



The poster features two versions of a man. In the background, a man in a dark coat holds a glowing red staff with a bright light and sparks at the top. In the foreground, a man in a brown jacket and sunglasses holds a similar staff, with red energy swirling around it. The background is dark with faint circular patterns and floating red sparks.

LIGHT OF THE LAST



CHUCK BLACK

LIGHT
OF THE LAST

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LIGHT OF THE LAST



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LIGHT OF THE LAST

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A NOTE FROM CHUCK BLACK

This is a speculative work of fiction not intended to confuse or diminish the truth of God's holy and inspired Word. Where the Bible is silent, I have taken literary freedom to construct a fictional account of the angels of heaven and their association and interaction with each other and with humanity. The intent of this book is, through fiction, to open our eyes to the reality of spiritual warfare as described in Scripture. I have made every attempt not to contradict the Bible in any way but rather to use it as a foundation upon which to inspire serious contemplation about our eternity and ultimately to give honor and glory to God. The Readers Guide that follows will carefully delineate the truth of God's Word from the fiction of this story. Please take the time to read and understand it so that there is no confusion regarding solid biblical doctrine.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Drew Carter	main human character
Validus	main angel character, last angel created

HUMANS

Sydney Carlyle	main female character
Kathryn Carter	Drew's mother
Jake Blanchard	Drew's mentor & stepfather
Benjamin Berg	friend of Drew Carter; technical genius
Piper	member of Ben's tech team
Ridge	member of Ben's tech team
Crypt	member of Ben's tech team
Jester	member of Ben's tech team
Thomas Reed	FBI agent
Mr. Ross	mysterious observer
Aashif Hakeem Jabbar	leader of the Islamic Global Alliance (IGA)

VALIDUS'S WARRIORS

Persimus	gifted at human translation
Sason	gifted at mass translation
Jayt	gifted at weapons
Brumak	gifted at strength
Crenshaw	gifted at prophecy
Rake	gifted at speed

GUARDIAN

Tren	assigned with Validus to protect Drew Carter
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ARCHANGELS

Michael	leader of the Warrior Order
Gabriel	leader of the Messenger Order
Raphael	second to Gabriel in the Messenger Order

ANGEL COMMANDERS

Danick	general of the second-generation of warrior angels
Brandt	great leader of first- and second-generation warriors

FALLEN COMMANDERS

Niturni	former close friend of Validus
Zurock	a regional commander on the West Coast
Tinsalik Barob	rebel Fallen



INTERROGATION

Drew Carter sat in a white room on a white chair in front of a white table. His hands were handcuffed to a bar in the middle of the table.

A hundred images and emotions flashed through his mind. He had saved Sydney, Shana, and Micah, but he was worried for Reverend Ray Branson. No one would tell him anything about the reverend's condition. He cringed at the thought that the kindest man he had ever known might be dead . . . dead because of him.

Drew tried to clear his mind. It took a few moments, but slowly he pushed his emotions down. He closed his eyes and welcomed the serenity of the room. His entire body sighed at the reprieve from a constantly overloaded sensory system. It was the first time since that fateful accident in the lab at Drayle University that he didn't have to concentrate on filtering out all the stimuli of a chaotic world. Though still too bright, the white room with its absence of movement soothed his eyes. The cool surface of the table relaxed his muscles. The clean, filtered air lulled his olfactory nerves to minimal activity. But the sweetest sensation of all was the *near* silence of the interrogation room. For a normal person, the silence would have been absolute. For Drew, it was close enough. He didn't have to concentrate at all to ignore the extremely dampened sounds outside the room.

For now, there were no invaders, neither light nor dark. In this sterile room he could almost convince himself that it was all a bad dream, that the invaders weren't real and that if he could just clear himself and Sydney, life would be normal. Oh, how he dreamed of normal!

Drew was tempted to shut down completely, but he knew he had to mentally prepare for the interrogation to come. How much did they know? How much should he tell? Was prison his destination regardless of what he said? After

all, he had assaulted two FBI agents. No matter what the outcome or his motivation, they would never let that slide. Severe repercussions were inevitable.

