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**by Larry E. Hamilton**

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## ***“Atlantis”***

**by Donovan**

*The continent of Atlantis was an island  
Which lay before the great flood  
In the area we now call the Atlantic Ocean.  
So great an area of land,  
That far from her western shores  
Those beautiful sailors journeyed  
To the South and the North Americas with ease,  
In their ships with painted sails.  
To the East, Africa was a neighbor  
Across a short strait of sea miles.  
The great Egyptian Age is  
But a remnant of the Atlantian culture.  
The Antediluvian Kings colonized the world.  
All the Gods who play in the mythological dramas  
In all legends from all lands,  
Were from far Atlantis.  
Knowing her fate,*

*Atlantis sent out ships to all corners of the Earth.*

*On board were The Twelve:*

*The poet, the physician, the farmer, the scientist,*

*The magician, and the other so-called Gods of our legends...*

*Though Gods they were.*

*And as the elders of our time choose to remain blind...*

*Let us rejoice*

*And let us sing*

*And dance and ring in the new*

*Hail Atlantis!*

## ***Chapter 1***

### ***Anna Maria Island, Florida***

#### ***Present Day***

*Trouble is coming. Coming by land...coming by sea. Coming for you...coming for me.*

Matthew Flannery leaned over the kitchen sink, resting his palms on the faded yellow, gold-flecked, Formica countertop that housed two well-worn stainless-steel basins. He absentmindedly chewed the inside of his lower left lip, a lifelong habit, and peered out the small, two-pane window above the kitchen counter. He never tired of the postcard scenery that lay just beyond his small but comfortable bungalow located on a white sand beach on the Gulf of Mexico. The story and a half dwelling proudly wore a coat of sun-faded yellow paint with white trim. A modest widow's walk circled the center of the roofline with just enough decking to accommodate a couple of lounge chairs and a small table. A reddish-brown paver lanai lay out back facing the water, always being partially obscured by blowing sand from the beach.

It occurred to Matt that he had not cleaned the kitchen windows in a while. The milky haze that naturally builds up on windows facing the ocean was starting to cloud his view. He made a mental note to take care of this problem, perhaps as early as tomorrow. If not tomorrow, soon then. Matt lived on island time.

The first time his father brought the family to Anna Maria Island, Matt was eight years old. He knew even then that he would return to live on that island someday.

It was for him...Simply Paradise.

Matthew was summoned back from his island daydream by the shrilling of the blender, winding up like it was about to take flight.

Matt had prepared his Saturday afternoon margarita with great care. He did not like his margaritas too limey or too strong...no puckering. He preferred a balance of tangy and sweet, topping it off with just a dash of orange juice to round off the bite. And of course, he *only* used premium gold tequila.

He pried the lid off the blender, removed the container, and tipped it forward, dribbling a little on the tip of his tongue to be sure it met his exacting standards.

*Ah, yes!* His taste buds were pleased.

He reached into the overhead cabinet and pulled out his favorite margarita glass, a treasured souvenir he had purchased at a Jimmy Buffet concert. It was a tall, thick glass tumbler and the heaviness of it felt good in Matt's hand. It featured Jimmy Buffet's smiling face wearing his trademark sunglasses with the word "Margaritaville" colorfully printed below his image. Matt anxiously stuck his glass into the ice dispenser in the refrigerator door and filled the glass three quarters of the way to the top with cubed ice...never crushed. He then moved the glass to his kitchen island and slowly, with an air of ceremony, poured his masterpiece gently over the frosty cubes.

With his left hand, Matt grabbed the full glass of perfect margarita, swishing it around and over the ice to chill it, swung around the corner of the kitchen island, and headed to the living room sofa. He had been looking forward all week to watching the traditional end of season football game between his beloved University of Florida Gators (his alma mater) and their rivals, the Florida State Seminoles. The annual grudge game was about to begin and he did not want to miss the kick off.

Matt was gliding across the threshold that separated the kitchen from the living area when he abruptly froze in his tracks...

## ***Chapter 2***

### ***Matt's Bungalow***

#### ***Anna Maria Island***

Matt had not heard a sound or noticed the slightest movement, yet there in front of him, at the end of the hallway that led from the front door to his kitchen, stood a man the size of two. The stranger was not smiling and did not appear to be a representative from the local Welcome Wagon.

