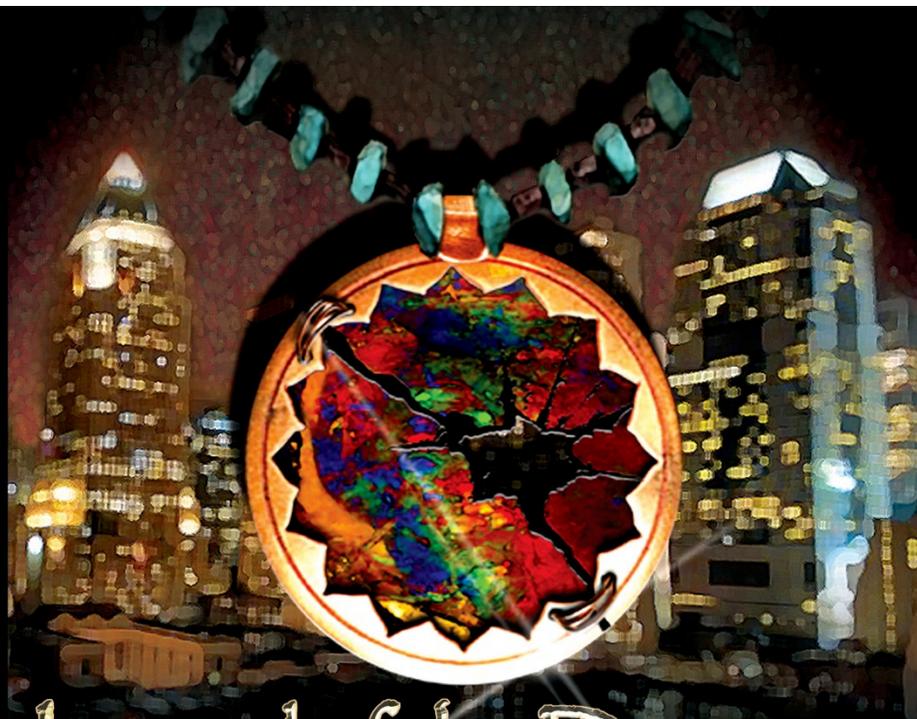




Legend of the Dogman
JONATHAN WOMACK



Legend of the Dogman



Award-Winning Author

JONATHAN WOMACK



Charles River Press

ISBN 978-1-936185-58-0



9 781936 185580

Copyright 2013 Jonathan Womack. All Rights Reserved

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. Characters from this excerpt are either fictitious or used fictitiously.

Legend of the Dogman / Jonathan Womack

1st Edition Hardcover / June 2016

ISBN 13: 978-1-936185-58-0

Other books by Jonathan Womack:

A Cry for a Hero

The Dogman Cometh

Old Souls

Ram I Am

Readers may contact the author at: jonathan@jonathanwomack.com

Published by Charles River Press - www.CharlesRiverPress.com

Part 1

The Dogman Standeth

“As foretold, the Dogman did slay the White Devil, and the land was at peace. But too soon did the brown devils appear, like scavengers they invade and shamble the land.”

-Dogman’s mentor, Two Hearts

Glacier National Park Montana

Dogman’s country home six miles Outside of Plano

Morning dawned over the mountain, rousing the flora and fauna, the climbing sun serving the nocturnal air with a spring breakfast of yellow shafts and tempered rays.

Sitting cross legged at the center of a tree rimmed circle, dressed in jeans and T-shirt, a multicolored talisman tucked inside his shirt, Jared Kneeling, the *Oheshkeso hehtahne*, the Dogman of legend, sat in repose. At his side, the remains of a smoked pipe, his psycho-activated vision dissipating. Overhead, Jared’s avian companion, Eagle, glided soft circles in

the dewed air, while the white spirit-wolf, Lightdog, sat nearby, bird of prey and luminous watchdog scouting for possible threats during Jared's trance.

The vision was clear, the ancient ones had spoken. Tonight, under the light of a full moon, Dogman would strike. The weatherman described favorable conditions, elements necessary to Jared's deadly purpose. Blinded by a fall into the rapids eight months ago, Jared had been granted special powers by the Great Spirit, superhuman senses and animal communication among them. Though the effect was moderate, wind, temperature and humidity influenced his radar abilities and Jared kept close tabs on weather readings.

Jared rose, slipped on his boots and headed for the barn a five minute walk away. Jared's Jeep was parked in the garage where it would remain during the interim. This journey called for the help of Jared's animal companions.

Eagle followed Jared's lead by spiraling a path to the barn's loft while Lightdog entered the wooden structure by passing *through* the barn wall. Relaxing inside a stall strewn with hay stood Jared's horse, Stonewalker. Jared approached the Appaloosa mare, patting her forehead with affectionate grooming. "The Great Spirit calls upon us once again."

Stony neighed, receiving images sent via Jared's mind. One hoof clopped the wooden floor.

"Yes," Jared said, "there is much danger ahead. Whatever happens, I pray there will be justice."

Jared saddled the brave horse, Jared's thoughts shifting to his far away mate, Jessica Corbett. After the White Devil incident* eight months ago, Jesse had returned to New York City where she was cleared of any charges in the ensuing murder investigation. Jessica returned to her life as Chief

Anthropologist at the New York Museum of Art as best she could. Though the couple often spoke by phone, they missed each other's physical presence, Jesse urging Jared to visit her in New York as soon as he could get away. Jared had called her earlier in the day to tell her of his morbid plan, and perhaps to say goodbye. Her voice mail greeting pruned his heart. Her buoyant strength had lifted him in times of weakness and leaving his satellite phone at home was difficult but necessary. Like the fictional Batman of Gotham, Dogman operated anonymously as an untraceable vigilante. There must be no evidence of his identity in the case of his capture or death, nothing to link Dogman to Jared Kneeling. His Will was written and signed. All that was left was to enact his plan and smite the enemy. He just wished he could have spoken with Jesse instead of leaving an awkward message. With luck, he, Stony, Eagle, and Lightdog would return home safely, and tomorrow Jared would organize a trip to the big Apple.

