

The Secret of Glaston Tor

“The Secret of Glaston Tor is a gripping yarn that has all the ingredients any adventurous reader could desire. Time travel, wartime adventure, interrogation by the secret police, a desperate attempt to escape from France against all the odds. And it’s all woven together with a golden thread of religious truth. Who could ask for more?”

*Joseph Pearce, Director of the Center for
Faith and Culture, Aquinas College, Nashville*

“The Secret of Glaston Tor is a moving story about how the power of prayer, love, and goodness, reaches God’s heart and inspires miracles. It takes us to the heart of the Christian mystery. Donal Foley’s book illuminates the nature of a true wish and gives a glimpse of why these wishes—the deepest desires of the heart—come true.”

*Dr Mitchell Kalpakgian, Professor Emeritus
of Humanities, Wyoming Catholic College*

A door opens up to another time and place, and three cousins suddenly find themselves thrust into a daring adventure none of them expected. Saving people in Nazi-occupied France is dangerous enough, but how will they get home?

“Parents and target audience members alike be assured: Donal Foley has written an exciting adventure for fans of time-traveling fiction and historical adventures. Ancient Marian shrines, plucky young heroes, priests and resistance members—and nefarious Nazis to boot. Read and enjoy!”

*John McNichol, author, The Young Chesterton
Chronicles, 1 & 2, and The King’s Gambit*

*For Martin, for your gift of friendship, and
for introducing me to Glastonbury ...*

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Glaston Chronicles

Donal Anthony Foley

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Christmas Eve

“Look out, Matt!”

Matt Bergin heard Annie’s desperate shout just as he stepped off the curb. It was already too late. Instinctively, he turned his head to the right, and saw a big black car hurtling towards him at high speed. He froze, and unable to move, braced himself for impact.

Then he felt a strong hand grasp him firmly around the left elbow and pull him forcefully backwards.

The black car whistled past his face, missing him by inches, before racing around a corner with tires squealing; passengers coming out of the nearby airport terminal craned their necks to see what was happening.

Coming to himself, Matt turned to see a tall stranger looking at him intently. He appeared to be in his early thirties, was wearing a dark jacket, and had fair hair.

“You should be more careful,” he said with a smile.

“Thanks ... you saved my life,” said Matt.

Matt’s shocked Aunt Susan, who had come to the airport to collect him, spoke up, “Yes, thank you. You really did save his life, Mr. ...?”

“Alexander,” he said. “Alex to my friends. Just happy to be of service.”

There was a pause, and then he said, “Well, I have to be going.”

“Thanks again,” said Matt, staring at him.

“No problem,” replied Alex. “Just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Life can be dangerous out there. Be careful. And always watch your back.”

He turned and walked briskly back towards Heathrow Airport Terminal 3. Matt watched him go, and thought that something about him was deeply impressive; something about his presence, a sort of power, something ... he searched for the right word ... mystical ... spiritual?

Matt’s cousins, Luke, Annie and Ben, who had come with his Aunt Susan, gathered around him and plied him with

questions.

“Are you okay, Matt?” asked Luke.

“I’m fine. Just a bit shaken up, that’s all. But I’m fine.”

“I was sure the car was going to hit you, Matt,” said Annie. “I didn’t see where that man—what was his name, Alex?—appeared from. One moment he wasn’t there and the next he was.”

“Yes, very strange,” said a relieved Susan Martin. “He seemed to pop up out of nowhere. Anyway, good job he was there. We didn’t want to lose you that way, Matt.”

“I don’t want to go that way,” said Matt dryly.

Mrs. Martin looked around. “Well, we’d better get going.”

They carefully crossed the road and made their way to the car, crunching through the fresh snow. Matt reflected that his overnight flight from New York to London Heathrow had been fine. He was in England for Christmas, and staying with his cousins in Glastonbury. He had traveled down to New York with his father from Hartford, but that seemed like a long time ago—and a long way away—now. It would be strange not to be with his family for Christmas, but staying with his aunt and her family was the next best thing. He was definitely looking forward to his holiday visit in England.

He glanced at his cousins and aunt. It had been a while since he had seen them. Luke at fourteen was a year his junior, and stockier, but they could have passed for brothers with almost the same shade of brown hair, while Annie had short fair hair, just like her mother’s. She was twelve, but mature for her age.

Matt had been reading a book about Glastonbury on the plane. Its cover showed Glastonbury Tor, the strange, conical hill just outside the town. At its summit was St. Michael’s Tower. The whole Glastonbury story fascinated him. Was it really true that Joseph of Arimathea had been there, and all those saints and historical figures? And what about the whole mystical side to Glastonbury, the myth and the magic, that was said to surround it?

And he thought it was strange, too, that after all their travels, his family had finally ended up in a place where there was also a town called Glastonbury so close—Glastonbury, Connecticut, that is. One of life’s strange coincidences,

as his Dad had remarked.

By now they had reached the Martin family car.

“Sorry about that back there,” said Matt. “I wasn’t thinking. I forgot cars drive on the left over here. I should’ve looked the other way.”

