

# THE ASSAULT

CYCLE TWO OF THE HARBINGERS SERIES

**THE REVEALING** BY BILL MYERS

**INFESTATION** BY FRANK PERETTI

**INFILTRATION** BY ANGELA HUNT

**THE FOG** BY ALTON GANSKY



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Bill Myers, Frank Peretti, Angela Hunt and Alton Gansky, *The Assault*  
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*Infiltration* © 2017 Angela Hunt  
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In this fast-paced world with all its demands, the four of us wanted to try something new. Instead of the longer novel format, we wanted to write something equally as engaging but that could be read in one or two sittings—on the plane, waiting to pick up the kids from soccer, or as an evening’s read.

We also wanted to play. As friends and seasoned novelists, we thought it would be fun to create a game we could participate in together. The rules were simple:

## **RULE #1**

Each of us would write as if we were one of the characters in the series:

Bill Myers would write as Brenda, the street-hustling tattoo artist who sees images of the future.

Frank Peretti would write as the professor, the atheist ex-priest ruled by logic.

Angela Hunt would write as Andi, the professor’s brilliant but geeky assistant who sees inexplicable patterns.

Alton Gansky would write as Tank, the naïve, big-hearted jock with a surprising connection to a healing power.

## **RULE #2**

Instead of the four of us writing one novella together (we’re friends but not crazy), we would write it like a TV series. There

## THE ASSAULT

would be an overarching storyline into which we'd plug our individual novellas, with each story written from our character's point of view.

If you're keeping track, this is the order:

Harbingers #1—*The Call*—Bill Myers

Harbingers #2—*The Haunted*—Frank Peretti

Harbingers #3—*The Sentinels*—Angela Hunt

Harbingers #4—*The Girl*—Alton Gansky

Volumes #1–4 omnibus: *Cycle One: Invitation*

Bill's first novella, *The Revealing*, sets the stage for the second cycle, *The Assault*. It will be followed by Frank's *Infestation*, Angela's *Infiltration*, and Alton's *The Fog*. And if we keep having fun, we'll begin a third round and so on until other demands pull us away or, as in TV, we get cancelled.

There you have it. We hope you'll find these as entertaining in the reading as we did in the writing.

*Bill, Frank, Angie, and Al*

# **THE REVEALING**

**BILL MYERS**

## CHAPTER

# 1

**W**hat're you sketchin' now?" Cowboy asked.

I flipped my notebook shut like a kid caught with porn.

The big guy smirked. "You know, Miss Brenda, you don't have to keep hidin' your gift under a bushel."

I gave him a look. He gave me one of his good-ol'-boy shrugs. Daniel, who's sittin' on my other side, stifles a giggle.

I shoot him a look. "You think that's funny?"

He grins and imitates Cowboy's shrug.

I scowl. But the truth is I like that grin. It don't happen much, but whenever it does, it warms somethin' up inside me.

The sketch is a blue velvet armchair. It's got peeling gold paint on its arms. I've been seeing it ever since we got on the plane to Rome. Never left my head. Not during the twelve-hour flight with its crap food and rerun movies, not during Mr. Toad's wild taxi ride from Da Vinci airport to the Vatican, and not as we sat on this butt-numbing wooden bench listening to the professor lay into some pimply-faced man-boy receptionist.

"Well, look again." The old man waved at the computer screen. "Cardinal Hartmann. You do know what a Cardinal

## THE REVEALING

is, do you not? *Cardinal* Hartmann invited us to this location at this particular date and this particular time to—”

“*Mi scusi*, signor, but you cannot have an appointment with—”

“Blast it all, don’t tell me what I can and cannot have.”

“But, such a thing, it is not—”

“I’m sorry, are you part of some special-needs program?”

“Professor . . .” As usual, Andi, his ever-cheerful assistant, stepped in to try to prove her boss was a human being. As usual, the odds were not in her favor.

Meanwhile, Daniel scooted off the bench to get another drink of water. At least that’s what I figured. But the way he cocked his head upward like he was listening told me one of his “friends” was around.

Miss Congeniality continued smoothing things over. “What the professor means is, we’ve just come from the airport. In fact, we haven’t even gone to our hotel because Cardinal Hartmann sent a very urgent and very personal request for us to visit him today.”

All true. It hadn’t even been a month since the professor sent the Cardinal that scroll with the fancy writing on it. The one some kid, supposedly from another universe, gave us. I know, I know, long story, and I’m not in the mood. The point is, this Cardinal guy, who used to be the professor’s mentor back when the professor believed in God, begged us to come. He sweetened the deal by e-mailing each of us plane tickets. And since I couldn’t cash them in, and since neither me nor Daniel have ever been out of the country, and since the professor pulled some strings to get us some fast passports . . . well, here we were with our ol’ pals, stuck in some backroom reception area that smelled like old men and floor wax.

