

PROLOGUE

Ren Merit, founder of Seekers After Lost Treasure—SALT, for short—sat in his favorite chair tucked into the corner of his Singapore office. He was surrounded by memories and treasures collected from around the world. A thin, bound document lay lightly on his lap but very heavily on his heart. Cardinal Robochon had just left SALT headquarters with a commitment to the Vatican from Ren and his small, highly skilled team. Ren’s “collected family” had agreed to put their lives on the line to find a treasure that might or might not exist.

Dangers they had faced before on assignments, but never truly life-threatening ones. Was this moment really what he had dreamed of as a young boy, when he lay in bed at night in Oxford, long after lights-out, reading tales of the brave and selfless Knights Templar?

“Is the risk worth the reward?” he asked himself as he began to reread the Vatican’s translation of the ancient codex ...

He closed the last page. Reading the document again that told the story across the ages, Ren felt as if he were a time traveler. At this moment, he and his team were stepping into history. But would this be a step too far for what might simply prove to be the ravings of an old monk in his dreams of sacred treasure?

Realizing he’d just made a very personal commitment, he said aloud to the empty room, “Well, I guess we’re all about to test the walls of our limitations, but at what cost?”