His thoughts turned to Ben. He hoped his quirky genius friend would stay levelheaded enough to implement the alternate plan. Ben was on his own now, once again lost in the sea of humanity. He had learned a lot and now his ability to disappear would determine if he lived or died. Drew shuddered to think of Ben up against an invisible enemy by himself.

And finally there was Sydney Carlyle. What would her role be in all of this? Drew had determined that the FBI was clueless in regard to the invader war, but Sydney was not. Was she a secret agent of the light invaders? Her actions in the warehouse had directly affected the outcome, giving the light invaders the upper hand right when they needed it. He would have to conceal her abilities from the FBI too.

After two hours of analyzing and preparing himself, he grew tired. He laid his head on the table between his outstretched arms and tried to relax again. How long would they leave him there?

With his ear against the table surface, some of the sounds in the building were amplified enough for him to pick up, especially with the calm of the room soothing his other senses. He filtered out the whir of the air-conditioning system, footsteps, and a low rumble of background noise that must be voices. There was one set of voices much stronger than the rest. If he concentrated, he could just make out the words.

"What have we learned from the girl?"

Drew lifted his head and put his other ear to the table to see if the voices were any clearer, but it was the same. He turned his head so his face was away from the one-way mirror to his left and concentrated.

". . . don't think she's trying to hide anything. No record. Looks like she just got mixed up with the wrong guy."

"That's irrelevant. She's an accomplice to a man suspected of plotting the massacre at Drayle University, and she aided and abetted him when she knew he was running from the FBI. She's not innocent, and she's got a cell with her name on it too."

Drew's heart sank. He had ruined Sydney's life by asking for her help and bringing her into this mess. His stomach knotted as he thought of his beautiful, innocent Sydney sitting in a prison cell. He had to do everything in his

power to negotiate on her behalf, no matter what it might cost him. Humility and honesty were his best play, as long as he didn't mention the invaders. If the FBI believed he was schizophrenic, there would be nothing he could do on Sydney's behalf. He wondered how much she had told them. If he knew, he might have an advantage.

"Do you buy her bit regarding the industrial espionage? Seems far-fetched."

"Don't know. We need to find Berg. He's the biggest piece we're missing. Let's go find out what this criminal knows."

"Hey, Lewis, this guy can't be all bad. Even the police think he's some sort of hero. And if he did what those kids said he did . . . I don't know."

"Come on, Reed, he assaulted both of us, and he knew we were federal agents. That alone puts him behind bars for a long time. This jerk is going down before there are any more shootings and innocent lives lost. Don't get soft on me. Got it?"

"Yeah, I got it, but . . ."

"But what?"

"The warehouse . . . I was there, Lewis. Do you know what he did in that building to save those people?"

"Yeah, he went on another shooting rampage."

"He shot eleven gang members. None of them died."

"Maybe he's just a lousy shot."

"Or maybe he's an expert shot."

"Are you soft on this guy, Reed? Do I need to look for another investigator?"

"No. I'm just saying that this guy may actually be one of the good guys. That's all. Let's let the evidence speak for itself."

"Absolutely, Reed, and it's screaming for a conviction!"

Drew heard a door open.

"Agents Lewis, Reed, this is Mr. Ross. He's with the Department of Justice." This voice was one of authority, probably Lewis's and Reed's supervisor.

"Department of Justice? With all due respect, we're with the Department of Justice—oh . . . I see. Why are you here, Mr. Ross? This is still my investigation, isn't it?"

"I'm just here to observe. Are you well prepared for this interrogation?"

"Of course."

Silence.

"Is there something we should know?" That was Reed's voice.

"Do you know who you've got in there?"

Drew's heart began to quicken. This Mr. Ross scared him. He seemed too smart.

"Yeah, a sadistic jerk who gets his kicks murdering students and assaulting federal agents." That was Lewis.

More silence.

"I've been watching Carter for the last year. I can promise you, he is anything but that."

