

Chaordia - A Novel of Transformation Ch. 17

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Because of climate change a man wants to transform an old farm into a new colony in Vermont

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Turns out, I didn't have to go downstairs. A few minutes later, just as I was telling Alice about Elizabeth's message, my dad came into my room. I know he heard me say, "We have to find out if it's the Bendula." Our eyes met, and then he took a deep breath and I could see how frustrated he was with not knowing what was going on. "Right, we'll go right after school." I knew it was late and wondered if I should skip another day. Going to Glenn's meeting in Manhattan on a school night was something my dad was okay with, but Alice's mom had ordered her not to go out--not that it did any good. Alice told me all about the big fight they had when she got home and how she said, what I imagined every parent dreads hearing. "You can't stop me." When I closed my phone, my dad took another deep breath before speaking. "What's going on with you and Alice?" he asked. "I've never seen you like this." I didn't know where to begin, so I went over to my desk and picked up my iPad and held it up to him. "Dad, ever since I read those novels about Atlantis and found out about these kids in the books who have memories of Atlantis, I wondered if that could ever happen to me. Alice felt the same way and now Gabe and Tim do, too. The books touched something in me. I can't explain it, but I wanted Atlantis to be real and not fiction." "What does Elizabeth have to do with this? Why is she writing to you about the Bendula, whatever that is?" "Because she has memories," I answered. "I told you, she has memories of Atlantis." "She could also be crazy. She could be imagining these memories." "She had friends who also had memories. They hummed this melody they all remembered and then the memories came. They remember the end of Atlantis, the huge tsunami, the fires. And it's all described in the books." "But you said the author, whatever his name is, said he made the books up. Isn't that what he told you? He wrote them for his kids. They're fiction." My dad started pacing the floor in front of my bed. He seemed upset and confused. "I don't understand what's happening to you because of those books." "I don't either. Lately, I don't know what's real and what isn't." My throat burned from trying to hold back tears. My father calmed down when he saw how upset I was. He sat down next to me on the bed, "Maybe I should read these books." "That would be great, Dad," I said, regaining my composure. "Then you'd know what I'm talking about. I don't know if Atlantis existed or not," I said. "I know these books were made up by Arnold Greenberg, but they awakened something in me. In fact, the first book is called, Twins of

Atlantis—The Awakening. I can't explain it and I wanted to have memories of the Children of the One in the books. They're Keepers of the Holy Way." "What do you mean, Keepers of the Holy Way? What's the Holy Way?" "It's the old ways. The way it was on Atlantis before the Bendula took over. Everyone shared. And no one was poor and there was enough food for everyone because everyone was important. Greed didn't exist. The greatest virtue was sharing and people were happy."

"Interesting," my dad responded, then stood up and walked over to the window and looked out. He looked up at the sky then turned to me, "It's amazing how many more stars you can see at Glenn's farm than you can here." "I know, Alice said the same thing," I said, wondering what he was thinking. My dad looked quietly back up at the stars, and then, after a minute sat on the bed next to me. He didn't speak and was slowly gathering his thoughts. "I remember Alice asking Sun Dancer about the old ways and he said White Elk told him stories about where they might have come from." "Shining Star also said her great grandmother told her the same stories when she was a child, stories passed down from long ago, but they never said anything about Atlantis," I said. "The Indians have been on this continent for thousands of years and it's a mystery where they came from." "Do you think it was Atlantis?" I asked. "There's no way of knowing," my dad said. "There 's so much that is unknown about life, so much mystery and many people are studying the past, trying to understand how life evolved, but there is a great deal of disagreement and people are always coming up with new theories. The true origin of life is our biggest mystery." "Grace told us how she has gone on archeological digs in Greece and other places and told us they have