him he was exactly where he should be, he could be nowhere else. And so he would do what he could until that last of days, to write down at least a bit and piece of something concerning what seek and discover might reveal.

Whatever we are, he sometimes thought, might not we be more than we think. Might not the very forge of creation be spirit within? He liked to think so. Along with his spiritual studies, thought of it sometimes helped damp down the creeping fire in his bones.

The mystery had to do with a 13th Century knight who seemingly lived and died oblivious to what exactly he accomplished when he set out to retrieve the “Christos Letters” that, as it turned out, made up less than a third of the bulky package he went on to defend with his life. The “Christos Letters” were important, of course they were, it was however the

mysterious accompanying documents that spoke of a Dark Wind that posited the existence of ancient secrets hitherto unknown, but then, Montfort was a hunted man with little thought to spare outside fulfilling a certain task. That he did so, whilst yet remaining ignorant of what he accomplished, was something that had caused Richard Coyne many a sleepless night as he mulled over the entire unfortunate incident that first brought the “Letters” and the ancient writings to light. Maybe, he mused, unfortunate is not the right word to use, maybe the letters were waiting for the right person to come along and move them on. Secrets, he thought, mysteries and secrets are like old friends; mysteries and secrets bind our very world. And what would we do without them, what would we do indeed? As for De Montfort, if not for his self imposed quest to find the “Christos Letters”, the mystery of a Dark Wind In Eden may very well have remained lost to the world forever. Maybe one served the other, he mused reflectively, maybe secrets have a way of revealing themselves, what is a secret then, he asked himself, if not a friend revealed.

It took him two years to lay bare the bones of the singularly peculiar documents he found in the package De Montfort rescued so long ago.

Two years, he thought, with a wry smile, but I got there in the end, I always do.

RICHARD COYNE 2001
SOUTHERN FRANCE
SUMMER/AUTUMN

Molten gold on the edge of a knife, blade of the horizon balancing the sun, words of summer whisper drifting through his head as he stared out through an old

casement window to the bedraggled garden beyond. A cold, dismal day it was, miserable and damp with no hint at all of summer remaining.

He sometimes thought there was a feel of desolation about such days, as though the very hours searched with anxious desperation for a single fleeting memory of warmth and light.

Low scudding clouds raced across a leaden sky. Skeletal tree tops whipped in the wind. Rain scythed down in grey, relentless sheets, drumming against the already sodden earth with an eerie, echoless sound. Gusting winds whipped raindrops against the window with sharp rattle tap sounds.

Shorn of autumn's visually vibrant colour, the centuries old garden seemed to draw in on itself beneath a shroud of gloomy, half light.

Shades of winter thought Coyne with a shiver. The thought of bitter cold days to come, of moaning winds, crackling frost and the wan rays of a warmless sun just about guaranteed to ache his bones with threads of fire. Not that he cared over much. The price of life, he thought with a wry, mocking smile; and isn't there always a price to pay, only fools think there is not, he concluded softly.

His thoughts moved back to the desert, to the heat and dust of it all beneath hot, blue skies. But that was long ago. Only death would greet him now, should he ever ignore a long ago warning and return. He liked to think some few survivors of the Black Tent People still remembered him. Those who escaped the constraint of walls and barbed wire fences that is. And damned few did, he thought sadly, damned few did.

The room was small and cosy. Heat from a crackling log fire warmed his back as he stared moodily out through the window to the sodden garden beyond. He thought of letters, and the fat wad of extraordinary documents he had found inside the package Morgan de Montfort carried home from the ill fated Crusade he

seemingly wanted no part of. Documents that had, as far as he knew, remained untranslated for more than seven centuries or more.

The world had moved on since then. The intervening centuries giving rise to a fragile, uneasy balance. He wondered briefly if Morgan had truly appreciated the tremendous importance of his mission. The conclusion of which for good or ill, quite literally held the fate of the West in balance.

The letters were not so important now. Perhaps they never were, perhaps they only ever attained importance in the minds of certain men. Now, if revealed, it wasn't so much the letters that would ignite raging storms of controversy, but the documents that accompanied the letters. The authorship of the documents was of course unknown, but the ancient scribe, whoever he might be, had used an early form of Sanskrit, one of the few Indo-European group of languages still in use today, thereby facilitating relative ease of translation of the document's cursive script. Sanskrit formed the root of Indo-Egyptian-Celtic language amongst others, which Coyne had always found intriguing, suggesting as it did something of a commonality of source. He would investigate the intriguing mystery of it all one day, when he had time enough to do so, that is.