“It wasn’t really your fault,” said Luke, “He should never have been going that fast in a car park anyway. He must have been doing fifty or sixty at least. He just came out of nowhere. It looked like a BMW or a Mercedes. Did you get the number?”

“No,” said Matt, “the license plate was covered with mud or something. But I did get a glimpse of the passenger’s face. I could’ve sworn he was smiling.”

That was another strange thing about the incident with the car, thought Matt—the way time had seemed to slow down the moment he felt Alex grip his arm. As if the whole thing had taken place in slow motion. Weird.

But he didn’t mention that.

“I won’t forget that smiling face,” he said.

“Smiling?” repeated Mrs. Martin. “That’s odd. What did he look like?”

“Oh, quite young, 16 or 17, dark hair. And there was a really strange looking character in the back too. But he wasn’t smiling. It was more of a look of ... well, hate.”

Something about that look gave Matt a sense of foreboding, the feeling that he hadn’t seen the last of that car or its occupants. He tried to brush off those thoughts, though, as they all piled into the family car, and made their way out of the airport, away from London and toward Glastonbury. He sat in the front seat with his cousins in the back.

“We’ll stop at the motorway services, Matt,” said Mrs. Martin, “but you can relax now.”

“Thanks, Aunt Susan.”

“Matt, you don’t have to call me Aunt Susan—it makes me sound like something out of a Victorian novel—just call me Susan or Sue. And I’m sure that your uncle will be happier if you call him by his Christian name too. After all you’re fifteen now.”

Matt was pleased that they wanted to treat him in a grown-up way.

“How are Grace and Uncle Robert?” he asked.

“Oh, they’re fine,” said Mrs. Martin. “We’ve left them at home preparing for Christmas. They were due to do some shopping, and also get a crib Grace said she saw in a shop.”

“A crib?” asked Matt. “What’s that?”

“I think you call it a crèche. You know, a nativity set.”

“Oh, right.”

Snow plows had mostly cleared the roads, but care was still needed after a fresh fall of snow. The conversation ebbed back and forth, and then lapsed into silence as Luke played an electronic game on his smartphone, while Annie read a book and Ben gazed out over the wintry landscape. Matt was left to his own thoughts, apart from the occasional observation from his aunt.

After about an hour, they pulled off the motorway into the service area. Mrs. Martin asked Annie to get the bag with the hot drinks in flasks, and food, from the back of the car.

“It’s too expensive to eat in these places,” she explained to Matt.

He knew that the family wasn’t that well off. Mr. Martin was a history teacher, but with four children and a lot of expenses, he had only been able to find part-time work after losing his job, while Mrs. Martin was a part-time nurse. The financial downturn had affected Matt’s own family back in the States too; his father had been an executive with a computer company, but had lost his previous well-paying job and now they too struggled financially.

After their in-car snack they all trooped over to the main building to stretch their legs. But they were soon back on road, or rather motorway, again, and hadn’t gone far when Luke and Annie got into an argument over something or other, which Mrs. Martin was only able to end by raising her voice. There was an embarrassed silence: Matt thought to himself, well, that’s what it’s like in families sometimes—maybe a lot of times—nowadays.

He looked out over the snowy landscape as motorway signs with strange place names flashed by. He picked up a road atlas at his feet and tried to work out where they were.

“We’re just getting near Stonehenge,” said Mrs. Martin, as the sign loomed up and Matt recalled what he knew of that ancient stone circle, said to have been erected three or

four thousand years ago. Old places like that fascinated him, and he looked forward to exploring Glastonbury. Something about the Tor in particular made him to want to know more about it: he felt drawn to it in some strange way he couldn't quite explain.

Next thing he knew, a big black car had veered in front of them, and forced Mrs. Martin to take evasive action in order to avoid smashing into a crash barrier near a bridge. She slammed on the brakes and they came to a shuddering halt just a few feet away from the barrier.

The black car braked, swerved, and then sped off down the motorway in the fast lane. From behind, Matt heard a siren start to wail. A few seconds later, a police car, with blue flashing lights, rushed past them in hot pursuit before it too disappeared into the distance.

Everyone was quiet for a few moments, and then Luke said. "What an idiot. He could've killed us."

"Yeah, crazy driver," said Matt. And a crazy experience, too, he thought. For the second time that day, he had the feeling—or more than a feeling really—that time had slowed down, and he had just experienced everything that had just happened in slow motion.

"I do hope the police catch him," said Mrs. Martin. She looked around. "Everyone okay? No broken bones? We'll get going then."

"And did you notice," said Luke, "that was a black car, just like the one at the airport."

"Yeah," said Matt. "Looked like it anyway."

"I'm sure it was the same type," said Annie.

As they resumed their journey, Matt reflected that he'd probably used up a couple of his "nine lives" already that day—and it wasn't even noon yet.

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Back in Glastonbury, Matt's Uncle Robert was just about to leave the house—precautionary umbrella in one hand, dog leash with small dog attached to it in the other—as seven-year-old Grace led the way.

"Here Grace," he said. "You take Toby, and make sure he