discovered towns and cities buried under newer cities, places they didn't know existed, and they're uncovering lots of things from the past." "That's true," my dad said. "They've discovered huge cities and temples in the jungles of Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua and other places in South America. I read about ancient civilizations like the Mayans and the Incas and others that built huge temples, had roads and farmed and fed thousands of people, then disappeared in the jungles." I listened to my dad and remembered what Grace had said, but then started thinking about Elizabeth's note. "Dad, I believe the Bendula are real and will try to stop Glenn or anyone who is a threat to their power. They may not be called Bendula today, but that's who they are." "And you think the FBI and the military are the Bendula," my dad asked. "Is that what your friend, Elizabeth told you?" "Yes and she lived in England when the Nazis bombed London and she said they were the Bendula, and so were the Romans who wanted to conquer the world and be an empire. She said it all started on Atlantis and that's why it was destroyed and disappeared." "I don't know what to say. This is beyond my comprehension. No one believes Atlantis really existed. It's considered a myth, something Plato made up for who knows what reason. There is no evidence it ever existed." "I know," I said, shrugging my shoulders. In *Daughters of Atlas*, it said they think the ocean was three hundred feet shallower than it is now and people could walk from Florida to Cuba and Mexico and Central America. This whole thing is pretty weird. Maybe someone will discover evidence that there really was an Atlantis. I don't know. All I know is we're going to go to Elizabeth's house after school tomorrow." My dad stood up and took another one of his deep breaths before speaking. "I'm baffled. None of this makes sense, but tell me what she says." He stood in the doorway and looked at me. "I will....thanks for listening." "Let's get some sleep." The next

day, I showed the note to Gabe and Tim. We were sitting in the cafeteria which was noisy and crowded. A voice came over the loudspeaker, "Will Janet Simpson and Carla Tanhauser come to the office." That was the fourth time that same stupid annoying voice came over the speaker making an announcement, or telling someone to come to the office. It reminded me of another book I had read, 1984 by George Orwell and how he talked about how Big Brother is watching and that's what it felt like. I noticed the video cameras in the corners of the cafeteria just below the ceiling. They were in the halls, too and in the library. Two girls sitting at the table next to ours stood up. One of them was wearing a short denim skirt with tights and boots, her long blonde hair was in a ponytail. She had long dark eyelashes, heavy eyeliner and red lipstick, and I couldn't help but notice her big breasts straining her tight yellow tank top and the tattoo of a snake on her arm. "Damn, what do they want now," I heard her say, as she picked up her backpack and tray. The other girl was dressed all in black and had several silver chains hanging halfway down her front and dangling earrings with crosses. Her dark hair was cut short and she had heavy black eyeliner and black lipstick. Her nose was pierced and so was her lower lip. "What are you looking at?" she asked, glaring at me. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be looking at you," I said. Alice came into the cafeteria and joined us at the table. She knew both girls, "Hi. What's up? How come they want you in the office?" I was relieved when she talked to the girls and seemed to know them. "Who the fuck knows," the blonde said. "Think I care?" "It's probably because we cut two classes this morning and they know we're here," the girl in black said. "I'm sick of this fucking place." "Why did you cut?" Gabe asked. "To get stoned," she said. "Like it's any of your business. It's the only fucking way I can get through the day." I didn't like the place anymore than she did, but I drew in my notebook or daydreamed looking out the window. The girl in black turned to Alice. "Why are you hanging around with these creeps?" "They're my friends, Carla, that's why and they're not creeps." "I don't like the way he was looking at my tits," the blonde said then glared at me. "Guys will be guys," Alice shrugged. "Let's go and see what all this fucking bullshit is about." Carla picked up her tray and left with her black backpack dangling from her shoulder. The blonde glared at me, then followed Carla. "See what happens when you get caught gawking, Alex." She sat down. "I didn't know I