With the margarita precariously balanced in his left hand and body suspended in mid-stride between the kitchen and sofa, Matt stared at the intruder. He began sizing up this ominous stranger who had appeared out of nowhere. Matt was trying, without appearing nervous, to make sense of this situation that had suddenly presented itself.

The intruder was dressed entirely in black. His head was big, bald, and shiny. Pale white skin covered it and ruddy red splotches were scattered here and there like continents on a world map. A small gold earring hung from his left ear. No facial hair at all. Looked like Mr. Clean.

Matt guessed the man to be at least six and a half feet tall. Matt stood six feet even and had to look up to see the stranger's eyes. The man's neck and torso was so thick and muscular that his tee shirt was stretching valiantly to keep from ripping out at the seams. The Incredible Hulk's arms bulged as large as a normal man's thighs. They resembled bionic arms that had been transplanted into his shoulder sockets. His legs could pass for small tree trunks. His chest reminded Matt of two concrete blocks pressed side by side, complemented by a couple rows of bricks directly beneath. He wore a skin-tight tee shirt made of the stretchy compression fit material that athletes wear, loose fitting dress slacks, and heavy, thick-soled shoes polished to a high gloss. Matt made a mental note about the shoes. They could inflict serious damage to a human body if used as a weapon.

The massive fellow could have been a character straight out of a James Bond movie...but this was not a movie. The situation was all too real. Matt did not know what to make of the man's cliché appearance or his sudden interruption of the afternoon's scheduled festivities.

The unexpected visitor was straight-faced, stoic, and stood menacingly at the end of Matt's hallway.

The uninvited guest's dark, unrevealing eyes stared without blinking into Matt's wide-open, enquiring, and blinking steel grey eyes. A hint of a menacing smile, or maybe a snarl, started to form on the stranger's large and bulbous face as he flexed his oversized biceps for effect. A small

rivulet of perspiration rolled down the side of the big man's forehead. He seemed to revel in the tension he was creating in the room, allowing it to build and expand before he spoke.

*I need to act as if I'm in control of this situation whether I am or not,* Matt reasoned with himself.

Using the calmest, deepest voice he could muster under the circumstances, Matt broke the silence.

"Who the hell are you and what are you doing in my house?"

The man mountain narrowed his eyes a bit, then responded in a low, menacing voice that sounded faintly Russian or East European.

"Do not play dumb with me, foolish man. You know why I am here and you know what I came for."

Matt searched his mind at warp speed for an answer that might make some sort of sense. While continuing to balance the margarita in his left hand, Matt pulled himself up to his full height and shot back a reply in the hope that he sounded braver than he felt.

"Look asshole, I have no idea who you are or why you're here, but I recommend you move on down the road because you obviously have me confused with someone else! My name is Matt Flannery and ..."

Big Baldy interrupted.

"I *know* who you are, and be assured, this is *not* a case of mistaken identity. I have waited a long time to possess what you are hiding. Now, give me the code keys without delay and I might let you live...or at least I will kill you quickly so you don't suffer."



A sickening smile spread over the stranger's face as he seemed proud of his little speech.

Matt's mind spun furiously, referencing anything in his brain that might explain what codes this stranger might be referring to.

*Surely, he doesn't mean the codes to my home security system? Hell, I don't even have one. Anyway, this guy could just rip the damn door off the hinges and come in any time he wanted! My home safe? Nothing in there but my passport, house and boat documents, and some old worthless relics Grandpa left me.*

Nothing made any sense. Matt concluded that this fellow had come to get something that Matt could not produce and Man Mountain was not going to be happy about that.

Which caused another realization to dawn on Matt.

It was obvious that this visitor would stop at nothing, including tearing him and the entire house apart, in an attempt to find these "codes" or "keys" or whatever it was that he came for. It was not going to end well for Matt as things currently stood.

*I have to level the playing field somehow...*

He pushed down the cold, growing fear welling up in his stomach that threatened to paralyze his arms and legs. He took a deep breath and decided he had to neutralize the invader somehow and let the police sort out this mystery later. Otherwise, the odds did not seem favorable that there would be a "later".

Matt countered again in an effort to buy time.

“Look Mister, I’m telling you...you’re in the wrong house and talking to the wrong person! I don’t have any codes or keys, don’t know anything about these codes or keys, and don’t want to know. I have a ballgame to watch so get your ass out of here before I call the cops!”

Even as the echo of his words died out, Matt realized how weak and impotent the ultimatum was. He felt the icy fingers of fear threatening to paralyze him again.