

RAM I AM

JONATHAN
WOMACK

Copyright © 2010 Jonathan Womack. All rights reserved.

Advance Reader Excerpt - Not for Sale

This excerpt is from an unedited manuscript and is meant for review purposes only. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written prior permission of the author.

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this novel are either fictitious or are used fictitiously.

Ram I Am / Jonathan Womack
1st Edition Hardcover: December 2012
ISBN 10: 1-936185-51-2
ISBN 13: 978-1-936185-51-1

Other books by Jonathan Womack:
A Cry for a Hero
The Dogman Cometh
Old Souls
Jonathan Womack Double EBook
Jonathan Womack Triple EBook

Readers may contact Jonathan Womack at:
www.jonathanwomack.com

Published by Charles River Press, LLC
www.CharlesRiverPress.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

PART ONE

Cycle

What goes around comes around...

ONE

WASHINGTON D.C.

Ram's heart froze. He'd been patrolling the skies over the nation's capitol on a sunny, September 11th morning when his alarm sense blared, bringing his glide to an abrupt halt over the iconic city. Ram's worst fear flashed his mind, the onset of an anniversary terrorist attack at eight forty six am. He prayed he was wrong and braced for the worst as he zeroed his awareness, pinging the area with his psychic sonar for the warning's origin. Convinced this was not a diversion, Ram pinpointed the northeasterly emanation and without hesitation darted eastward across the sky over the marble metropolis, following the red alert beacon toward its source. More dreadful than any of his previous distress calls, the signal led him away from the DC area and over the eastern seaboard. Ram locked on the paranormal SOS and arced high over the Atlantic Ocean, the U.S. coastline shrinking into the distance behind, tunneled vision of sky and sea ahead. In the time it takes to slide into home plate, his forward rush slowed as the British Isles came into view ten thousand feet below, his tracking sense

RAM I AM

indicating his objective lie somewhere along England's southern coast.

Faster than a speeding jet, Ram dove at the signal's origin directly below, the danger sense intensifying as he raced at the island nation. An eighteenth-century sailing ship came into view, docked at a rocky patch of barren and abandoned shoreline, its sails furled under a blue sky, waves lapping at the hull. A group of frantic people gathered on the deck, and as Ram closed in on the vessel from above, he witnessed an ensuing sword fight between an embattled-man garbed in a leather tunic protecting a young Victorian-looking woman from what appeared to be a trio of pirates. Standing at her protector's back, the exit blocked, the woman was at the crux of the crisis, her survival somehow determining the fate of many. Her protector was valiant, but had suffered grievous wounds, his bearded, Saxon face drawn and pasty, his physical body about to expire. The protector was the originator of the SOS, his mental cries buffeting Ram with peril, dread pouring over Ram like liquid cement, *help...!*

Ram was about to incapacitate the pirates with a short burst of psi-fire when the protector was stabbed in the stomach. Time blinked, and in the next temporal clock-tick, Ram watched as the stranger's spirit separated from the impaled body and elevated into the sky toward a dark tunnel, disappearing in a bright flash, its

JONATHAN WOMACK

exit from the physical world and return to the spirit realm complete.

Before Ram could act, an irrevocable force pulled Ram into the protector's vacated body, Ram's perspective suddenly that of the swashbuckler, the pirate's sword still stuck in Ram's belly. Face to face with his attacker, time resumed, and Ram locked eyes with the villain, the never ending battle between good and evil playing out in a do-or-die moment. If not for Ram's honed mental buffering, the scorching pain from being pierced with cold steel would have overwhelmed his hold on consciousness. Imposing his will upon the damaged body, Ram focused on his cutlass, dangling at his side from his loose grip. Ram tightened his hold and arced upward, the single-edge blade slicing through the pirate's wrist, separating the villain from his weapon and his right hand in one slash. The pirate screamed with pain, and Ram followed with a punch to the face, knocking the killer backward over a stand of barrels. The sight of Ram removing the decapitated hand from the sword hilt and easing the steel blade from his stomach stayed the remaining two pirates. Rather than gushing blood, the wound clogged to a trickle. Fear swarmed the pirate's expressions. The warlock stories were true. The man in the leather tunic had the power of a demon.

Ram lunged at the pair, one pirate choosing to jump overboard rather than fight a zombie. The second com-

RAM I AM

batant put up a brief resistance before getting side-kicked against the mast and knocked unconscious. The way now clear, Ram turned to the woman, and called to her with someone else's voice and accent. "Go!"

She hurried to the gangway and scuttled down the plank, her nearness familiar, her identity and purpose unknown.

A conscious choice faced Ram as he shot a look at the pirate with the severed hand. The killer had removed his head-scarf and was wrapping his bloody stump, his aggression in retreat, his hatred escalating. The question of whether to finish him was momentary. Though the pirate's aura emanated greed and hostility, Ram had pledged one year ago to never again take a life, no matter how malicious or wretched, and his oath applied regardless of where he was or whose body he inhabited.

