



BOOK 2: A LAYOVER IN DOPPELGÄNGER-VILLE

#HEART'S JOURNEY HOME

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Chapter One

They sat across from each other in silence. Tori found herself casting inquisitive glances at the strange Rachael double who was looking at her.

At first Tori wouldn't come inside the house, preferring to walk around the courtyard area, muttering in a strange language. Touching her head, she stumbled to her knees and the woman ran to her; speaking softly but firmly while pointing to the door of the house. She stepped away from Tori, giving her the wide berth she seemed to prefer until she finally relented and came inside.

"This is tore up," Tori muttered under her breath, allowing the woman to lead her into the small room just to the right of the open door. Inside were two high-backed couches along two opposite walls, four spaced chairs and two low marble tables. A large colorful rug covered the tiled floor. The woman motioned for Tori to sit in one of the chairs.

The woman was a dead ringer for her father's the live-in girlfriend Rachael Cleary. Following the death of her mother, Tori and her archeologist father left the country traveling around the world on archeological digs. He met Rachael while on a dig in Italy and when they returned home Rachael was with them. Tori waged war on the woman who would dare try to take her mother's place and the nearly nine years Rachael had lived with them was tumultuous and filled with strife. It was only recently that Tori had begun to appreciate how much Rachael took care of her, especially with her father gone so often on digs and treasure hunts.

"I gotta get out of here. I gotta get home." Tori said as her eyes filled with tears.

The woman said something Tori couldn't understand.

"AJ, Kalea, what happened to you?"

She buried her face in her hands. Her head still hurt and crying wasn't making it any better. A few moments later she heard the woman place something on the table. She looked up to see a cup in front of her.

What was happening to her? she thought. Just a short time ago, she was with her friends from California, who all came from wealthy families like her. They were walking through an archeological dig in Jerusalem that her father was overseeing when there was a cave-in. But that was 2009, and everything around her seemed as if it was from a distant time; an era from the distant past.

Tori took the ceramic cup, feeling the heat radiating from it. She looked at the greenish liquid and then at the woman. The woman tapped her own forehead, suggesting it would help Tori with her headache. Still keeping her guard about her, Tori took a sip. It was strong and didn't taste very good, but the woman seemed pleased she was drinking it. Tori took a few more sips

and after a few minutes the pain started to go away. She placed the cup down and decided to try to communicate with her.

“Rachael?”

The woman shook her head.

“Yudith.” she said pointing to herself.

“Well Yudith, you have Rachael’s face,” Tori said motioning to her own face. The woman pointed to her.

“Tori.”

“Tori,” she said with a familiar thick accent.

“AJ, Kalea, the people who were with me?”

The woman shook her head.

“Where are they?!”

The woman was startled when Tori raised her voice.

“Where are my clothes?” Tori asked pulling on the tunic she was wearing. The woman pointed to her torn and tattered clothes lying in a pile on a box against the wall.

“Where are the others?” Tori asked her.

The woman pointed to her.

“No, the others,” Tori said pointing to herself then motioning with her fingers – one, two.

“*No others living.*”

Tori sat back in the chair, stunned. She understood that.

Tori thought a moment then spoke,

“Eifoh hachi chaver?” *where is best friend?*

The woman’s eyes widened and she began speaking words quickly. It suddenly dawned on Tori; the woman was speaking Hebrew. It appeared to be an older, more primitive form of the language, but it was Hebrew nonetheless.

“Young like me dead?” Tori asked speaking the Hebrew slowly.

“No. Men only. We think you are daughter to one, bringing food.” Tori let herself breathe a sigh of relief. Perhaps AJ and Kalea had gotten out after all and were home safe and sound.

“What is this City?”

“Yerushalayim.”

“You’re saying Jerusalem. The old Hebrew alphabet doesn’t have the letter J, instead you use the letter Y. This is crazy.” Tori said to herself. “What were the men doing in the tunnel?”

“Digging away stone for building project.”

Tori thought about the question before asking it.

“What year is this?”

The woman shook her head not understanding. Tori said every version of the word “year” she could think of in Hebrew. She even came up with some Yiddish words, but the woman still didn’t seem to understand her.

“Tell me your timing?”

The woman thought a moment, then understanding she said –

“Nisan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz, Av, Elul, Tishrei,”

“Heshvan, Chislev, Teveth, Shevat and Adar.” Tori finished for her.

The woman smiled. She and the strange girl were finding a way to communicate.

“This is tore up,” Tori said in English, shaking her head.

They were reciting the Hebrew calendar. Tori knew the Jewish months from Bottie’s Synagogue where they were teaching her Hebrew. Part of her classes involved a study of the Torah and these words were part of the instruction. They were the names of the months and they made up the Jewish calendar year.

Tori thought about how to convey the concept of “year” to the woman.

“Nisan to Adar, one year.” Tori said holding up one finger. “Nisan to Adar, two year. Nisan to Adar, three year.” she said holding up three fingers. Tori took a deep breath.

“Is the Temple complete or is there construction?”

“There is yet construction.”

“How many year, one, two, three, is the Temple being built?”

The woman thought.

“Constructing yet forty-sixth year.”

“Forty-six years,” Tori said to herself. “Okay, think, remember, remember. Herod started building the Temple around 19 BC. He’s been working on it now for forty-six years.”

After a few minutes Tori shook her head.

“BC, AD. Yours is the Hebrew calendar but mine is the Gregorian. I don’t understand enough about yours to match the timing of it to mine.”

She slumped back in the chair and closed her eyes.

“How do I get out of this?”

After a while Tori stood and walked out of the room and stood in the open doorway, looking out onto the home’s courtyard. Though it was fenced completely around with a high stone wall and large heavy wooden gate, she knew what lay beyond. And though she couldn’t figure out what time period she was in, Tori knew she was far from home.

“Well, one of two things is going on,” she said to herself. “Either I’m still inside the tunnel knocked out cold and I’m dreaming all this, or Kalea was right and I fell through some kind of space-time warp continuum and now I’m in the past.”

The woman stepped to Tori.

“Have you family here?”

Tori shook her head.

“I am alone,” Tori said in Hebrew.

“Then you will stay here with me.”

Tori turned to the woman with Rachael’s face. Her eyes watered again and she was more afraid then she could ever remember. As if sensing Tori’s distress, the woman put her hand on Tori’s shoulder.

“There is safety here with me.”

The woman smiled at her and Tori believed her as if Rachael had spoken the words to her.

Tori folded her arms and gathered her resolve.

“I will stay with Yudith.”