

## CHAPTER 1



The tour guide had just welcomed his first group of the day to the Mount Herzl National Cemetery when he saw the naked man. Among the bushes at the edge of the Jerusalem Forest, the pale stalker scratched his head and stroked the stately brown beard that fell to his chest.

Despite having been trained to handle this exact situation, the tour guide choked up, and his group of Japanese tourists, with their matching yellow hats and oversized cameras, chattered among themselves and eyed their catatonic guide with concern.

He had approached the rumors with a healthy dose of skepticism at first—after all, dead people didn't spontaneously rise from their graves—until early one morning a fellow guide had discovered a man, naked and alone, among the tombstones of the military cemetery. The former soldier had saved his brothers-in-arms by diving onto a grenade during the Second Lebanon War. A camera crew had arrived to immortalize the moment of his return, and the number of visitors to the park had spiked—resurrection tourists mostly—but after a few days life on Mount Herzl had returned to normal.

Over the following weeks, however, more casualties sprouted from their graves: shell-shocked tank drivers of the Yom Kippur War; commando fighters of the Six Day War; and then the waves of

gaunt Eastern Europeans mowed down during the War of Independence.

The phenomenon, bizarre and surreal by any standard, soon became routine, and they no longer bothered to notify the media when a long-deceased Jew turned up among the hedges. They did notice one trend: as time progressed, the arrivals returned from further back in the past, and the guides placed bets on which of them—if any of them at all—would welcome back to the land of the living the personage enshrined at the heart of the national park.

Today was this guide's lucky day.

"One moment," he told the Japanese tourists in English, as he hurried over to the bushes.

The naked man looked him over with suspicion. *By God, it's him!* the guide thought. He had seen a hundred photos of the man and studied his life in detail, but today the statesman had stepped out of the pages of history—and the grave—and into the present.

The man held his head high, despite his embarrassing state of undress. "*Wo bin ich?*"

"Pardon me?" For the first time since graduating from university, the guide wished that he had studied German as a third language instead of Arabic.

The man sighed and switched to English. "Where am I?"

The guide delivered the good news with glee. "In Jerusalem, sir, the capital of Israel—the Jewish State!"

A satisfied smile curled the man's lips and a fire burned in his dark eyes. "*We did it!*" He clenched a victorious fist in the air. Then he winced and massaged his temple. "*Mein kopf!*"

Remembering his training, the guide reached into his shoulder bag and tore open the DBS First Responder Kit. He helped the man into the thick spa gown with the words Dry Bones Society sewn onto the back and then handed him the two Acamol tablets and the small bottle of mineral water.

The man popped the pills and washed them down, then blinked as cameras flashed. The Japanese had caught up and were documenting the historic event.

“Friends,” the guide said to his audience. “I present to you Mr. Theodore Herzl, the Visionary of the State!”

Herzl stepped out from the bushes, bowed his head, and posed with the guide for the cameras.

Then he gazed at the sculpted gardens and stone paths. “What is this place?”

“Mount Herzl, the national cemetery named after you. Your tomb is over there, in the center.” The guide pointed. “I’ll show you.”

Herzl slipped on the pair of spa slippers, also courtesy of the DBS, and they walked along a path of rock slabs.

“When was the State established?”

“1948.”

“So late?”

“The road to nationhood was long and winding, but I think you’ll be proud of the result. The land has thrived, the desert bloomed. Jews have returned from all over the world. We have an Israeli government and army, technology and culture.”

“And yet you do not speak German?”

“Hebrew is the official language, along with Arabic and English. English has become the language of science and culture.”

“English? How strange.”

“Times have changed. You died over a hundred years ago.”

“A hundred years? Incredible!”

They arrived at the large central plaza of white Jerusalem stone and approached the prominent slab of black granite in the center of a circle of grass. The name Herzl was etched into the tombstone.

Herzl sucked in a deep breath. A summer breeze ruffled his hair as he stared at his own grave. Tearing up, he turned to the guide and shook his hand. “I thank you for fulfilling my wishes and bringing my remains to the Jewish State. But how did you revive me?”

Once again, the guide leaned on his training. The instructor from the Dry Bones Society had warned the guides not to overwhelm the new arrivals with information. “You have many questions,” he said, using the instructor’s words. “We will answer them in time as best we can.”