Blood trails embossed Ram's arms and legs as he and the mystery woman abandoned the pirates to their karmic fate and hurried across the gangway to the shoreline. A grass and stone path led up a steady grade layered in slippery mists. A backward glance from Ram revealed the lack of pursuit, his enemies intimidated by his resurgence. Because of his Samaritan actions, the danger beacon that beckoned him here was silent, replaced by a comforting sense all was as it should be. The woman would reach the village safely: time to go.

Mid-step, Ram disengaged, lifting up and out, the

JONATHAN WOMACK

protector's expired flesh slumping in Ram's wake, the body of the once virile swashbuckler thudding the ground limp as a stampeded monkey. The woman turned at the sound of her fallen guardian, rushing to his side with sorrowed eyes, no chance for thank you, no good-byes; her hero dead and gone.

Ram swooped up and away, jetting south over the English Channel, his tranquil detachment incongruent to the bloody violence just occurred. Taking time to revel in the joy of flying was a way to mitigate negative echoes leftover from the battle. He glided through the oceanic vista, his mind at peace.

Angling down at the sea, Ram swooped low, skimming the blue surface, choppy waves blurring by beneath him, racing above the brine as exhilarating as speeding through a Death Star trench in an X-wing fighter. The pirate encounter proposed many questions, and Ram meditated his debriefing to Dr. Keef upon returning to the venerated institute. Ram's physical body lay on a sleep table inside a sound-proof booth, entranced and closely monitored during the out-of-body patrol.

Ram veered west as the French Coastline came into view. Though a European terrorist strike was always a viable threat, Ram's focus on this morning of remembrance was America's East Coast. Major Honeycutt had no Intel regarding an attack. Even so, the government

RAM I AM

and the people were on high alert, and Ram's responsibility was clear; serve and protect during the ceremonies in New York and DC.

Ram lifted away from the sea, rising through light clouds into a blue expanse, the sun glinting off the ocean surface with the metallic cast of a Navy ship hull. Envisioning the Statue of Liberty in his mind while expressing the desire to go there, Ram burst into motion; his surroundings blurring into the tunnel effect indicative of traveling through the ether at the speed of thought. He reached the northern Atlantic coast in a plowed instant, slowing his breakneck velocity into his routine patrol glide as he neared New York City, the famed copper lady a few miles in the distance, the Manhattan skyline visible just beyond. Ram took in the entourage of military and civilian vessels pocking the bay as he passed over Ellis Island, his mind dialing into the broadband of frequencies transporting the thoughts of 15 million people. Appearing to his meta-vision as a fog of radio static doming the city, Ram sifted through the thought-cloud generated by the thinking populace. His ability to tune out the chafe and tighten his sonar to a narrow spectrum common to extremists was improving. Once detected, Ram could follow the malfeasant beacon to its homicidal source. Far from an exact science, ferreting out terrorists was part success, part disappointment.

Ram passed above the docks lining the Manhattan

JONATHAN WOMACK

shore and coasted to an idle above a rooftop flanking Ground Zero, peopled masses gathered below commemorating September 11th. Ram's ghostly physique was invisible to human senses, and he watched the Reading of the Names as an unnoticed bystander, his astral cape billowing as he floated above the scene. Like many earthly sites where senseless violence had occurred, traumatized souls lingered the area as ghosts. One of Ram's responsibilities was made known one year ago* when he freed the Pentagon souls. Guiding them to the light was deeply rewarding, and to date, a number of SOS calls had originated from dazed and confused ghosts. From Auschwitz to Anaheim, Alaska to Antarctica, the earth was full of such entities, some harmless, others malevolent. Ram had since cleared Ground Zero, and all lingering spirits had returned through the tunnel to the light.

Ram resumed his patrol, gliding over Manhattan and surrounding boroughs in ever widening circles, sonar-reflections absent of perceived threat. Envisioning the Washington Monument and expressing the desire to go there, Ram sped away from New York to blitz a path back to D.C., reaching the airspace above the White House in the time it takes to board Air Force One. The Pentagon was a short glide from the Mall, part of his routine patrol route. As with New York, a somber ceremony took place below among a gathered mass. Ram scanned the crowd for malicious intentions, and finding

RAM I AM

none, expanded his ping range to the surrounding area, ready to respond at the first sign of danger. He took a moment to pay his respects before moving off, staying on the move, his watch covering a 5 mile radius from the White House. Moments later came the pinch on his upper right arm, a way to recall him to his body, Keef monitoring his vitals from a glassed in control booth. The soft rather than hard pinch suggested a lack of danger, Ram's instinct sensing the US had avoided another attack on this notorious anniversary. Thoughts of Vonya candied his mind as he angled south away from the Potomac into a slipstream glide toward the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.