

## A TROGLIAN KNOWS

Mark Stewart

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Edited by: Rosemary Cantala

Other novels Mark Stewart has written

The Kendal chronicles (crime)

Fire games

Heart of a spider is the second book in the series

I know your secret is third in the series

Romance

Kiss on the bridge (series)

Kiss on the bridge (2)

Kiss on the bridge (3)

The perfect gift

Blood red rose (Vampire romance adventure)

Blood red rose two

Blood red rose three

Legendary Blue Diamond

Legendary Blue Diamond two

Legendary Blue Diamond three

Planet X91 the beginning (series)

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### CHAPTER ONE

“JASMINE, WE made it in time.”

The fifteen-year-old girl bounded up the stairs, puffing from their sprint across the car park. “Jake, you spoke too soon.”

The fifteen-year-old glanced over his shoulder, his eyes bulging at the scene closing the gap. The surge of holidaymakers was a sea of strangers. Each one wore the same expression. Get to the Timeportation building first.

Jake and Jasmine, luggage in tow, stepped through the main doors and were instantly greeted by a Troglan sniffing at their luggage. The chain tethering the burly security guard and the midnight black hairless prehistoric dog looked piano wire tight. The strain on the guard's face displayed how much effort he needed to use just to hold back the creature.

Finally controlling the sixty-centimeter tall beast, the guard said in a gruff voice. "I want both your names." His concrete expression signaled he meant business.

Both teenagers stopped in their tracks. Immediately the Troglan started to sniff their feet. Wagging its long white tipped tail, the dog swapped his attention to Jasmine.

"What's with the mutt?" growled Jake. "Why is he more interested in my sister?"

"My name is Jasmine Ward; this is my brother Jake. We're innocent of any wrong doings."

"Did I say you've done anything out of place?" questioned the guard.

Jasmine slowly shook her head.

Jake focused on the man's name tag pinned to his breast pocket. Jake quipped. "TW Morgan, maybe your black ugly sin of a dog doesn't like long blonde-hair girls."

"Maybe your Troglan is love deprived," said Jasmine, deep in thought. "He is a male."

The corners of Jake's lips curled upwards. "It would explain why he's throwing particular interest towards you, Jazzy. It's no great surprise the whole race of mutts became extinct 85 million years ago. I'm flabbergasted the person who went back in time was actually able to apprehend a single Troglan, seeing how they're stronger than two men combined. If it wasn't for him, and if he'd thought his intentions through properly, we wouldn't be having this conversation. The idea he wanted to introduce the species to the modern era was a sham from the start. The females only live twelve months. Good bloodhounds, though. If a Troglan didn't exist I certainly wouldn't miss their ugly faces."

The guard stood to full height, looking down his nose at the pair of teenagers. His overgrown moustache quivered when he talked. "Twins in the shape of teenagers bother a Troglan."

"I suppose he told you?" snorted Jake.

"You have a smart attitude," growled TW Morgan. "Nothing escapes a Troglan's snow white oval shaped eyes or his nose; nothing at all. He smelt your DNA. He goes skittish when something doesn't add up."

The Troglan stepped closer to Jake again, sniffing his ankles.

"Stop sniffing me you prehistoric mutt of a dog."

"Don't upset the Troglan. You know they're only doing their job," instructed Jasmine.

"I don't care for a Troglan, they're ugly and they smell."

"The males might be ugly, but a female is the essence of beauty."

Jake pretended to throw up his breakfast. He sent the guard a snappy smile who didn't look amused. "Please call off the flea-bitten mutt."

"Trog, leave for the moment." TW Morgan lifted a stubby finger, pointing at Jake and Jasmine. "State your business in the Transportation centre?"

"We're going on a holiday," said Jasmine. "It's the school break."

TW Morgan yanked hard on the Troglan's lead, pulling him away. "Mark my words both of us will be keeping a watchful eye on you two."