The documents he quickly came to learn were copies of copies of copies. Stretching back over an incredible span of time to an era so remote, mere intimation of such would be enough to convulse most scholars, or at the very least, cause their blood pressure to sky rocket. Nor would they, Coyne knew from experience, even condescend to view the documents, dismissing them out of hand as false in absentia. Not that it mattered, not really. Coyne and the Brotherhood were aware that, thanks to recent extremely innovative advances in various technologies, evidence concerning provenance of the documents narration was piling up at an ever, increasing rate. And nobody, at least nobody

in his right mind, thought Coyne, views incontrovertible evidence and then states blandly that it doesn't exist and cannot exist because the era in question never existed in the first place. Sadly, Coyne was all too aware that the academic world was indeed home to more than one or two tunnel visioned scholars, who unfortunately occupied positions of power detrimental to scholarship itself. Coyne hoped he would live long enough to see it all change. It would change, of that there was no doubt, only it would change slowly, by incredibly small increments that had him doubting he would live long enough to stand witness to such change.

Provenance of the documents however was not in doubt. As far as the Brotherhood was concerned that is, but then they had access to proofs others did not, at least not yet.

The documents, written in the first person by an unknown author chronicled the life and time of a man who lived about 16,000 years ago. An extraordinary man, one of a race who later branched off to form two other unique cultures who yet retained, tenuous it is true, commonalities of origin. And, incredibly, as the centuries and thousands of years went by, even though the two nations eventually developed unique language differences and cultural traits unique to their nations, yet did they continue to share common bonding of root words evidential of a distant shared ancestry. Words remaining in use to this day representing the least of empirical evidence, along with a series of spectacular discoveries in an area that is now a desert, but certainly was not during the era encapsulating the somewhat enigmatic narrative concerning the struggles and spiritual values of an hitherto unguessed at race occupying the upper south-west of the Indus Valley. Eventually spreading east into a vast area known today as the Thar Desert (Borders Pakistan/India). (Indus River Valley stretches from Arabian Sea to Foothills of Himalayas, about 1800 miles. Remnants of this race eventually moved north and

occupied the Nile Delta, laying the foundations of what eventually became a vast dominant empire unique to the world.) Coyne, aware of the results of recent studies in ancient climatology knew full well that the Thar Desert was, during the ancient city state's existence, warm and dry for around six to eight months of the year, followed by cool seasonal rains. There were remains of irrigation systems, complex underground sewage systems. 16,000 year old technology. Not to mention sit down toilets with wooden seats flushed by running water, and weapons of superior metals. War however, according to the narrator, was constant, at least for a thousand years of their history. In hindsight Coyne realised it was knowledge of this forgotten race that comprised the true secret contained within the package Morgan carried away, and not the Crucified Man's letters. They simply represented terrible danger in the wrong hands.

The true secret was knowledge of events occurring thousands of years before the birth of the Crucified Man and the many, though divergent similarities concerning devotional celebration of spirit and Creator and Magia Sophia, Sacred Wisdom, and the closed and open mystery schools affording knowledge of spirit and much else besides.

War then, Coyne thought with a rueful sigh, is seemingly inevitable whilst ever lazy men covert what others gain through toil and deep contemplation.

He turned towards the fire. Settling down in an old comfortable easy chair, he picked up a neat stack of papers and began to read words originally written 16,000 years ago. Wondering idly as he did so, what the world of scholars would make of it all.

Rain lashed against the window, winds howled with increasing force. The room however, was warm and quiet as he rolled the first of what would be an innumerable succession of hand rolled cigarettes as he settled down to read, this was his

passion, he loved it. He loved anything to do with ancient mystery, the more obscure and controversial the better.

Puffing contentedly he turned the first page, the sound of wind and rain fading away as he lost himself in a distant age recounted by an unknown narrator reaching out across thousands of years, his very words imbuing an ancient forgotten world with rich, vibrant life. A few lines from an obscure work by Spanish Paques flitted through his mind.

*Of all the secrets I have known,
I craved the answer to but one.
Later when I found the answer,
Of the answer I never spoke.
And if tomorrow I breathe my last
Know you this,
The answer to the one secret
Is graven in stone.
The answer to the one secret
Is in your soul.
The riddle however is this,
To gain the secret,
First you must know
What questions to ask.*