I glanced over to Daniel. He’d passed the water fountain and stood at a wooden door built into the wall. Hardly visible. He looked back at me like he wanted something.



*What?* I mouthed.

He just stood there.

*What?*

Meanwhile, the professor cranked up his personality to super-jerk. “Okay, you do that.”

The receptionist had gotten up and was heading out of the room.

“Only make sure you bring back someone with rudimentary communication skills.”

Daniel cleared his throat, real loud to get everyone’s attention. We turned to him as he reached for the door. He pushed it open and motioned for us to join him.

“What is it now?” the professor said. “Do you wish for us to follow? Do you believe there is something inside there?”

Daniel sighed like it was obvious. And for him it probably was. ’Cause like it or not, the kid heard things we never heard. Saw things we never saw. And whether the professor believed in any type of “higher power” or not made no difference. Our last couple of road trips made it clear Daniel was connected to something.

So, without another word, Dr. Stuffy Butt headed over to join the boy. Something was up, and he knew it.

So did Cowboy. “What’s goin’ on, little fella?” the big jock asked as he rose to his feet.

Daniel pointed to the open doorway. It was dark, but you could just make out some narrow steps. Me and Andi glanced at each other then got up and followed. None of us knew what was going on in that little head of his, but whatever it was, it wouldn’t hurt to pay attention.

## CHAPTER

# 2

**S**urely you're not serious?"

"Have I ever lied to you before?"

"Other than matters pertaining to God?"

Cardinal Hartmann waved the professor off with a bony, arthritic hand. "Please, James, do spare us your sophomoric wit. If I've taught you anything, was it not to put aside your prejudices? Weigh all the facts and only then reach a reasonable conclusion."

The professor wasn't thrilled about being lectured in front of us, but I didn't mind. It was good to see someone other than me putting him in his place.

We'd found the frail old priest stashed away in some musty little apartment on the third floor. If it wasn't for Daniel's inside info we'd never have gotten to him . . . or dodged the locals who would have busted us for skulking around. Even then, it took twenty, maybe thirty minutes to wind through all the halls and stairs before we found him.

The assistant who'd opened the door for us was even skinnier than Hartmann. He wore thick Coke-bottle glasses that hadn't

been cleaned in years. He didn't say anything, just greeted us with a polite nod and ushered us inside.

Hartmann sat in the center of the room. He was hunched over in the exact chair I'd been sketching all these hours. He was too old to stand and greet us. And when the professor tried to shake his hand, he refused, laughing it off about being a closet germophobe. There was something more, but I couldn't put my finger on it.

Over on the desk was the scroll the professor had sent the Cardinal. But so far no one had brought it up. Instead, we were sitting in some broken-down apartment listening to some broken-down priest tell us an unbelievable story. Most of it had to do with the small display case the assistant had wheeled in and the rusty spearhead inside.

The professor tried to be cool, but you could tell he wasn't happy. "Can you honestly tell me with a straight face that the artifact before us is the reason Hitler started World War II?"

"No." Hartmann shook his head. "Though my brothers here insist upon this one's authenticity, there was another lance with greater credentials in the Imperial Treasury in Vienna. That was the one Hitler insisted upon owning—the one both he and Himmler believed had great supernatural powers. A fact underlined by Hitler's immediate visit to the museum to take possession of it when his troops marched into Vienna."

The professor said nothing—a first, as far as I could tell. He just sat there, eyeing his old mentor, wondering if the priest had lost his mind. And the more he talked, the more I figured he might be right.

"Because of Hitler's deep involvement with the occult, he believed whoever controlled the Spear of Destiny would control the world."

Andi motioned to the display case. "The Spear of Destiny. The one that supposedly pierced Christ's side at His crucifixion?"

"That is correct. Because it was used to kill God's Son and

## THE REVEALING

because some of His blood remained on it, Hitler believed whoever owned the spear would be invincible.”

We sat in silence a long moment until the professor answered. “Poppycock.”

“Perhaps. But do keep in mind that it is the exact spear Emperor Constantine claimed gave him his power. Then there is the overwhelming evidence that Charlemagne actually slept with it. Finally, we have the minor fact that over forty-five emperors for over a thousand years possessed it and claimed it facilitated their ability to rule.”

“Proving absolutely nothing.”

“And the very day the Nazis lost the spear to General Patton, who later returned it to Vienna, was the very day Hitler committed suicide.”

“That may be true,” Andi said. “But as you said, that’s not this spear here. That’s the one in Vienna.”

“Yes and no. Granted, it is not this spear. However, I do not believe the spear Patton returned to Vienna is the same spear Hitler stole.”