was gawking." "Well, you probably were," Alice said. "I've known Carla and Janet since middle school and they hate guys. I don't know for sure, but I think they're gay," she continued then shrugged her shoulders again. "Who cares?" "They seem pretty angry," Tim said. "They are," Alice responded and looked at the paper in my hand, "Let me see the note from Elizabeth." When Lou opened the front door and smiled, revealing his gold tooth, he seemed glad to see us, but then his face got serious and his voice changed. "Elizabeth and I want to know all about this farm in Vermont. She's concerned." "We got a note from her," I said. "I know. I delivered it." "How did you know where I live," I asked. "You'll find out," Lou said. "There's someone visiting who wants to meet you. She's upstairs with Elizabeth." "Really. Who is it?" Tim asked. "You'll find out. Let's go." He led the way up the carpeted steps and down the hall to Elizabeth's room. When we entered, Elizabeth was sitting in front of the fire, reading a book in the lamplight over her shoulder. The room was dark even though it was around four o'clock. Another woman sat at Elizabeth's desk, typing something. A small lamp was on, but it was still hard to see her. "Oh good, you're here." She closed her book and

waved us over to sit on the couch. The woman stopped typing, turned off the lamp and walked towards us. Lou brought over another chair for the woman. At first, I couldn't really see her because the room was so dark, but when she sat down, her chair was next to the fire and I could see in the glow, a tiny, thin woman with white hair tied in a bun. She wore brown, wool slacks, a white satiny blouse with puffy sleeves. In the firelight, I saw her wrinkled skin. She had been wearing glasses when she was typing, but now they were hanging from a thin strap around her neck. "This is Arianna," Elizabeth said. "She's an old friend who I haven't seen in many years, but I called her and invited her to visit and also to meet all of you." We said hi and introduced ourselves, but I was wondering why Elizabeth invited her to meet us. I had no idea why until Alice noticed the necklace Arianna was wearing, "That's such a beautiful necklace," she said, staring at it. "Thank you. I'm glad you noticed it." "You are, why?" Alice asked. Arianna didn't answer at first, but glanced at Elizabeth, then looked back at Alice. Lou leaned forward, then turned to me. "Now you're going to find out how I knew where you lived." "What do you mean?" I asked. Before Lou could answer, Alice interrupted, "What kind of a stone is that?" "It's a ruby, a Star Ruby." Arianna placed her fingers on the stone. "A Star Ruby?" Alice repeated and stared at it. "Yes, a very special ruby." "Special? What's special about it?" "It called the Stone of Truth," Arianna said and glanced at Elizabeth. Alice looked at me, then at Tim and Gabe. "There was a Stone of Truth in these books we read about Atlantis." "Really? You read about the Stone of Truth in a book? That's strange." "Yes, we read a book called, Daughters of Atlas by Arnold Greenberg, and this girl, Julie, was given the necklace by a gypsy woman named Madam Tutania, and she called it the Stone of Truth. The gypsy woman said Julie was a Daughter of Atlas and she would have memories of Atlantis. She was kidnapped by a motorcycle gang who were hired by the Bendula because they thought she knew where the Great Crystal was under the ocean." "The Great Crystal? He wrote about the Great Crystal and the Bendula?" Arianna asked, then stared into the fire, mulling over what Alice said, then faced her. "And you know about the necklace? I don't quite understand." "I don't either," I said. "Those books are fiction. We emailed the writer and he told us he made up those stories for his kids, but then we heard Elizabeth say the word Bendula at the library a few weeks ago, and now we found out the Bendula are real." "Are you a Daughter of Atlas?" Alice asked. "Yes, that's why I have this necklace," Arianna said, touching it. "And that's how I found out where you lived," Lou said. "She just held the stone in her fingers and closed her eyes and then gave me your address." Lou paused and shook his head. "Don't know how she did that." "This is too wild," Gabe said. "Do you mean the Daughters of Atlas are real and there's really Bendula? It isn't fiction." "How could Arnold Greenberg make that up," Alice asked. "I don't get it." "I don't either," Arianna said. "I'm shocked that you read a book of fiction about the Daughters of Atlas. It's impossible. Very few people know about that and the Stone of Truth." "That's why I called you, Arianna," Elizabeth said. "I thought you could explain what's happening." "There has to be some explanation," Arianna said. "But I don't know what it could be. Perhaps the Stone of Truth will help me know." "How did you get the Stone of Truth and become a Daughter of Atlas?" Alice asked. "Do you have memories of Atlantis?" "I do," Arianna said, nodding, then gazed into the fire again and sighed deeply. She held the ruby in her fingers, then closed her eyes for several minutes. Before speaking she glanced at Elizabeth and Lou,

