

Chapter I

IT is the 41st Millenium. For more than two hundred centuries, God-Emperor Ronald Tromp has sat immobile in the Oval Office upon the Rich Mahogany Throne of America. He is master of mankind by the will of the Racist party (formerly known as the Republican party), and the great flag of America flies over countless alien landscapes, illuminated by the light of slightly fewer, yet still countless alien suns. His armies are without number as well, expanding outwards from Terra in search of new races to oppress. He is kept alive by the resurrection-magic of the Christians, who use their prayers and strange rituals to channel the tears of the vanquished and oppressed into the twisted theotechnological monstrosity known as the Privilege-Metatron, which serves as the Emperor's heart. Great fleets of warships cross the interstellar void, powered by the raw magical force of Privilege, and guided by the Emperor's prime directive:

"Make America Great Again."

The cybernetically-enhanced warriors of the National Rifle Association form the core of Emperor Tromp's expeditionary forces. They are augmented and assisted by the high priests of the Inquisition, who seek to ferret out atheists, heretics, pagans, LGBTQ+ individuals, and so-called Communists wherever they may be found. To be a woman in such times is to be one amongst untold quadrillions; it is to live in the cruelest, most oppressive, most sexist regime anyone could ever imagine. This is but one tale from this time (amongst untold quadrillions of equally valid and meaningful stories which all deserve to be heard). Forget the power of Tolerance and Empathy, for these principles simply no longer exist. Forget Equality, forget Justice, forget Individuality, forget all Love and Understanding, save that which you hold for the God-Emperor. In this grimdark future, there is only war.

My name is Mr. Brockwood, and I have just returned from a visit with the selfsame God-Emperor which I have previously described. Through a curious string of coincidences that, much like countless things in this world, are too numerous to count, Ronald Tromp is my landlord (in addition to being the God-Emperor of mankind as previously mentioned). In all of the quadrillions of square miles which make up America, I do not believe that I could have found a more luxurious and well-appointed domicile than that within which I presently reside. I of course owe all of my wealth and privilege to my father, as is the custom with my people; it was he, and not I, clearly, who saved the Emperor's half-life during the third great Battle of the Wall in 2017 by leaping in front of a rock thrown by a vicious Illegal. By way of thanking my father for his noble sacrifice, the Emperor injected him with pure Privilege, drawn directly from the Privilege-Metatron. From that day on, the Brockwoods were afforded every opportunity to get ahead, culminating only recently in my invitation to live at Tromp Tower itself, the most luxurious lodging-house in all of the American Empire.

The Tower is isolated from the mighty steel and glass spires of the megacity of Tromptor, built on the last ten-mile stretch of undeveloped land on Terra. It is within these hallowed grounds

that the entirety of my tale shall take place, for it serves as a perfect haven for ones as curmudgeonly appointed as the Emperor and I; quite the pair are we, and a capital fellow He, if you can get past the power-armor and battle-scars, of course. I venture that he little understood the violent patriotism which swelled in my breast as I beheld His eyes withdraw suspiciously beneath the golden mane of His hair as I approached on my BMW Privilege Cycle. "Your Supreme Majesty?" I queried boldly as I dismounted from my steed. His Excellent Eminence nodded curtly in response.

"I am Mr. Brockwood, your new tenant, your Supreme Excellence. I do myself the honour of calling upon you as soon as possible following my arrival from the Colonies, where I have been employed as an Overseer of your most holy work until recently, when I received notice that the Thrushcross Suite had become available for lease. I returned to Terra with all speed in the hopes that I might avail myself of the opportunity to exercise my Privilege in such pleasant surroundings. I do most sincerely hope that my arrival and subsequent presence in this place has not inconvenienced you, your Excellency. I heard over the subspace transmitter that you-"

"The Thrushcross Suite is absolutely available," interrupted the Emperor, golden mane flowing luxuriously in the gentle breeze of the grounds. "However, I must insist on checking your Privilege before I can allow you inside. We have certain standards which must be upheld in order to Make America Great Again."

