



LIFE BY APOTHECARY



DR. WALTER L. ROSADO

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OTHER TITLE(S) BY
DR. WALTER L. ROSADO:

*Without Fear: A Soldier's Memoir of Sacrifice, Love, Tragedy,
and Triumph in Central Iraq (2017)*

CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	9
THE DOCTOR'S FOREWORD: A WARNING.....	13
LEO'S PRAYER.....	19
PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL	21
PART 1: THE DEVIL, THE SOLDIER, AND THE DRUNKEN GIRL.....	23
THE BOY AND THE WAR	27
THE "REAL" JOB.....	33
THE GIRL AT THE FRONT DESK.....	39
THE LOVE LOST	57
THE BULLET AND THE BANG	65
CARNEGIE'S INTRODUCTION.....	77
THE MISSION.....	83
THE APOTHECARY.....	91
THE ORDER.....	95
THE PINKERTONS	101
THE ELEVENTH KINGDOM	105

SIX	113
THE PHARMACY.....	117
PONTIAC’S APPRENTICE	123
THE PRIVATE ARMY	131
SECOND CHANCES.....	147
THE DEVIL’S LAMENT	157
THE GREAT BATTLE	165
REBIRTH	171
PART 2: THE BEGINNING OF THE END	185
KILLING CARNEGIE.....	187
A VETERAN NAMED JACK	197
THE AIRSHIP GENERAL BRADDOCK.....	205
THE LADY OF THE LAKE	215
CLASH OF THE TITANS	231
THE LOCOMOTIVE	239
FOOD FOR THOUGHT	245
ALLEGIANCE	255
OUTBREAK.....	263
REVELATIONS	279
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	297

*Dedicated to all the depressed dreamers that
struggle daily to improve the world.*



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SPECIAL THANKS ARE OWED to those that believed in me and encouraged me to finish this book. This includes my family, my close friends, my fellow military veterans and my colleagues. When I told people that I was writing a historical fantasy in which Pittsburgh's Duquesne Incline was literally a time machine many thought that I was joking, or crazy, or both, but for the few that took me seriously thank you, I genuinely appreciate it and I hope you find this novel enjoyable.

I also want to thank God. I said a few things in this book in regards to religion that, though designed to spark interest in my faith and challenge preconceptions, may seem disrespectful to some. As a devout Roman Catholic, I promise this was not my intention. I owe all that I have in this world to my God and my relationship with Jesus Christ. If you, as a reader, find yourself interested in the religious stories I drew from, or want to learn more about Catholicism, I'd strongly encourage you to seek out and speak to a priest or do additional research. I know they would be happy to hear from you. The truth of the death and resurrection of Christ is more powerful than any story any author could ever come up with, certainly including myself.

*“Keep life moving forward, looking backward is
only for time travelers.”*

- Rachel O. Washington

Life
by
Apothecary

THE DOCTOR'S FOREWORD: A WARNING



IT WAS AN UNUSUALLY DARK, warm summer day along the north shore of Pittsburgh. Earlier that morning I had checked the weather forecast but rain hadn't been anticipated. I was walking on a concrete pathway, a trail alongside the Allegheny River. The air smelled of burnt almonds and the winds were steadily intensifying, pushing warm air in waves across my face. There were a few drops of water mixed into the wind and, fearing that a thunderstorm would soon roll in, I increased my pace. I had hoped to find shelter soon rather than getting wet. The air felt chalky as it entered and exited my lungs. I wasn't in as good a shape as I had been just a few years prior. Working a desk job was starting to wear on me – hence my trying to spend more time outdoors, getting back into shape. I didn't want to get rained on, and the weather looked simply devilish. I was far from my car but the Clemente Bridge wasn't too far ahead. I knew that I could make it to the cover of the bridge.

A few homeless men had gathered under the bridge that my path would intersect. There was no avoiding them. They were taking shelter from the weather that seemed guaranteed to arrive any second. As I passed, one of them, filthy, unkempt, and sad looking, said something to me.

“No Slack, Soldier.” The statement caught me off guard. He had recognized the logo on the T-shirt I was wearing. It had an army seal on it, a unit that I had once deployed with to Iraq as a National Guardsman, and he had called out the unit’s slogan correctly. At the time, I was a veteran myself so, despite the looming storm, I paused to speak to the man. Stopping to speak wasn’t something that I would have typically done, but in my mind this man was potentially one of my brothers – a fellow veteran who may have fallen on hard times. He deserved a chat, if nothing more. I figured that in a worst-case scenario I could stand under

that bridge for a while. If I was lucky the storm might be a quick one.

At that point, the rain slammed around me, and I sat next to him under the bridge, taking cover. I was glad to be dry. My Fitbit electronic wristwatch probably cost more than all of this man’s possessions. The thought made me feel bad, guilty. It was eerie. We spoke. He told me of his military service. His speech was slurred. I thought that he may have been drunk, or high, or both, or worse. His mental state didn’t matter so much to me – I expected that there were probably hardships that had led to his current predicament that would make vices and escape attractive to him. Convinced that he was an authentic combat veteran, I reached into my pocket and pulled out a ten-dollar bill – it was all the cash I had on me. I handed it to him. I wished that I had more to give him. In exchange, he offered to tell me his story. I accepted. I didn’t fully understand at that time what I had agreed to.

