

The background of the cover is a misty, blue-toned forest. Three people are seen from behind, walking away on a path that leads into the distance. The person on the left is a woman with long dark hair wearing a patterned top and dark pants. The person in the middle is a man with short hair wearing a dark jacket and pants. The person on the right is a woman with long blonde hair wearing a dark crop top and pants. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and suspenseful.

**OLIVIA HARDY RAY**

**PHARAOH'S  
STAR**

**BOOK TWO OF THE FOX HOLLOW  
ROAD ABDUCTION SERIES**

# FOX HOLLOW

# PHARAOH'S STAR

Olivia Hardy Ray

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

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*“In the deepest sense, the search for extraterrestrial intelligence  
is a search for ourselves.”*

Carl Sagan

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# PHARAOH'S STAR

Fox Hollow Road Abduction Series

BOOK TWO

Olivia Hardy Ray



# Prologue

## *Barely Two Weeks After Nick Dowling's Funeral*

A quiet rage filled Sam Hollander, a rage that clouded his thoughts and caused him to forget all those simple things, like remembering his house keys and realizing that red octagonal signs on the road meant he should stop his car and not drive straight through intersections. He was so distracted that he no longer heard what his patients said. He hoped they couldn't read his expression, the one which revealed he wasn't present. He walked around in a daze with a dilemma that had no apparent solution. His brother had died in his place. How would he live with that?

He was on the deck at Jenna and Nick's country house in New Kingston, barely two weeks after Nick's funeral. He was staring at the chair he'd last sat in talking with Nick, his mind jumbled with what he knew and couldn't speak about – alien beings, spaceships, time manipulation. But his conversation with Nick that day had been about just that; he'd warned him: "They're coming back for you," he'd said. "They could at any time, you know. It's that damn tracker, I think it's still implanted inside you."

Then, only shortly after that conversation, Nick was gone, and he had to accept Nick's disappearance as Nick's 'death' because that's what the police report said it was. He had no other choice. He couldn't go on insisting that Nick Dowling wasn't dead, that he'd been abducted, taken by beings who were compelled to save a planet that couldn't be saved. They'd most likely commit him to an institution. He'd certainly be beyond what he'd always been called – eccentric – and moved into the realm of the totally insane. No one paid attention to alien sightings anymore, the world had become too rational;



aliens were for cable shows and computer games.

They were quick to close the investigation on the car crash that supposedly killed Nick Dowling and Sam's brother, Elijah Hollander; it had been a slam dunk. The consensus was that for years Nick Dowling had been an imposter; a murderer by the name of Harrison Hinckley, and he had used a fake identity as Nick Dowling, even marrying and raising a daughter under that identity. He and his fake identity were now dead, burned to death in a car that had gone off the road and crashed. Nick and Harrison. Same man. Both dead. End of story.

Not so, and Sam knew it. The horrible truth was that Sam knew Harrison Hinckley was as alive as Nick Dowling. Gregory Hinckley, Harrison's twin brother, had been the poor unfortunate victim found dead in that car crash. Sam had seen Harrison at the funeral, disguised as Gregory, pretending to be gay like his brother. He had an earring in his ear and a flamboyance as diametrically opposed to Harrison as a dress would be on Arnold Schwarzenegger. But no one questioned it. But Sam knew it wasn't Nick lying in that coffin, and it wasn't Harrison lying in that coffin either; it was Gregory. The other corpse was Sam's brother, Elijah, who was in a coffin meant for Sam. Sam saw right through the charade that Harrison had created. He knew his brother's murder had been one of mistaken identity. Sam felt he'd never get over the guilt he'd feel for the rest of his life.

He had threatened Harrison that day, well, in a sense he had threatened him, nothing violent, just told him to watch the sky carefully – certainly innocuous and basically laughable, hardly a threat. Harrison could interpret that in any way he wanted as far as Sam was concerned, but Sam's threats were empty, and Harrison probably knew it. There was nothing that Sam could do. There was no way to make a deal with beings who did not yet exist. Possibly no way, unless of course, there was. Sam knew, better than anyone that in the far future, reality will look nothing like it does today. Reality alters with time. So, communication with alien beings might be feasible. What we don't know now, we might know someday. Well, someday will one day be here and maybe is already here,

unseen, and unknown until it isn't. Sam wished he could convince the aliens that did not yet exist that Nick's abduction would prove nothing, but Harrison's DNA could reveal where indifference began, in what dark space of the human soul it was given birth, and how to conquer it, so our planet would not become a ghost town, *its works laid bare*, just like the Bible says.

What a crazy man people would think he was if he went around saying that aliens travel among us, even manipulate our perceptions. But Sam could not predict what aliens would do on their quest through space and time, but he could predict what Nick would do if his consciousness were functioning at all. If it were at all possible to return to his life, if he could still think, still act, he would find a way home.