then faced us. "I was given the necklace when I was thirteen. It was on my birthday when this woman from Trinidad came to our house. I lived with my mother in New Orleans, but she originally came from Belize. My father died when I was seven and we were poor, very poor. My mother worked as a cook for some rich man in New Orleans named, Alistair Nicholson, and she had to be there at six in the morning to make breakfast. She worked all day and came home around eight at night. I had to stay home and take care of my sister, Jessica, who was five and was born just before my father died. It was really hard for my mother. She couldn't pay for childcare, so that's why I stayed home from school. We had to hide from the authorities. My mom never registered me because she was undocumented." "Wow, you were given the necklace on your thirteenth birthday," Alice said. "That's how old Jera was in Egypt and Julie was when she was given the necklace. It was on their thirteenth birthday." "Is that what the books you read said?" Arianna asked. "That's interesting. I might have to read those books." "You should," I said. "This is mind-boggling. I don't understand how this could be happening." "This is all very strange," Elizabeth said. "It sure doesn't make sense to me," Lou said. "Let me continue telling you how I was given the stone," Arianna said. "Then we have something more important to talk about." I got really nervous when she said that and wondered what she was going to tell us. I looked at her holding the ruby in her fingers, then she looked at Alice, Gabe and Tim. I could tell by how they sat on the edge of the couch that they were as eager as I was to hear the rest of the story and find out what was so important. "It was on my thirteenth birthday. I was upset that my mom had to work when this old black woman from Trinidad came to our door and asked if I was Arianna. I said yes and asked her who she was. She told me her name was Sasha Mori. I didn't want to let her in because my mom said never to let anyone in the house I didn't know. She said she had something for me. She said it was very important that I let her come in. I said no because I was frightened. I could see she was very old and had wrinkled black skin. When she said, 'Please, I won't harm you,' I didn't know what to do. She said, 'It's important that I give you this necklace.'" She opened up a small pouch she was carrying and took out the necklace and showed it to me. I looked at it in her hand and saw the red ruby and decided to let her in. She was so old and didn't seem dangerous, and I wanted to know why this stranger was giving me the necklace." "So who was she?" I asked. "How did she find you?" "She told me the Stone of Truth led her to my house and when she gave me the necklace, she told me I was a Daughter of Atlas and in time the stone would tell me what I needed to know and I would start having dreams. I was frightened and didn't want the necklace." "But you took it," Alice said. "Yes, but first I told her I didn't understand why she thought I should have the necklace and she just said, 'Because you're a Daughter of Atlas and have lived many lives.' She put the necklace around my neck and warned me to be careful then left. Soon, I started having dreams and learned about the Bendula and that Trinidad was once part of Atlantis. It was the top of a big mountain and most of it was under the ocean. I learned that many of the islands in the Caribbean were mountain tops and part of Atlantis." "But you were living in New Orleans. Why did she come to you from Trinidad," I asked. "I didn't know until I started having dreams about a girl in Trinidad, who lived a long time ago when Columbus came from Spain. They called the people Caribs and made them slaves for the pearl industry on Isla Margarita. The girl in my dreams was named Samnu and