The homeless vet explained to me, which made little sense at the time; “Every nightmare and every legend is an old god, fighting to remain relevant while at the same time evading the one true god bent on their destruction, the god of Abraham and David.” His tone was low and steady, and caused goosebumps to rise on my arms. I wasn’t sure if it was the words, or the belief that I was standing next to someone who was potentially unstable that unsettled me. I considered making a quick escape, but the thunderstorm had intensified and by that time I felt committed to hearing the tale.

What followed was an outstanding story. I’ve captured it here in this manuscript. I did my best to remember the details. The story will likely sound unbelievable to you. It sounded that way to me as well, but when I left the bridge and my new friend that day I did so believing that every word he had spoken was, on some level, true. If it wasn’t true, then at least this homeless man seemed to believe it. The story was remarkable enough that I felt it had to be recorded. It had to be passed on.

According to the homeless veteran every fantastical story you’ve ever heard about magic, or aliens, or monsters, or dark figures of faith, or Native American folklore, or numerology was based on a truth which we, human beings, have largely repressed over the course of our evolution. Every nightmare that we experienced when we were fast asleep was tied to this.

When I took this story to traditional publishing houses I received one major piece of feedback, which was that this story crossed over too many different genres. I didn’t care at all about that. I didn’t want to change the story. I wanted to share the story exactly as I remember it – exactly as it was told to me, and to honor that

veteran's life or at least his life as he believed it. If it was perceived as mad ramblings, then so be it. People needed to know.

After our meeting, I returned to the bridge on many occasions, but the homeless veteran who introduced himself to me as Dean Watson was never there. I never knew what came of him. I never saw him again. I wrote *Life by Apothecary* in a period of only eleven days in the month of November in the year 2016. I'm sure that, as a Roman Catholic, it is sacrilegious to admit, but writing this came so easily that it felt divinely inspired. Recalling every word and every detail was not possible. There was much to this story that I wished I knew more about. If you are from, have visited, or plan to visit Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania you will hear names and see landmarks that interweave with Dean's story. There were controversial historical statements that seemed unlikely, but upon closer research were indeed possible, if only remotely so.

What genre does Dean Watson's life fit into? What genre does anyone's life fit into? People are not books. There is more to them than that. People are complex, animalistic, imperfect beings and their stories oftentimes show this. No biography ever written has been truly complete. There is just too much to a person. But what about Dean? Where would his story fit if placed on a library bookshelf? If I had to pick one place for Dean Watson it wouldn't be history, or science fiction, or fantasy, or horror, or mythology. If I had to pick one I would call this a love story. Dean served his county proudly, but it wasn't his patriotism, but rather his love for a woman that changed his life forever.

You probably won't believe what you read here, but pieces of it may start to make sense as you notice sequences of numbers, strange weather, or odd happenings in your own life. You may start to see patterns in music, and you could even begin to miss

people that you never remember having met. There is a chance that you are already noticing these things, like waking up from a dream. I'm sure it sounds unbelievable, but nonetheless this story is true. I can't comment as to why Dean acted the way that he did, or what the turn of events was that led him to squat under a bridge next to me in a rainstorm.

I've thought about my own life in a different way since our meeting. Dean and I were very similar in many ways. He reminded me of an older version of myself. This scared me as I contemplated the ways that he and I were different and wondered what it would take to put me in his position. Was it a lot or a little bit? I was fortunate in my life to get "lucky". I was blessed with growing up in a good area, an education, and a job. I was a white male in a society that generally showed white men favor. The cosmic lottery seemed to favor me.

Dean showed me a new way to look at the city and the world that I already lived in, and I am forever in his debt. Before you read any further – a warning. Some doors, once opened, cannot ever be closed again. To believe this story is a choice, one that you will not likely make. If, however, you do choose to read on, embrace the story, and believe in the spirit of it, then your life will be forever changed. A door will open. I cannot say with any real confidence whether opening this door will bless or curse your life. I'm still trying to figure out how it has impacted my own, hence the warning.

If you still feel the desire and host the courage to proceed, then I wish you well and I wish you luck.

Proceed with caution, and an open mind.

-The Doctor

LEO'S PRAYER



POPE LEO XII HAD a terrifying vision, one that shook him to the core, a vision of the devil openly threatening his church. The date was October 13, 1884. It was thirty-three years to the day before what the Roman Catholics call the Miracle of the Sun in Fatima, where a vision of the Virgin Mother appeared and the sun seemingly danced in the sky. Numbers and history matter. The Pope had just finished the mass in a dark and crowded Vatican Chapel. The chapel smelled good, incense infused with roses. There were cardinals, priests, and nuns in attendance. Facing the altar, the pope froze, standing completely still. He turned white as a cloud and looked as though he was going to vomit. Concerned onlookers ran up to him, shaking him and trying to stir him from his trance. Nothing they did made any difference. The pope remained in this state for eleven minutes.