"How's that possible, sir? Lewis and I have been looking for Carter since Drayle and just yesterday discovered his location. How could you have been watching him?"

"Just go do your job, gentlemen," Mr. Ross said quietly.

"Don't screw this up, Lewis. We need this information, and you need this to go well," the supervisor said flatly.

Drew heard some unintelligible sounds and a door open and close again. He took a deep breath, then sat up as the door to the interrogation room opened. He thought of Sydney and Reverend Ray and was able to give the agents a genuine look of apprehension.

One of the agents sat across the table from Drew while the other leaned against the wall to his right, opposite the one-way mirror. Drew recognized him as the younger of the two agents he had overpowered earlier, which meant he must be Reed. He was lean with dark hair, twenty-five to thirty years old. He didn't look happy. The aggressive agent would be the interrogator, Lewis. He was shorter, five-nineish with a stocky build, ten years older than Reed and nearly bald. A Band-Aid covered a small cut and a nasty bruise just above his left eye. This was the agent Drew had slammed into the car and knocked out.

This was not going to go well.

Lewis opened a folder in front of him, then reached into his pocket and set a digital recorder on the table between them. "I am Federal Agent Lewis, this is Agent Reed. Will you approve of our recording this questioning?" Lewis asked.

Drew nodded. He appreciated the cold, professional demeanor Lewis was displaying, knowing the agent probably wanted to cold-cock him to get even.

Lewis pushed the Record button.

"Before we ask you any questions, you must understand your rights. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can be used against you in court. You have the right to talk to a lawyer for advice before we ask you any questions. You have the right to have a lawyer with you during the questioning. If you cannot afford a lawyer, one will be appointed for you before any questioning, if you wish. If you decide to answer questions now without a lawyer, you have the right to stop answering at any time. If you understand your rights and you are willing to answer questions without a lawyer present, sign here."

Lewis placed a sheet of paper and a pen within Drew's reach. Drew looked over his rights once more, thinking through whether he should have a lawyer present.

"I also have the right to a phone call," Drew said. "I'd like to talk to Jake Blanchard."

"You do have the right to make a phone call. However, a phone call to Jake Blanchard may jeopardize our continuing investigation. Is there someone else you would like to talk to?"

Drew frowned. That meant Jake was being investigated too. Probably because of the money and fake IDs he'd given Drew before Drew left to search for Ben. It felt like everyone good was under investigation while everyone bad was walking free. He didn't like it.

"No." Drew grabbed the pen and signed the paper.

"You are being charged with eleven counts of aggravated assault, two counts of aggravated assault against federal agents, and illegal possession of a deadly weapon in a school safety zone. Other charges may or may not be counted against you as the investigation continues. Do you understand the charges against you?"

"Yes, but I will only answer your questions on one condition."

Lewis looked at him with a countenance of stone. "We are not in a position to make concessions or deals in exchange for information."

"This one's easy. I want to know the medical condition of Reverend Ray Branson."

Lewis just stared at him for a moment, looking as though he didn't want to give Drew anything.

"I just want to know if he's going to make it," Drew said. "He's my friend. Please."

Lewis finally nodded. Agent Reed disappeared through the door and returned two minutes later. Drew studied his eyes for some hint of his message.

"Reverend Branson is in serious condition but stable. They will know if he will make a full recovery within the next twenty-four hours." Reed gave Drew a subtle nod.

Drew lowered his head. "Thank you." Ray had a wife and two beautiful children to fight for. Drew convinced himself that his friend would make it.

He looked back up at Agent Lewis. "Why don't you tell me about your involvement in the shooting at Drayle University on Thursday, May 8, 2014?" Lewis asked.

Drew shook his head. "It began eight months before that. I have to start there for you to understand."

Lewis crossed his arms and leaned back in his chair. "Start wherever you like. We have plenty of time."