she was a Daughter of Atlas and tried to tell people they must hold onto their old ways. It was very dangerous for her. The Bendula tried to stop her. Then I learned how the British brought people from India to be slaves on the sugar and cocoa plantations. In my dreams, another girl named Aleeya did the same and tried to keep the memories of the old ways alive. And when pirates from Jamaica took over Trinidad, they smuggled drugs and ruled the country even though there was a British Prime Minister and a government, but people were frightened and there were many murders just like there are in Mexico today. The drug lords became the Bendula." We listened to Arianna, thinking about her story. I looked at the fire, trying to comprehend what she was saying, and then Tim spoke, breaking the silence. "You still haven't told us why this woman came to you in New Orleans from Trinidad." "I didn't know why until I found out from my dreams that I was to work with Native Americans who were made to suffer from the Bendula in this country," Arianna said. "I never saw Sasha Mori again." "So you became a Daughter of Atlas a long time ago," Gabe said. "Did the Bendula try to stop you? What happened?" "I was arrested many times for trying to stop the war in Vietnam and also the war in Iraq, but I also wrote articles for many magazines about Native American rights being ignored. I covered the uprising at Wounded Knee in the seventies and wrote a book about why the Cherokee Indians were forced to leave Tennessee." She paused for a minute, then asked us if we had heard of the Trail of Tears. None of us did and I wondered if my dad knew about it. "So is that how you fought the Bendula?" Alice asked, "By writing?" "Yes and this Ruby helped me see what I would not otherwise see," Ariana said. "And when Elizabeth called me and told me about your friend's plans in Vermont and the problem with the Indians there, I touched the Stone of Truth and knew I had to come and meet you." We were all silent when she said that. Then Elizabeth said, "Tell them what you told me." Arianna looked at us, "Listen to me, the Bendula know the Indians are on the land and know what Glenn is planning to do? Not only is your friend in danger, but the Indians are in danger also." "How could they know?" I asked. "No one knew they were there until we showed up a few weeks ago." "A newspaper story was just published in the New York Times two days ago." "I don't believe it. The New York Times?" I shouted. "Oh no," Alice said. "It was that reporter who interviewed us." "But he said he was on our side and the story would help," I said. Arianna touched the stone and closed her eyes. We looked at her and wondered what she was doing, what would she say? "Your friend is in great danger. The Bendula will try to stop him, but your friend's mother, Grace, is very wise. She will know what to do." It felt like a caravan driving to the farm. Glenn had taken out the seats from his VW bus and filled it with furniture from Tammy's storage. I couldn't believe how much he squeezed in and he even had a mattress tied to the top. He worried about the weight but said he could repair the engine if he had to. My dad drove our Subaru hatchback and Tim, Gabe and Grace rode with us. Tim and Gabe brought a tent and Alice and I had our sleeping bags and backpack in the back with my dad's stuff along with Grace's large canvas bag filled with books, a quilt and her brown wide brimmed hat. She also had a small suitcase with clothing. She planned to sleep in the house. So we had quite a load. Dan, Liz and Atticus followed us in their red Toyota pickup truck. It was one that had a back seat, so Atticus was in his car-seat and the bed of the truck was filled with Dan's tools and their camping equipment covered with a heavy green tarp. When Alice and I told Grace what Arianna had

said about the Bendula knowing the Abenki Indians were on the land and that Glenn was in danger, she already knew because she had read the story in the New York Times. The story about the Daughters of Atlas and how Arianna was given the Stone of Truth from a woman from Trinidad fascinated her. She was especially interested in the book Arianna wrote about the "Trail of Tears" and the Cherokee Indians being forced to leave their homes and go to Oklahoma. My dad knew the whole story and that's how I learned how cruel it was that so many had to leave their homes all because the rich people wanted their land. It was a horrible story and it made me think of White Elk and his people reclaiming land that had been stolen from them and now they were in danger because of the story in the New York Times. When we stopped at the Mapleland Truck Stop for gas, Tammy picked up some fresh fruit, vegetables and kitchen supplies. Alice and I walked with Dan, Liz and Atticus while Tim and Gabe looked at CDs in the music section, and Grace browsed the small section of books. We walked through a section that had sports equipment, hunting equipment—rifles, fishing