"Make America Great Again!" I and everybody within earshot echoed in a steamy fervor of patriotism. I proffered my iPrivilege smartwatch to the Emperor, so that He might check my Privilege levels, but to my surprise, a sly smile cracked the living God's face, and He waved the watch away.

"Fuck that Chinese-made crap. I can tell you're a stand-up guy just by looking. Come on in and have a look around!" I briefly considered protesting that China had been a nuclear wasteland since the Consumer Electronics Coup of 2020, and that all products consumed by the Empire's citizens were technically manufactured in America, but noticed a shadowy wrinkle form upon the Holy One's magnanimous brow as the thought crossed my mind. I decided then to refrain, and saw a much gentler, kinder smile form upon the Emperor's face. I had heard rumors of His psychic powers, stretching back to before the attacks on the Twin Towers, which He had predicted in all His great wisdom, but I had never experienced them in person, until now.

He surprised me then, calling upon His great stores of Privilege to activate the hoverjets surgically grafted to His body and hovering on up the drive, calling out in a booming voice as He went, "Jose, take Mr. Brockwood's Privilege Cycle; and bring us a bottle of fresh tears." I was momentarily concerned that this "Jose" represented the sum total of the Emperor's domestic servants, contrary to what I had been told and led to believe, however my fears were soon assuaged, as a veritable horde of rehabilitated Illegals poured forth from behind the various landscape features which enriched the approach to Tromp Tower and made short work of the Emperor's requests. First, they spirited away my very imposing 14-Cylinder diesel Privilege

Cycle, and then they all began to cry, passing a green-glass bottle back and forth among their ranks to catch every last delicious tear. Having overcome my initial doubts, I stepped forward with my faith in the Emperor renewed, and smiled broadly as the ranks of Jose parted like the waves of the Red Sea before Moses at His and my passage.

One step brings us into the grand lobby of Tromp Tower. The floor is made of polished elephant ivory laid over (and this, friends, is not something everyone knows) a floor of layered hardwoods, ebony, red oak, yew, and cypress, to be exact. The symbolism of this elaborate installation is entirely lost on me. Members of the NRA's elite "2nd Amendment Squad" occupy fortified positions placed strategically throughout the entryway. Progress through the entryway is streamlined by a maze of plasmoelectric fences which guide potential supplicants at the Altar of all Privilege towards the TSA checkpoint which blocks passage through the velvet-curtained opening in the solid obsidian wall which forms the rear of the lobby. As we near the front, we see various species of Terrorists lingering near the front of the line. We briefly see, that is, for as they come within reach of the God-Emperor's piercing vision, they are reduced to a fine red mist as they encounter the aethyric field formed by his psychic manspreading.

"Jose!" cried the Emperor in a booming, cybernetically-enhanced voice, "Come clean this up." My naturally superior sense of hearing detected the thundering of a thousand footsteps, as Jose approached at speed. The Emperor ascended to the ceiling using his hoverjets and sat perched upon the diamond chandelier that hung there. As he watched, casually vaping 100mg nicotine juice on an American-made Surric X 200 Watt regulated device, vintage 2015, Jose filled the maze in an orderly fashion and the gore-spattered area was thoroughly scrubbed. As I watched, much to my surprise, I saw that various elements of Jose were actually cleaning the plasmoelectric fences, being reduced to cinders in a matter of picoseconds.

At first, I was horrified, the rampant waste of human life and effort in pursuit of cleanliness following a senseless murder spree seemed somehow...obscene. But then, as I watched on, to my delight I saw the ashes of damaged sub-Joses being swept up in dustpans and carried through the horde, forming the fertilizer for the planters some of their number carried above them on long poles. Time seemed to slow and speed up at the same time, and in my altered vision I saw Jose in all its/their glory. The planters grew various crops, which fed the sub-Joses, who lived in vast cities constructed within bags of holding carried by the working Jose. In these cities, the sub-Jose lived, and loved, and died, and bred. They cycled between our world and the cities in an unending stream of perfect biomechanical productivity. Noticing my interest, the God-Emperor wrenched my corneo-cortical implants open and spiked my mind with knowledge.