“But you just said—”

“The Nazis were notorious for creating replicas of the treasures they stole. Paintings, statues, religious artifacts—”

“And spears,” Cowboy said.

“That is correct.”

Cowboy stole a glance at Andi, no doubt hoping she noticed his powers of deduction.

She didn’t.

“So if this isn’t the real spear,” she said, “and the one in Vienna isn’t the real one, then—”

There was a knock on the door. Andi stopped as Hartmann raised his hand for us to be quiet. There was another knock. Again he motioned for us to be silent. After what seemed forever, the footsteps faded down the hall.

When they were gone, Hartmann answered Andi's question. "That is the very reason we have summoned your team here."

"Team?" I couldn't help but smirk. "I wouldn't go calling us a team."

The priest looked at me. I held his gaze, but he didn't blink.

He answered. "We have decided you are the ones called to find and retrieve the real Spear of Destiny."

"We?" I said. "Who's *we*?"

He started to answer, then stopped and shook his head.

"And what's all this got to do with the scroll?" I nodded to the scroll sitting on the desk.

"Everything. And more."

"Yeah? Like what?"

"You shall find out soon enough."

I kept staring. There was something about him. He seemed honest enough, I'll give him that, but there was something.

The professor gave a heavy sigh. "So you brought us halfway around the world to find some mythical artifact with a questionable history that may or may not even exist."

"Oh, it exists, James."

The professor continued. "And to what purpose are we retrieving it? To add yet another item to your obscenely bloated Vatican collection?"

"No. To prevent the others from adding it to theirs."

"Others?" Andi said.

The priest nodded. "Hitler is dead, this is true."

"At last, a verified fact," the professor said.

"But there is another force far more powerful." He turned to the professor. "The very one your overinflated sense of logic keeps denying. One whose power grows stronger every day."

"I kinda got lost," Cowboy said. "What force are we talkin' about?"

## THE REVEALING

“You’ve already encountered it. More than once.” He turned to Andi. “On your beaches.”

Andi frowned. “All those dying fish and birds?”

“And earlier. As far back as your first meeting at the Institute.”

“The Psychic Institute?” I asked.

“It was one of their training grounds.”

“Sridhar,” I said. “The kid mentioned something about an organization. What did he call it?”

A moment then Cowboy beamed. “The Gate.”

“That’s right,” Andi said. “The Gate.”

Cowboy beamed brighter. She didn’t notice.

The priest continued, “Should the spear fall into their hands they shall—”

“—rule the world and make us all their slaves.” The professor’s voice dripped with sarcasm. “No doubt ushering in the postapocalyptic nightmare that will destroy all mankind.”

Hartmann looked at him then answered. “No, not yet. They still need to secure the appropriate items and people. But possessing the spear will greatly expedite their plans.”

Daniel gave a start and spun to the door.

“What’s the matter, little guy?” Cowboy said.

The priest lowered his voice and spoke quickly. “We haven’t much time. It is imperative you find the spear and bring it here as quickly as possible.”

“But . . .” Andi frowned. “How? Where do we start? Where do we—”

There was another knock on the door. Hartmann traded looks with his assistant, who nodded and shuffled over to answer it.

Hartmann turned back to Andi and whispered. “The Appian Way. The catacombs.”

“The catacombs,” the professor scoffed. “Aren’t we being just a bit melo—”

More knocking, louder.

The assistant reached for the handle but was a fraction too late. The door flew open and five wannabe linebackers stormed in. We jumped to our feet ready to defend ourselves.

“No,” Hartmann cried. “Do not resist them. Our meeting is over.”

The first fellow grabbed me. I swore and tried to land a good kick, but he saw it coming. The second guy reached for Andi. Big mistake. Cowboy saw it and threw all 275 pounds at him. They crashed to the floor and traded punches.

“Don’t resist,” the priest kept shouting. “We have finished. Do not resist.”

I searched for Daniel who was off to the side, safe.

“Unhand me, you Neanderthal!” the professor was yelling at the third man.

The other two had joined the one fighting Cowboy. Even at that the odds weren’t exactly in their favor.

“Don’t resist! Bjorn Christensen, there is no need to resist.”

The sound of his name brought Cowboy up short. He turned to the priest.

“We have concluded our business. There is no need to resist.”

They got Cowboy to his feet. “Okay, fellas,” he said. “Take it easy. I heard the man, take it easy.”

They guided us to the open door. I looked over my shoulder to see Daniel trailing close behind. We’d barely made it into the hallway before Hartmann called after us. “The feast is in the kitchen.”

I turned to him.

He nodded and repeated, “The feast is in the kitchen.”

His assistant also nodded, then smiled, then shut the door as the big boys escorted us down the hall.