“A hundred years,” Herzl repeated. “My children must have passed on already. Their children too. Tell me—what role did they play in the founding of the State?” A hopeful smile made his lips tremble. “Was my son the first chancellor?”

The guide swallowed hard. He had hoped to avoid that topic.

“Tell me, please,” Herzl continued. “Are they buried here as well?”

The guide grasped at the shred of positivity. “Yes, they are. Over there.”

Herzl gripped the guide by the shoulders. “Show me!”

This was a very bad idea but how could he refuse the Father of the Jewish State?

He led the newly resurrected visionary along another stony path. He needed to call the Dry Bones Society to arrange a pickup but stopped himself. The instructor had warned against using modern technology such as mobile phones, which might disorientate the new arrival.

He stopped before a row of three plaques. “Here they are. Paulina, Trude, and Hans.”

Herzl appraised the markers in solemn silence. “The dates,” he said, startled. “Paulina and Hans died in the same year—and so young!”

The guide hesitated. “Paulina suffered from depression. She overdosed on heroin. Hans shot himself on the day of her funeral.”

“Depression,” Herzl muttered. “The scourge of our family. And little Trude? Died 1943. Did she, at least, live a happy life? And why does she not have a gravestone?”

He was right. Behind the plaque with Trude’s details, and between the two large rectangular gravestones of her siblings, lay a gaping empty space.

The guide shook his head. He had already said too much.

“Tell me!” Veins throbbed on the forehead of the resurrected statesman.

“We don’t have her remains. She died in the Holocaust.”

“Holocaust? What Holocaust?”

“During World War Two.”

“A world war—and two of them? Please continue. I must know.”

There was no holding back now. “The Germans and their collaborators systematically murdered Jews throughout Europe.”

“The Germans? If you had told me the French I would have believed you, but the Germans? How many Jews died?”

“A great many.”

“Tell me, boy—a thousand, ten thousand?”

“Six million.”

Herzl ran his fingers through his mane of hair. “Dear God. 1943. But you said that the State was established in 1948—only five years later. Five years too late! We didn’t work fast enough.”

He lurched backward and the guide steadied him. He called on two of the Japanese who had followed them to support the distraught man. He should never have shown him the Herzl family plot.

“Wait here, sir. I’m going to call for help and I’ll get you something to eat.”

He dashed off toward the snack store and called the Dry Bones Society on his way. A team of their volunteers was on the way.

Theodore Herzl himself! The guide’s skin prickled all over. The recent resurrection had raised hopes for the dawn of a new utopian era, and who better to lead the nation into a brighter future than the spiritual father of the modern Jewish State? The Visionary of the State had returned with perfect timing.

When the guide returned to the Herzl family plot with a handful of Mars bars and a covered paper cup of sugared tea, however, Herzl had vanished.

“Where is he?”

The Japanese chattered excitedly and pointed toward the forest. The guide shielded his eyes with his hand and scanned the thick press of trees. In the distance, between the tall trunks, a bearded man in a white gown sprinted and disappeared.

## CHAPTER 2



“We should set a date for our wedding,” Moshe Karlin’s wife said as she drove her white Kia Sportage down Emek Refaim Street early Tuesday morning.

“Right,” said Moshe Karlin, who sat in the passenger seat.

Outside the window, Egged buses hissed and growled through the heart of Jerusalem’s German Colony. Cars honked their horns as commuters rushed to their jobs.

Ordinarily, a man was not required to marry his wife twice, but these were not ordinary times and, technically, their first marriage had terminated with his death.

“This time,” Galit continued, “I think we should try a different venue.”

Moshe agreed. Three months ago, Moshe had awoken in the Mount of Olives Cemetery to discover that his best friend, Avi, had invaded his home and taken over his family business. Make that *ex*-best friend. Moshe’s struggle to win back his life had culminated in a dramatic attempt to stop Avi from marrying Galit at the Ramat Rachel Hotel in South Jerusalem, the very same venue where Moshe and Galit had first tied the knot. The time had come to paint new memories on a fresh canvas.

“What do you think of Mamilla?” Galit asked.