Drew took a deep breath. "It all began with the death of Dr. Waseem, a physics professor at Drayle. My friend Benjamin Berg was his lab assistant. Dr. Waseem had received a grant for his groundbreaking work on the acceleration of light. Ben came to me one day, concerned because Dr. Waseem had disappeared. Later we discovered that he had died in a car accident, which seemed fishy to us. Ben and I attempted to re-create the lab experiment Dr. Waseem was working on, but the equipment exploded."

Lewis held up his hand to stop Drew. "Why did you try to repeat the lab experiment?"

"Because Ben believed that Dr. Waseem had successfully accelerated light and that his death was not accidental. We were trying to confirm his findings as proof."

"Proof of what?" Lewis asked.

Drew hesitated. "Proof that Dr. Waseem and his research were the victims of industrial espionage and possibly sabotage."

Lewis glanced toward Reed. Reed just raised an eyebrow.

"If you were convinced, why didn't you take this to the police?" Reed asked.

"Because we needed proof. No one was going to listen to a couple of col-

lege students about something this big. Besides, we were nervous that whoever was behind this may have been watching us. We were afraid for ourselves and our families.”

“That’s quite the conspiracy theory, Carter. How does this have anything to do with the shooting at Drayle University?” Lewis sneered.

“The accident burned Ben, and I went blind for a few months. During that time, Ben became paranoid. You see, Ben had helped Dr. Waseem conduct the research and was the only one who could re-create the experiment. He began to fear for his life, so he disappeared. When I recovered from my injuries, I knew I had to find him. That took me to Drayle, because I knew I had to disappear too, but I needed to say good-bye to someone first.”

“Who?” Lewis prompted.

“Sydney Carlyle. And for the record, I want you to know that whatever you think I’ve done and whatever charges you have against me, Sydney had nothing to do with any of it. The only thing she is guilty of is trying to help me find Benjamin Berg. She is innocent on all counts,” Drew pleaded.

Lewis smirked. “We know better, Carter. Ms. Carlyle was an accomplice of yours from the day she set foot in Chicago. She was supposed to report any contact with you to us, and she didn’t. She’s given us her statement. I wouldn’t worry about trying to protect Carlyle, because she doesn’t appear to be worried about protecting you. Now what happened at Drayle? Why did you have weapons in your car on a college campus?” Lewis’s voice was strained.

Drew shook his head. “I wasn’t thinking. I should have parked off campus. I had the gun and knives because I didn’t know who I might come across in my search for Ben. If these people had truly killed Dr. Waseem, I wanted to be prepared.”

Lewis huffed. “Supposing your story to be true and Dr. Waseem had been killed by some questionable people, you think you would be able to defend yourself and Berg?” He smirked. “Against professionals?”

Drew wasn’t sure how much he wanted the FBI to know about how skilled he was. “Well, I knew I’d have a better chance with weapons than without them.”

Lewis glared at Drew. “What is your association with Duncan Terance McGruger?”

Drew shook his head. “Who is he?”

Lewis smirked again. "Don't play dumb, Carter."

"I'm sorry. I don't know that name."

"He's the guy who killed nine students at Drayle. How can you not know his name?" Reed asked, leaning against the wall again.

"I . . . I disappeared off the grid for months. No television, no computers, no technology for weeks. I guess I never heard his name."

Both agents just stared at Drew, expressionless. Reed pushed off from the wall and walked behind Drew. Lewis glanced up at his partner. Some message was exchanged.

"How stupid do you think we are, Carter? You were there, you coordinated the attack with him, and now you want us to believe that you don't even know his name?" Anger flushed Lewis's cheeks as he struggled to keep control.

Drew was getting angry too. This guy had had it in for him even before Drew had knocked him out. Now there was no hope.

Lewis continued. "How was it that you were in the same building as McGruger when he started shooting students?"

"Sydney had a class in that building. I walked her to her class, and as I was leaving—" Drew stopped as he remembered the shots ringing out, the students screaming and crying. People had been dying all around him and all he could think about was trying to save Sydney. He recovered himself. "As I was leaving, the shooting started."

Lewis's eyes narrowed. "What did McGruger tell you to do then?"