Saddled, bridled, dressed in Native American regalia, Stonewalker presented a majestic icon of strength and heritage. After packing the saddle bags Jared stepped to a nearby locked chest. Inside lie his head dress and Native American attire, his knife blade lathed to a keen edge, his Tomahawk balanced and agile in his hand. The spear Jared had used to slay the alpha wolf that became Jared's head dress was there, too, along with bow and arrows, a rifle and a pistol.

Mindful and reverent, Jared shed his civilian attire, humming a Cheyenne chant as he dressed in fine Tsitsista cloths, transforming into his Dogman persona with each item he donned. The magical talisman felt warm against Jared's chest, its power like a second heartbeat. Jared dipped two fingers into small jars of war paint, streaking his face with red and black. Now the finishing accouterment, the wolf head that served to strike fear into

his enemies. Like his spear and knife, its weight and carry had become an extension of his body.

Jared reviewed his plan and how he came to this moment. Montana's remote landscape had attracted Mexican drug lords. Jared blamed the news reports of the White Devil incident for having led a ruthless gang to set up camp at the home of the Lost Tribe, the same spot Jared had defended against the white supremacist/serial killer, Zach Arsonault*. It was biting irony that Zach had warned of the inevitable Meximerica. In the eight short months since Zach's defeat, the sacred ground had become defiled by murderous invaders occupying the ancient landmark with impunity. Moreover, crime in Plano, a small town with a Sheriff and two deputies, had escalated in the past year. Two weeks ago Jared's high school football coach had been gunned down in broad daylight. If there were any witnesses, they were too frightened to offer testimony.

In the dim light of the Dog barn, a light shaft found its way through a hole in the barn wall, silhouetting Dogman like an actor on a stage. Dogman regarded his loyal audience with a meditative face, preparing his heart, soul, and body for the coming battle. The spirit of oncoming conflict escalated, the air charging up with psychic energy, and, as did his warrior ancestors before him, the Dogman danced.

* * *

Afternoon dimmed into evening as Dogman and his away team closed to within two miles of the drug lord camp. They stopped in a deserted open area with a two-story rock-crop at the center of a clearing known to Dogman's ancestors as something rock. Stonewalker sidled up to the stone formation, Dogman dismounting to the hard ground. He had reconnoitered

the drug camp for a fortnight before embarking on his mission. Except for his shaman mentor, Two Hearts, Dogman knew the terrain better than anyone, a distinct advantage. He counted a contingent of thirty men and two women, each armed and dangerous. Rather than test his stealth and cunning against such odds head on, Dogman would circumvent the guards, isolate the leader, and disappear before his actions were discovered.

Dogman checked his arsenal. The next leg of his journey came with weight restrictions. He would bring his pistol, extra bullets, and his knife. His destination would be too windy for bow and arrow, his weighty rifle and spear would also stay behind.

A furling breeze fueled Dogman's radar vision as he climbed the crop to the flat pinnacle. There he stood tall, outstretching his gloved arm, his mind pinging with rippled thought. In moments, Eagle fluttered over head to land on Dogman's forearm, folding its wings in, talons squeezing, the bird of prey reporting to its master with a staccato screech.

Dogman petted the bird, projecting thanks for its unfailing loyalty. Dogman had sent Eagle to fetch the fifth member of their war party. As confirmation, a feathery musk scenting the wind was the first sign of the great sky creature's approach. Eagle spread its wings and lifted from Dogman's arm, gliding up and away, making room for the voluminous encounter.

The sound of rhythmic drafts drew closer, descending like a winged elevator. A rhythmic whoosh buffeted Dogman as the giant condor swooped low, landing beside Dogman, a medieval dragon answering a wizard's call. Dogman climbed onto the bird's back, his arms around its shoulders. With thrusts of its broad wings, the mammoth beast lifted from the crop, the Cheyenne hero holding tight to the thick feathers, Eagle gliding in formation

alongside condor and human as they ascended into the night sky. Thick clouds blotted out the moonlight, blanketing the airborne assault with dark cover.

Dogman utilized his mind meld, coaxing Condor's primitive brain to cooperate, urging it to its mountain nest. Condor flapped a path to a remote summit without complaint, landing at the center of an oversized, empty nest constructed from limbs and twigs, Eagle perching along the wooded rim.

Dogman dismounted, taking time to groom and praise his feathered friend before stepping to the wooded rim. Shifting breezes brought pilloried scents, one particular aroma bracing Dogman's nerves. The enemy was nearby. Trade winds sighed over the plateau, outlining Dogman's target in gray radar reflections. It was to Dogman's advantage his enemies were predictable, Dogman capitalizing on his foe's vulnerabilities. Employing his modified senses, Dogman scanned the area ten stories below, his ancestor's sacred prayer plateau. As if a concert venue had been scooped up and wedged into the side of a cliff, the spectacular feature was nature's version of the Hollywood Bowl. One side of the stage had a set of slate steps sloping down around the mountainside. Two guards stood at the top of the stairs, two at the bottom. This was the crime lords private time with his mate, at least in theory. From the faint voices carried on the wind, Dogman sensed more angst than amour between the couple.

The face off between good and evil fast approached as Dogman climbed onto Condor's back, Eagle spreading its wings. Time to send a message.

Solemn and steadfast, the warrior band lifted up and away into the darkness.

* * *