rods and clothing. When we stopped in front of sweatshirts with different sports teams names, Dan chuckled. "It's interesting how horribly this country treats the Indians and yet we give so many of our sports teams Indian names like the Atlanta Braves and the Cleveland Indians and the Washington Redskins. I don't get it." I never thought about that before and realized how racist it was. Dan laughed, "How would blacks like it if we called teams the Detroit Niggers, or what would the Italians say if they named a team, the St. Louis Dagos, or Jews if the Phillies were called the Philadelphia Kikes or Hebes." I laughed and loved hearing Dan's views on things and agreed it was weird, then remembered playing cowboys and Indians in our backyard and in the woods near our house and how I liked pretending I was an Indian. I thought about Sun Dancer and his friends Wolf and Strong Eagle leaving college, how they drank and tried fitting in the white man's world. I remembered Morning Star telling us how learning her Indian name meant so much to her and how, when she was Louise, how lost she felt and didn't want anyone to know she was an Indian. She said she had no core, no identity. That's why she drank and did drugs and tried killing herself. I knew I could never really understand their pain, but wanted to and was glad I was learning about their lives. When we continued to the farm and drove past Lake Champlain, there were ships and sailboats in the distance. I wondered what it was like when the Indians fished there before the French and English came, how it must have felt to see people with beards and strange clothing and to trade with them, and then be cheated by them over and over. We stopped at Bronson Palmer's office to see what was happening with the bank and paying the back taxes and saw the newspaper about Glenn and the Indians on a chair in the secretary's messy office. The secretary seemed nervous when she let Bronson know we were there. Dan, Liz and Atticus waited in their truck, and we said we wouldn't be that long. Tim and Gabe waited in my dad's car. Glenn picked up the newspaper and started reading it to himself, but I could see the headline on the front page, Two Worlds Collide to Create New Colony. Under a picture of a wigwam with smoke coming out the top, the caption said, Indian tribe discovered hiding on local farm for eight years. While he was reading, I noticed the secretary looking at us, then quickly turn away when she saw me noticing. I bet she's the one who called the editor. She must have overheard Glenn telling Bronson his plan. Bronson called us into his office and told Grace the papers would be ready by

Monday and the closing could take place that afternoon if we were still going to be in the area. Grace said her bank was transferring the money and she wasn't certain if we would still be here on Monday and would let him know. Glenn held up the newspaper with the story on the front page. "Do you know how this story got to the newspaper? You were the only one we told." "Well, I didn't say a word to anyone," he answered. "I wouldn't do that." I wasn't sure if I should say anything but then said, "I think it was your secretary. I can't prove it, but that's what I think." Everyone looked at me, but then Grace said, "It doesn't matter how they found out. The question is how will people around here react to the news?" She added, "And now the whole world knows. It was in the New York Times." I didn't want to say anything about the FBI watching everything, but couldn't stop thinking about Arianna's warning that the Bendula would try to stop it and that not only Glenn but we were all in danger, including the Indians. Just before we got into my dad's car parked in front of Bronson's office, I noticed the sheriff's white car parked across the street and saw him looking at us. "The sheriff is watching us," I said to Alice. She looked at the sheriff and me, "If he is, so are the Bendula." After setting the round oak table in the middle of the small dining room along with five wooden chairs, and a green futon couch in the living room, Glenn cleaned the old wood stove and got a fire going. Grace and Tammy carried in several boxes of dishes and pots and pans. My dad and Dan put together Grace's bed in her old room on the second floor, while Gabe and Tim carried up her oak bureau. Now that all of the furniture was in the house, Alice and I took our things up to the cabin. Gabe and Tim said they wanted to sleep in the tent because Gabe just got it as a birthday present from his uncle, but they also suspected we wanted some privacy. A little bit of firewood remained from our last trip. I got a fire