



Be different: buy direct
from the author or
tslbooks.uk

373 BC

The couple floated through the morning mist like ghosts, silent and eerie in an intricately carved boat that arched gracefully on bow and stern, crowned with carved dragons, teeth bared menacingly. Its eyes pierced the water, gliding quietly to the wayward side of their homeland.

"We must flee, husband, before the earth swallows us whole. The land is shaking, and I fear for our lives."

"Hurry, Muri," Shira whispered to his wife. "I can hear the thunder of the ocean as it crashes on the beach. The wind roars like an angry beast. We must run or we will be engulfed before we can retrieve the clay pot. We must retrieve the pot... we must..."

They passed no fewer than several boat lengths of a stone image of the Crete invaders—every face arrogant and masterful—world-conquering imperialists. The latter came to destroy Helike and make the citizens their slaves.

They hurriedly beached their small craft. "Look, the sky is darkening!" Muri screamed.

"Where are you two going? Get back here." The stern-faced slave master cracked his wicked hide-whip onto the backs of frightened men trying to escape.

"Don't look back! Run," Shira yelled.

The crack of the stout thong resounded in the air. A black cloud appeared, covering the face of the sun. It spread rapidly to the horizon. The ground heaved in rolling tremors that lasted only minutes. Still, it seemed like forever, throwing men and women into the air and down into the depths of the earth.

"It's almost too late," Muri cried out.

The ground swelled, and the land broke apart to the rim of the volcano as they scrambled to a hidden grotto protected from all sides of view.

Inside the grotto, the couple dug with speed, and from a sealed clay pot, they brought out a codex with coordinates that pointed to a new land and carried it away with the golden mykite that would keep their people alive. Husband and wife fled the interior of the cave just as high waves, infuriated and maddened by some tremen-