

## CHAPTER NINE LAPIS RUSSIA

There was to be a trial.

It was an ordinary day when Lapis' mother arrived, unannounced, at his school. "We had a call from Samuel's mother. I don't know how to tell you this."

As Samuel had been devastated by the death of Marcus, Lapis was hit the hardest with Samuel's death. He couldn't remember who had told him "If you think you have control over anything, you're wrong."

When the golden retriever had approached Lapis after Samuel's funeral, his message was clear. Argos - "You are unique. Tone and color can change lives." Lapis - "Are you all right?" Argos - "Yes. We're known for our ability to recover quickly."

Lapis knew he had a connection with his new friends that was unique, different from any he'd ever had before.

Blunt, direct, straightforward with a temper, he was well aware how many times in the past he'd behaved badly. At Samuel's funeral, when Emilie had said "We have to grow up FAST," it hit the mark. He promised himself to learn tact, to control his temper. "Ask yourself what you are most afraid of, look at what scares you the most, and do it." During a concert tour, he was completely comfortable being on stage before thousands of people. What scared him was being with another person, one on one. He wondered if this was because he didn't trust people. One thing (of the many) he remembered about Prague was how much he liked not having to be in a hurry.

After Samuel's funeral, Lapis and Emilie had stayed up talking into the wee hours. When Lapis, suddenly, walked over and kissed her, what happened next seemed totally out of their control.

Arriving home in Russia, there seemed to be continual political riots in St. Petersburg. Many believed there had been corruption in the recent election. The tension, everywhere, was palpable.

Lapis began to do research on animal behavior. He wasn't surprised to learn that a coyote won't eat the flesh of a crystal meth user, bats don't fly, eagles don't drink water, ants and bees are cousins, chickens and alligators shared a common ancestor. Was it true that putting deer and bison on birth control was being considered? Did humans understand the results of captive breeding? In his opinion, animals were fine. It was the behavior of humans that shocked him.

As a little boy, he loved the sound of a car driving over pea gravel. He first heard the sound on the long driveway leading to his grandparents' house. The sound was an amazingly brilliant purple. He had to remind himself that everyone didn't hear in color.

One day, walking to the Philharmonic for a rehearsal, Lapis noticed a small crow following him. "Caw caw caw. . . caw caw." Knowing something was being communicated, he was frustrated he didn't understand. "Caw caw caw. . . caw caw." Suddenly it came to his mind. "Speak up." "Speak up." He had no idea what the message meant.

Lapis had learned to speak French as a young boy. Entering the empty lobby, walking toward the door into the theater, two men were speaking, very quietly, in French. They were planning to harm someone. Smiling as he walked past, he nodded, putting them at ease he had no idea what they were saying. Phoning the police, describing the two men and what he'd heard, he understood "Speak up."

He was proud of his song, *Holy is the Man Free*. Changes free the hearts of you and me.

Lapis was fascinated with the work of John Ridley Stroop. Cognition interference. Imagine a picture of a blue fish, with the word dog written on the fish. How quickly can you name the animal? You would have to stop and think. The Stroop Effect was about interference in the brain, when there are two conflicting meanings. Somehow, his learning about tone and color seemed to be connected.

Of all the things he'd learned both in Prague and at Samuel's funeral, he decided to write down the most important. Trust is all important in any relationship. People count on things being predictable and often don't like change. When you break a convention, be prepared for a confrontation. Miscalculation - people who don't agree with you often take an action that, instead of causing you harm, can unite and empower others who agree with you. Never forget how much you don't know.

At Samuel's funeral, when he had suggested the possibility of non profit oil companies, weapon manufacturers, and pharmaceutical companies, everyone laughed. He didn't care. If he was going to defend the human race, he'd begin by explaining Synesthesia, discussing the cutting edge data about the effect of tone and color on the human brain and nervous system. Argos had been clear in his message. "What's important is staying informed and involved, showing up, never giving up, allowing the possibility of wonderful things to happen to you."