Jose, I now know, is the perfect collective intelligence. Following the Invasion of Mexico in 2020, CIA scientists performed unholy experiments on the native population, hybridizing them with construction-nanites and selectively breeding Oppression transmitter/receivers into their brain structures. After thousands of years, Jose had emerged- a symbiotic hive-mind entity wired entirely for self-preservation through production. It all made sense to me now. This was

how Tromp had made Mexico pay for the Great Wall. A stunning triumph of industry, not to mention deal-making.

The world swam before my eyes as I returned from a poorly-defined narrative framing device, and I beheld the way through the gruesome abattoir of the TSA checkpoint standing open to my passage. Emperor Tromp hovered just above my left shoulder, and I saw luminescent filaments of Privilege holding the various torture devices in safe positions, so that we might pass unmolested. I found myself drawn forward, towards the velvet curtain, which swung back and enveloped me in the tender embrace of sleep.

I came to before a great fireplace, well appointed with bric-a-brac themed after the Pacific Northwest. A taxidermied space-moose head hung above it on a 16-foot square titanium plate, which was bolted to the wall with six-inch rivets. The gentle whirring patter of fluid being poured across fine crystal drew my attention back to the room, and its two occupants: the God Emperor Tromp himself, wearing a stunning smoking-jacket, crafted from the finest orichalcum thread, and a towering bitch-woman, clad in nothing but a collar, pouring brandy into the Emperor's snifter with her tail. I raised my eyebrows in surprise, for I would have never before thought that the Emperor's sexual tastes ran in such an esoteric direction. This gentle muscular action was by no means lost upon the Emperor. The bitch, apparently taking notice of some subtle corresponding change in her master's demeanor, let out a low growl, and dropped to all fours. The decanter of brandy tumbled from her tail and onto the floor with a ringing crash. In her natural pose, she was an imposing and deeply primal sight, fangs slick and slavering, eyes flashing red in the firelight. I found my erotic interest subtly and unexpectedly stirred at the sight of the beast's mammary glands hanging low below her stately frame, and I reached out to pat her behind the ears. My caress provoked a long, guttural snarl.

"You'd better let the dog alone," growled the Emperor in unison with his pet, "She's not accustomed to affection- not kept for a pet." I briefly consider remarking upon how his utterance so shattered my description of it that it should never have been recorded in the first place, but choose to press on with the plot instead. "I shall fetch Jose," he said, a twinkle in his eye, before teleporting out of the room and locking it from the outside. The unfortunate by-product of this action was that I was left trapped in the room with the bitch, who had inexplicably begun to perform what appeared to be some kind of interpretive dance routine. As she swayed hypnotically...things...began to swim hypnotically into view around her. More dog-person/things. Hundreds. The space was entirely filled by warm, hairy bodies, writhing about me like a fur coat in heat. Through this hedonistic nightmare, the bitch-woman approached me like an unholy avatar of anthropocanine lust, worming her way through the pulsating pile which covered us on all sides. Not anxious to come into contact with their fluids and fangs, I sat still amid the musky melee; but, imagining they would scarcely understand tacit insults or blows, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the faces in the crowd, not of my own volition, mind, but as a natural and reflexive response to the gratuitous obscenity which I beheld as I surveyed the scene. Some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam that she suddenly broke into a fury and leapt on my lap. I flung her back, and hastened to interpose the en-suite bar between us.

This proceeding aroused the whole hive: more than two-dozen more four-footed fiends, of various sizes, ages, and levels of respective endowment issued from hidden dens to the room in which I stood, figuratively and literally wrestling with my dignity.

As the wave of flesh surrounded me, I felt my heels, the hems of my clothing, and my legs to be the peculiar subjects of the assault; and parrying off the larger combatants as effectually as I could with the poker, retrieved dexterously from the aforementioned well-appointed fireplace, right from beneath the stern and impassive gaze of the space-moose, I succumbed to humility and cried aloud for my God to come save me from this Hell. My faith was well-rewarded, as the God-Emperor burst through the door and to my rescue, sweeping me simultaneously off my feet and out of the lusty jaws of the bitch-woman and her ilk. As we flew through the vast galleries of what I believe to have been the coat closet of Tromp Tower, the Emperor fixed me with his loving gaze and inquired, "What the devil is the matter?"