When he awoke he looked around, terrified, trying to take in what had just happened. He rushed immediately to his chambers and demanded something to write with. He described what had happened to him. He explained that there were two voices that spoke from the altar. One was peaceful and heavenly; pre-

sumably God. The other voice was deep, raspy and guttural, presumably the devil.

The guttural voice of Satan: "I can destroy your Church."

The soft voice of our Lord: "You can? Then go ahead and do so."

Satan: To do so, I need more time and more power."

Our Lord: "How much time? How much power?"

Satan: "75 to 100 years, and a greater power over those who will give themselves over to my service."

Our Lord: "You have the time, you will have the power. Do with them what you will."

Immediately following his observation of this conversation, Pope Leo sat at his desk, and in only eleven minutes wrote a prayer – the Prayer to Saint Michael. Saint Michael was God’s most powerful angel. In the Bible, when Satan declared his war on God, it was Michael who defeated the devil and expelled him from Heaven. The Church often called upon Saint Michael to defend against spiritual attacks.

The Pope instructed that his new prayer be offered after all low masses, “I have faith. I hope that this prayer will stop the beast, or at least slow his advance.”

PRAYER TO
SAINT MICHAEL
THE ARCHANGEL



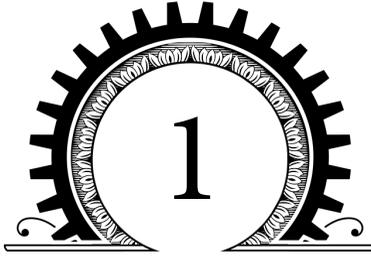
St. Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.

Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,

O Prince of the heavenly hosts,
by the power of God,
thrust into hell Satan,
and all the evil spirits,
who prowl about the world
seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

PART



THE DEVIL, THE SOLDIER,
AND THE DRUNKEN GIRL

PEOPLE DON'T BELIEVE in magic anymore. God replaced magic. Science replaced God. Emotion replaced Science. Throughout it all, love remained a constant, but sometimes love was hard to define, and seemingly impossible to find. Love likes to hide. It hides in music, in art, or even in a smile. Love waits for the one worthy enough to seek it out. The definition of what love is varied based on the person trying to find it. Dean Watson never knew love. Life was cruel to Dean.

When he was a kid he was anti-social. He came from a broken home and had a strong lisp in the early years of his life. As a baby, he played alone on a stained carpet in a tobacco smoke filled room in front of a nineteen-inch television screen.

In his school years he would be ridiculed for not wearing brand name clothing. Russell Athletic sweatpants from the Goodwill and shirts with holes were his uniform. Growing up was painful. He didn't have many friends, and he never really dated. His childhood was tough. He was bullied and abused. He did not have the love from a parent, a family member, or a pet in the way that most in his situation do. Still, he believed that people were good. He didn't get along with people in general. They had always been mean to him. He felt like no one believed in him, and so he worked hardest when proving his doubters wrong, being motivated by his own insecurities – there were many. He grew up in a world that was violent and cold. His was a world of terrorism and political correctness – a world without honor. When he was in high school things began to explode, sadly and literally. A global terrorist organization began attacking major U.S. cities while inciting violence around the world – the rise of the Radical Islamic State. What he did have, against all odds, was a strong sense of right and wrong.

Dean who played violin in the high school orchestra, devoured books, and spent almost all of his time outside of school by himself, believed in magic, God, science, and in love even though he had not personally experienced any of those things in his life. He believed what he read in his books. After his high school graduation, the thin Dean, who was about five feet ten inches tall, with flowing brown hair, thick rimmed tortoise shell glasses, orb-like blue eyes, and a timid personality enlisted in the army, volunteering for ranger training. He was not a confident person, but desperately wanted to be a part of something

greater than himself. He was eager to fight, but more than that he wanted to find someone worth fighting for.

Soon he would embark on a great adventure across space and time, all for a girl that would teach him, perhaps inadvertently, that some people are worth fighting for, but that some battles cannot be won.



THE BOY AND THE WAR

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DEAN WATSON had been in the army for less than two years and had spent most of that time training. He went from boot camp and advanced individual training to airborne school before heading to the army's ranger school. At ranger school and beyond, at the pathfinder course and the mountain warfare course, he had done well at some of the military's toughest schools and now found himself deployed to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, he had thought, would have been a beautiful place to visit if it weren't for the war. His living area was made largely of sandbags and plywood. He didn't have to sleep on a cot, but instead had an actual bedframe and mattress. His base had recently been upgraded to have running water and

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



DR. WALTER L. ROSADO is the author of *Life by Apothecary* and *Without Fear; A Soldier's Memoir of Sacrifice, Love, Tragedy and Triumph in Central Iraq*. He is a decorated U.S. Army combat veteran of overseas military operations under the Global War on Terrorism to include the Iraq Campaign. His military awards include the Army Combat Action Badge and the Army Commendation Medal. Dr. Rosado currently works as a change management consultant for a major healthcare technologies consulting firm. He holds a Ph.D. from Robert Morris University, a M.S. from Duquesne University, and a B.A. from Thiel College. He resides at his home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.