going, but knew we would have to gather more wood. "I really like this cabin," Alice said, walking around, glancing out the window, touching the bunk bed, then she came over to me and we hugged. It was the first time we had been alone all day. We kissed gently and embraced for a few moments, breathing in the quiet stillness and each other before going back to join the others. "This is nice," Alice murmured. It was a bright but chilly late October afternoon and the blazing camp fire felt good. Tammy was in the kitchen with Grace. Glenn and my dad were just coming out of the barn after showing it to Dan and Liz. Atticus was piggybacking on Liz when we saw Sun Dancer and Morning Star walking through the pasture. Sun Dancer wore a bright orange sash around his waist. I was eager to know if the council had made any decision about the length of time they would grant us, but could tell by the expression on both of their faces that something was wrong. "We have sad news," Sun Dancer said. "My grandfather has passed on. He is now with his ancestors." "Oh, no, that's terrible," Tammy said. Grace closed her eyes at the news. "When did it happen?" "The morning after you left," Sun Dancer said. "My grandmother knew the end was near when he returned from the last council meeting. That's why she would not allow another meeting." "What will happen now?" Glenn asked. "Will Grey Fox be made Chief?" "No, that is why I am wearing White Elk's sash. He passed it on to me before he died. I am now the keeper of the sacred pipe. Grey Fox has not said anything, but I am sure he's not happy." "So you are now the Chief," Grace asked. "That is what my grandfather wants, but it has to be decided by the council and also by everyone. The Chief cannot be appointed but must be chosen by all members of our tribe. The time of grieving must pass before choosing can be done. So for the time

being, I am Chief Sun Dancer." "That's good news, but I'm so sorry about White Elk," Grace said, reaching for Morning Star's hand. "How is your grandmother?" "She is being comforted by the women but is grieving," Morning Star said. "She will be wearing the black mourning dress for many months." Alice went to Morning Star, "I know you loved your grandfather very much. I could tell." "Yes, he changed my life and my brother's. He brought many lost Indians back to their ancestors." "I want to go to Shining Star," Grace said. "I do too," Alice said, then turned to Sun Dancer, "Can we?" "Not now, but tomorrow," Sun Dancer said. "She will be sleeping soon." "When was White Elk buried?" Glenn asked. "Ten days ago he was taken to return to his ancestors," Sun Dancer answered then pointed to the hill. "Our burial ground is beyond the woods and near the river. It is on a high hill where it is clear and the soil is soft. It's a place of dignity overlooking the river where we fish. He was buried in the old way wrapped in birch bark and with the few possessions he loved, his rifle, his knife, his old beaver hat." We looked where Sun Dancer pointed and saw an eagle gliding in a circle high in the sky. "The Eagle has been flying there every day," Sun Dancer said. "White Elk loved the eagles and often said he believed he was part eagle." "That's beautiful," Grace said, looking up at it circling in the distance. Sun Dancer looked at Tim and Gabe, then at Dan, Liz and Atticus. "Welcome to our land." "Thank you," Liz said, holding Atticus and patting his back. "I'm sorry to hear about your grandfather." "It's good that White Elk has chosen you to be chief," Grace said. "But there is something you should know." "Really, what?" "The story that the reporter wrote about what we are doing here was published in the New York Times. I don't know what will happen now, but it is no longer a secret. The world knows you are here and what we are planning." Sun Dancer nodded, "I'm not surprised. I knew the story would spread. Maybe it's for the best. Now, they know and will learn why we are here." Glenn had been quiet, listening, watching the eagle. He seemed deep in thought and I wondered what he was thinking. He glanced at my dad and Grace, then faced Sun Dancer and Morning Star. "Nothing can stop us," he said. "I want to make this land we share, honor my grandfather's dream and White Elk's vision." After hearing Glenn's determination, I clenched my fists at the thought of the Bendula wanting to stop him. Then he held Grace's hand and squeezed it and said, "We can do this. We can create Chaordia Farm. I know we can." That's when we heard a car driving up the lane. I wondered whether it was Jeremy Zelnick, but when I saw the white car, I knew it was the sheriff we had seen earlier.