"What the devil, indeed!" I cried, nearly beside myself with blasphemous fury. "The herd of possessed swine could have had no worse spirits in them than those animals of yours, Your Holy Eminence. You might as well leave a stranger with a brood of tigers!"

To my eternal surprise, the look which came upon the Great God's face at this outburst was not one of justifiable rage and fury, but one of surprise and genuine concern. "My dear man," he began, "I was under the impression that you had gone to College in the early years of the first decade of my reign- traveled back in time, I heard, to study with a particular professor whom you held in high regard, no?"

"Well, yes..." I stammered, "but..."

"I merely assumed that you had contracted a taste for the relationship structures of the time, my good man. The youth of that age were so burnt out on traditional family values that they had to twist them in all sorts of directions to get their rocks off. From what I understand, the welcome I arranged would have been considered tame in that day. I do however cry your pardon for my mistake."

"I..." I stammered, taken entirely aback, "...well, I...it's really no trouble, your Excellence."

"Allow me to make it up to you, my good man. Here at Tromp Tower we have no need for money, no. That is for the Citizens to play with. Here we operate on an entirely different system- the economy of favors."

"The economy of...favors?"

"Yes. Essentially, within these vast and towering walls that pierce the heavens like some kind of mighty drill weilded by a war machine, no money is exchanged for goods and services. Everything you can imagine can be had at no financial cost to you. However, you must be

prepared to pay back the cost of your living here through performing various acts for other inhabitants."

"This is beginning to sound like some kind of dystopian fable," I opined nervously.

"Ah, I can see how you might get that impression. However, since you were inconvenienced by my well-meaning gesture of welcome, you may now draw upon my account of favors, which you will find is quite limitless for one as tame and upstanding as yourself." At this last, we alighted at the door to the Thrushcross Suite. I was quite flummoxed at the fact that we had somehow bypassed the usual methods of transit employed within a hotel, such as stairs and elevators, and had yet somehow ended up many thousands of stories off the ground in a matter of moments, but assuaged my incredulity by reminding myself that I had made my journey in the company of a living God. At that moment, that same God set me down once again on my feet and relinquished his firm, but gentle embrace. I felt a brief moment of incompleteness as I felt his touch recede, but it passed, and I invited him inside.

"Take a glass of wine?" I inquired, unlocking the door with my thumbprint.

"Certainly," he replied, "after you!" He gestured for me to proceed with a majestic sweep of his begauntleted left arm. I entered my suite and began the long trek up the driveway to the house. As I trudged, I saw the Emperor soar majestically above me in the gathering twilight of the room's binary suns, reaching the house well in my advance. As I approached, I saw the lights come on, one by one, and the chimney began to smoke cheerily. By the time I arrived, the Emperor had prepared a beautiful spread of artisan cheeses and candied meats for us to indulge in with our wine. We seated ourselves before my roaring fireplace, and I filled the glasses with a Blandy's madeira of very good vintage. The Emperor broke the ice with a witty remark upon the present lack of a bitch-woman to save me the trouble of pouring, and within a short term He and I relaxed a little in the laconic style of chipping off our pronouns and auxiliary verbs, and lazily worrying a topic of some small interest to the both of us - a discourse upon the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various Alien races which inhabited the American Empire. I found Him to be even more intelligent than I had suspected, for he was able to speak at length and with much expertise regarding all of the various topics upon which our conversation touched. Before I bid him good-night, I was encouraged by our camaraderie to proffer my availability for a similar engagement on the morrow. His Eminence seemed at once to accept and decline my offer to stream video and chill on the morrow, a trick of the wine and his unique diction. I presume. I have made up my mind to go, notwithstanding. It is astonishing how patriotic I feel when I am in his presence.