Jake shook his head. Grabbing his sister by the arm he escorted her over to the nearest growing queue of people. He looked sideways into the eyes of the Troglan. It snorted and ambled off towards the next wave of people.

"That's a weird beast," moaned Jake. "The Troglan's long hind quarters and stubby front legs make his backside stick upwards. When it ambles from one place to the next its rump sways from side to side. To make matters worse, it never moves faster than a snail's pace. If the creature opened its mouth more often, that annoying grunted cough might cease."

"What are you mumbling about?" questioned Jasmine.

Jake shuddered and faced his sister. "Nothing important a party wouldn't cure."

"Why does there have to be so many people?" quizzed Jasmine, counting heads in the swelling line. "Each new summer it seems to be getting harder to take a trip through time. I'm positive previous years weren't this bad. 2245AD is shaping up to be another rushed year."

"Like you said to the guard; school holidays," injected Jake. "Everybody wants to leave this time zone and chill out just like us. I've read Hawaii was a nice quiet place back in the brand-new year of

2000AD. They called it the eve of new millennium.” He looked across at the Troglan. “And there were no prehistoric dogs.”

Jasmine’s shoulders slumped from having to wait too long to start their trip.

“That’s why you should be coming to the party to end all parties. We’ll slip into the last hours of, 1999 to celebrate the arrival of the year 2000.”

“You help to make it sound thrilling. We might even meet someone special.”

“Jasmine, you forget the rules. We mustn’t change history. The law is absolute. Harsh penalties will overtake you if one is broken. We can mingle with the people of yester-year, but we must never get involved,” warned Jake. He was leaning against a bronze statue of a man holding an old-fashioned book in one hand and a briefcase in the other.

“If it wasn’t for the man you’re leaning on this place wouldn’t exist,” said Jasmine. “Time travel might never have been taken out of the book.”

“Professor Charles Bradshaw, thanks, mate,” mumbled Jake, reading the plaque.

“The story reads, just after he gave his last lecture on the possibility of time travel, he died.”

“I know I read the article last week. I wonder what it was like living in 1942AD. Technology would certainly have been prehistoric.”

Jasmine was pouting as Jake scanned the terminus. People were already stepping through the hundreds of time porthole doors. He looked over his shoulder at the main doorway and spied the guard, TW Morgan holding back his Troglan. A fresh wave of teenagers had swarmed in through the main entrance of the massive ten storey building.

“Jazzy, the droves of the thousands of commuters remind me of seeing the exact same scene in an ancient movie. People gathered like we are now in the days when they sat in airplanes built of metal to get from one country to the next. Melbourne to America took 24 hours.”

“What a painfully slow way to travel,” groaned Jasmine. “These days we can travel around the world before a hot chocolate has a chance to cool.”

“What about in 1969AD, three days to get to the moon. Five minutes these days. I live in hope one day soon they’ll do it in ninety seconds.”

“Last week I had a school class on the moon at mid-morning. I got back in time for lunch,” added Jasmine.

“Studying moon rocks is so boring,” said Jake.

“Where did you say you obtained the information on the planes?”

“I didn’t,” said Jake.

Jasmine shot him a sterile look.

“The museum of ancient history was full to overflowing with knowledge of the past.”

“Are you trying to inform me you actually stepped foot inside a museum? I’d rather take the guided tour through the hologram,” said Jasmine.

“I thought it might be fun. Besides, I walked into this massive room full of old relics of the Second World War. Mannequins were set up wearing soldier uniforms. They carried handguns to shoot their enemy. I’m pleased to be living in 2245AD. I don’t fancy killing another human.”

“Sounds barbaric,” moaned Jasmine. “Knowledge is the key to human survival. Did you know over one-hundred-years ago mankind got together and decided there would be no more wars? Every person on the earth is expected to help one another in a quest for knowledge.”

“I thought that happened two hundred years ago,” snorted Jake.

“Either way, there is no crime, no jails and we have the freedom to go anywhere in the galaxy or through time to quench our thirst for knowledge.”