Drew clenched his teeth and reminded himself that this was a tactic to get him to trip up. "Nothing! I'd never seen the guy until that day."

Reed walked from behind Drew to his left side and gave Lewis a stern look. "What did you do next?" Reed asked.

"I was on the stairs. I tried to pull some of the students to safety. One girl was shot in the leg, so I carried her back to Sydney's class and got two guys to take her out the back way. We got some of the students out, but the gunman cut off our exit. That's when he came into our room. The professor and I tried to keep the door shut, but he got shot and the gunman got in."

"The professor stated that you agreed to bar the door but then let the gunman into the room," Lewis said flatly. "Was that part of your plan with McGruger?"

“What? No! I told you I never knew that guy. Why would I let him in and then try to stop him?”

Lewis leaned forward. “You tell me.”

“I don’t know. I guess I was stunned for a moment. I remember thinking, what if this guy was connected with the people who killed Dr. Waseem? What if he was coming after me?”

For a moment, no one said anything.

“Is that what you believe?” Reed finally asked. “That they were coming after you?”

Drew realized that he was starting to sound like a conspiracy nut. He shook his head. “No. I realized that I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. This McGruger guy was just some nut job on a rampage. All I wanted to do was to keep Sydney safe and stop the killing.”

Lewis scoffed. “Sure.”

Drew tried to ignore Lewis’s sarcasm. “Once the gunman made the room, I charged him. He slammed into the wall and was knocked out.” He shrugged. “That’s it. I had nothing to do with the shooting except trying to stop it. Look, there was an entire classroom of witnesses you must have questioned. What about the professor? Surely he told you.”

Lewis just frowned. “Why did you run? Why did you leave your car there, a car with weapons inside it? Were those backup weapons for McGruger? If you were innocent, why run?” The agent leaned forward again. “Sure looks bad from where we’re sitting.”

“Because I knew the campus would immediately go on lockdown. I would be detained and questioned for hours.”

“So what?” Reed asked. “You waited eight months. What’s a few more hours?”

Drew sighed. He felt manipulated, and Lewis was intent on making him look guilty. “My face would have been all over television for days, especially since I had stopped the gunman. I couldn’t take a chance on those responsible making the connection between me and the incident at the lab.”

“Oh, I see; you were afraid of the secret assassin that killed Waseem.”

Drew stared at Lewis, trying to control his anger. The agent had no clue what was happening. Drew was the only person on the planet who could see

the global invasion of mankind, and he was stuck in an FBI interrogation chamber, trying to convince two skeptical dimwits that he was a good guy.

"I don't think you have any idea how significant Dr. Waseem's discovery is. His work on light acceleration has the potential to revolutionize the technology industry. Telecommunications, data storage, weaponization. It would be the single most significant discovery in the last one hundred years, and it would be worth billions." Drew leaned forward and stared right into Lewis's eyes. "That's why I ran. And that's why Ben ran."

Lewis stared right back at him, anger seething in his eyes. "Carter, regardless of the evidence for or against you at Drayle University, you were in possession of illegal weapons in a school safety zone, you purposely evaded the FBI and impeded our investigation, and then subsequently assaulted two federal agents with deadly weapons." Lewis leaned in close to Drew and lowered his voice. "Assault with a deadly weapon against a federal agent carries up to twenty years in prison . . . for each offense! Do you understand how serious these charges are against you?"

Drew's heart sank. He glared at Lewis. Honesty and humility weren't going to gain him a thing. "Yeah, I get it," he snapped, regretting his tone before he finished the comeback.

Lewis stood up and leaned over the table. "I suggest you reconsider your story and start telling the truth!" He slammed the table with his fist.

The room fell silent.

Drew was frustrated, angry, and discouraged. It seemed so hopeless. He hung his head, resigned to finish out his life behind the bars of a prison cell.



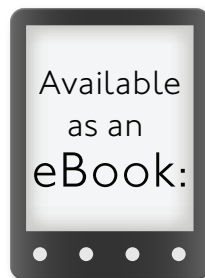
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