

## SYNOPSIS

### The main plotline:

The main character, Ronalds Bergs, returns at long last to his native Riga. His life to date has been spent firstly as a professional basketball player and then as bodyguard to a Russian oligarch; he was shot in the line of duty and is still recovering from his injury. It's high time for him to embark on a more peaceful life! In a department store, he runs into a former schoolmate. The two of them used to be inseparable and decide their chance encounter deserves a celebratory drink. Bergs learns that his old friend is now a professor and research scientist, working on an international, European project investigating old maps and researching ancient castle mounds and buildings.

A few days later, he comes across an obituary in the paper. His friend, the professor, has unexpectedly died. The funeral is terrible. He is accosted by a bizarre young woman, Linda, who appears to have even less taste than the funeral ceremony. Claiming to be the late professor's assistant, she insists that they talk. It turns out to be serious – she reveals that his friend committed suicide while under the effect of drugs, the use of which appears strange due to his diagnosis of diabetes. And besides, what was the professor looking for on the abandoned skyscraper construction site, so far from his own home? After his meeting with Linda, Bergs is assaulted in the entrance hall of his own apartment block; hit over the head he loses consciousness. When he comes round, he finds himself in an abandoned factory, tied to a chair. In front of him, tied up likewise, is the professor's assistant, whom he had no wish of ever seeing again. Their abductors, two sadists, try to squeeze information concerning a secret map out of them, supposedly left to them by the professor. Bergs manages to break free and makes short work of his abductors, making his escape with Linda through the night streets of Riga, still having no clear idea as to what is going on. Shortly afterwards, he discovers an

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encrypted email from the professor in his inbox which discloses that confidential information is awaiting him, hidden in their secret childhood hidey-hole in the attic of the Riga apartment where he used to live.

Benefitting from a head start over his pursuers, Bergs goes straight to the hiding place. The message he finds there reveals how both he and the professor's assistant have been dragged unwittingly into a terrifying adventure first set in motion centuries ago.

Before his murder, the professor had chanced upon part of a map disclosing the whereabouts of the hidden, sacred relics of the Teutonic Order. His killers had found out. Bergs and Linda now have to join forces in an attempt to come through this adventure alive, setting their differences aside. No option remains open to them but to flee their pursuers in search of the two other missing parts of the map. The path takes them through the Nordic states to Venice where, staging a perfect robbery in Saint Mark's Basilica, they attain the second part of the map, then on to Rome before returning to the ancient ruined walls of Courland Castle where the final, decisive events unfurl.

The parallel plotline:

The capital of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, Acre, is threatened with attack. The three ancient knightly orders; the Templars, the Teutonic Order and the Maltese, realise that their services are no longer required either by Europe or the Vatican. So as not to lose their influence, the Orders agree to withhold from the Pope certain relics in their possession. Mentioned in the Book of Moses, the Templars had come across these relics at the excavation site of Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It is decided that the relics be hidden in such a way that the Pope's spies are unable to trace them, all indication of their whereabouts being left in the form of fragmented maps hidden in different places. The Vatican will have great difficulty explaining to the faithful why God has entrusted these relics, of such profound significance to Christians, with anyone other than the Church, thus forcing the Pope's hand into

considering the Orders' demands. The Teutonic Order conceals their part of the relics in a newly built fortress wall in *Terra Mariana*. After a fruitless, centuries-old search for any trace of the relics, the Vatican eventually sets the question aside, believing the maps to have been destroyed when the French king settled his accounts with the Templars, to whom he owed vast sums of money.

It is not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that researchers from the German *Ahneenerbe* Institute happen upon traces of the relics again. Otto Rahn comes close to solving the puzzle but is unwilling to collaborate with the Nazi regime and, following an order from Himmler, is involved in a fatal accident. Other people are then entrusted with the quest for the relic but fail to decipher Rahn's code. Only at the very end of the war does one of Himmler's henchmen discover that the Teutonic Order's part of the relic is to be found in Courland. To prevent the relic from falling into the Allied Forces' hands, Himmler orders his henchman's murder.

Most of the archives from the *Ahneenerbe* Institute end up in Russia, however, it transpires that the most important documents are all missing. A young military expert, whilst going through the papers, in a flash of genius, conceives that the destruction of the walls of Jericho, as described in the Book of Moses, may have been assisted by means of a man-made earthquake. He proposes the construction of a mechanism operating on low frequency oscillations capable of creating artificial earthquakes. His proposition comes at just the right time, since it coincides with the Cold War period when the super powers are struggling to maintain their underground nuclear experiments secret and which global seismographic stations are able to detect. The project is successful; its aim is that of creating an even more powerful device, effectively capable of provoking an earthquake anywhere in the world. In the Eighties, experiments come to a standstill due to their unpredictable side effects. Activating the device sets off a devastating earthquake in Central Asia and an entire city is wiped out. The eagle-eyed chiefs of Soviet General Headquarters, aware that a report detailing exactly what happened has

been placed in the US President's hands, and fearing Gorbachev's wrath, liquidate the device, its creator and all the scientists involved.

In the Nineties, the son of the device's creator uncovers technical drawings for the device hidden in the wall of his sauna house. He leaves the military and sets up his own business. The company is successful and expands into a corporation with head offices in Frankfurt. The business empire has a legitimate business division which acts as a cover for criminal affairs: smuggling as well as arms, drugs and people trafficking. For some time, the son has been trying to recreate his father's device, applying all manner of modern technological know-how, but it's still out of control. He therefore gives up on the idea, focusing his interest instead on the artefacts mentioned in the Book of Moses. Hackers working for his corporation devise a special surveillance program which installs a virus into thousands of computers worldwide belonging to enthusiasts and scholars of the artefacts. The virus program, which reacts to certain keywords, bears no fruit for a number of years but then, one fine day, out of the blue, he is notified that the system has detected the grey code. A match has been found in online correspondence between a professor in Riga and another in Berlin. A group of homicidal heavies thrash the required information out of the two professors. The group of three, their leader having grown up during the demise of the USSR and heavily influenced in his youth by the ideals of the National Bolsheviks and their followers, is however lacking in intellect and also far too brutal. They go too far and murder the professors; the map then lands in the hands of the former basketball player and the murdered professor's assistant, who succeed in escaping from the killers. The hunt, both for the relics and the protagonists, is under the surveillance of the secret services- charged with keeping the organised crime empire under observation and also fully cognizant of the knowledge held by its leader.