A massive surge at the departure door interrupted the conversation. The Timeportation centre resembled a mad house. Throngs of people were bursting through into the terminus like ants running away from a flood.

“Let’s hope we get going and soon. Holding up my holiday makes me slightly upset,” complained Jasmine.

The pair of teenagers reached the checkout. Jake stepped up to one of three-hundred computers bolted to the wall. Jasmine swiped the plasma coated chip she had buried deep in her pocket and stepped next to her brother.

“Speak your details. Include your exact date of departure and return,” reported the computer’s metallic voice.

Jake cleared his throat. He said in a military voice. “Jake Ward; time of departure is 24 May; year 2245AD. Destination Hawaii, 31 December 1999 3:04pm.”

Jasmine stepped forward. “85 million years BC. May 2, 4:04pm.”

A door at the far end of the long narrow room opened, allowing them to walk through.

"I thought we were going to Hawaii to see in the new millennium; party to end all parties?" quizzed Jake.

"I was, but I thought I'd go find a Troglia pup. The knowledge a female Troglia pup can bring easily outweighs King Solomon's treasure."

"Good luck on that score," said Jake.

"I'll catch you up. I'm sure finding a pup won't take long. Save me a place on the dance floor."

Jake and Jasmine were ushered along by security guards stationed at frequent intervals.

"Finally, we're on our way," whispered Jasmine, catching a glimpse of the doorway at the other end.

Jake looked over his shoulder and watched the crowd swell. "We made it through in time. The terminus is full to capacity. Each queue looks to be over four hundred deep."

Ahead of the two, there was a smaller group of people. They were mingling, discussing how slow the queue was. A military man walked over. He held a semi-transparent computer screen in his hand and stared directly at Jake.

"Where are you headed?"

"Hawaii."

"Year?"

"1999."

"Dressed in your 2245AD clothes? I don't think so. Stow your gear in a locker, change clothes or you won't be going anywhere."

Jake stepped into an adjacent cubicle. After deciding what to wear from the catalogue, he placed his thumb against the computer scanner. A faint whirring noise filled the room followed by a bright light. The moment the light dimmed his clothes were hanging from a coat hanger next to the door. Jake quickly dressed and emerged in the attire the new millennium party goers would be dressed in.

"Now you look the part," said the security guard. "I wouldn't want to call in a Troglia to find you because you were wearing the wrong clothes for the era you were visiting."

"No, it wouldn't be good," replied Jake.

"Don't forget the rules about intermingling with the past people. They had their ways."

"I know," groaned Jake. "I must not change history. Any slight deviation could be catastrophic to this generation."

The next wave of excited holidaymakers appeared to be quickly closing the gap. Jake and Jasmine were swallowed up in the mayhem.

Jasmine and Jake held out their time cards to the usher. The wiry built man scanned them and handed both back.

"Jake Ward, you can make your way to door fourteen. Jasmine Ward, you can make your way to door twenty-three. Have fun."

The two smiled at the guard and started to walk towards their time door. Every digital clock hanging on the wall above the archways to the many time machines were running forward at a dizzy speed. The analogue clocks were running backwards at the same dizzy speed. Next to the archway at door thirteen, a digital calendar slowed then stopped. Jake read the date.

"19th February 1942AD."

Under the arch, a dim light was growing. In seconds, the whole threshold was a bright light. Gradually the blurred scenery started to clear.

"There's been a mistake," said an unshaven man standing at the threshold of door thirteen.

A security guard stepped over to the man, blocking the way. Jasmine snuck through under their legs and walked towards her door. Jake watched her step through. In a bright flash of light, she was gone.

Jake smiled as he was roughly pushed and jostled in the slight skirmish from the tall unshaven man. Jake's time card was knocked out of his hand. He bent to pick it up. The unshaven man lost his balance and fell over Jake as he stood. Jake dropped his time card again and was bumped off balance. He teetered on the edge of door thirteen. He had almost regained his balance when the Timeportation hole sucked him through.