Sam's theory was that aliens were more interested in psychopaths like Harrison, not well-meaning men like Nick Dowling, but they had made a mistake, a costly one. They certainly should be more interested in evil men. The good, intelligent people of this earth were not responsible for murdering it. Sam felt it was his duty to fix this entire fiasco, but he couldn't yet interpret what *fixing* it meant. Nick was his friend, and, in a few months, Sam would marry Laurie and become his brother-in-law. Sam loved him like family, and he owed him all the effort it would take to find him.

Laurie knew that he did not accept Nick's death as something that had happened to Nick. It was certainly a loss but not a death, but they didn't talk about it. Nick's abduction was still too close, the pain of it too immediate, his apparent death had happened only two weeks ago, and coming up with absurd explanations for why he was gone was cruel. But Laurie knew Sam would not let his belief in aliens be interpreted as a crazy man's theory. Nevertheless, it was nothing they could discuss with each other, not yet. The pain of losing Nick was too devastating, and Laurie adopted a sane explanation because she had to, maybe to keep peace with her sister, Jenna, maybe to just avoid the truth, at least for the time being. And the truth for now was that Nick was gone, no matter what had taken him.



Jenna came out on the deck and took his hand. Sam thought she looked haunted. Well, he probably did, too.

“Thanks for coming,” she said. “But I didn’t really need a pot of brisket. You didn’t have to bring that.”

“Laurie insisted.” He smiled and squeezed her hand tightly. He was not aware of the strength he put behind it, and she let out a sound.

“Oh, sorry.”

She dropped his hand, and the two of them stared out over the mountains. The sky was steel gray, and the trees were green and white, tall evergreens and white birch lined the landscape, but it was so bleak. He wished he could say something comforting to her, but anything he might have said, anything that resembled the truth, would be upsetting.

Right before Nick’s so-called death, Jenna had finally come to believe that Nick had been abducted and returned to Earth with his jumbled memories. At least, she said she believed him, but Sam was never sure. She just wanted the whole experience to go away. Whatever it took. But then the accident happened, and DNA identified the man behind Nick Dowling’s driver’s license as Harrison Hinckley. It was assumed then that Nick was a liar and an imposter and had really been the murdering son of a bitch, Harrison Hinckley, all along. He’d been found burned to a crisp in his car. Afterward, everyone assumed Nick had been lying about his identity to escape his past as the man who’d killed his wife and child. So, Jenna had gone back to accepting that her husband was indeed a psychopath. That insidious Harrison Hinkley had surfaced on the earth with his duplicitous plans, surfaced from the depths of the river, or the chasm of hell to hurt them, to make Nick the embodiment of Lucifer, and to free himself.

Sam had locked eyes with Nick’s mother at the funeral, so sad and devastated she was. She had found her son after so many years, and now she couldn’t get anyone to believe that she had, that the man she found was genuinely her son, a man incapable of violence. Unfortunately, she was sure that it was

Nick who burned in that crash. She never believed that her son was Harrison Hinkley, though. No, Nick had not been hiding behind the identity of a murderer. Nick's mother knew better than that. Finding Nick when everyone else believed him to be dead had proven that anything is possible and that everything Nick had told her about his missing years was the truth. But she had found him only to lose him, or so she thought, and now she didn't know what to believe. Sam thought about going to her and giving her his theories, but if Nick never returned, then any hope he'd given her would fade, and she'd be left with nothing but pain.

Mothers know their sons, and Sam was sure Nick's mother had some inkling of the truth, that Nick might still be alive. Somewhere deep inside her, she must know that. Well, alien abduction investigators know that impossibility is often nebulous and vague, but capable of manifesting. The fiancées of space detectives know all that we don't know is far greater than all that we do. Sam believed Laurie would come around, and he would be able to share his beliefs once again, to tell her what he really thought, but for now, everything was better left unsaid. Everyone's feelings were still too harrowing.

And then there was Jenna, the wife of an abductee who has been too hurt and so damaged by the truth, she resorts to all kinds of protective measures rather than believe that her husband truly was who he appeared to be, the opposite of how reality revealed him to be. Reality: Sam has had a long history with that word. Jenna has retreated into sanity and reality as she interprets it, and Laurie is so hurt by the truth that she is forcing herself to believe in the untrue.



"Laurie is heating the brisket. We should be eating soon." Jenna looked up toward the sky and sighed deeply. He put his hand over hers.

"I'll be in in a moment," Sam said.

Sam felt lost and defeated as he watched Jenna disappear through the sliding glass doors. He didn't know how to communicate with aliens, but he knew there was a way, there

must be a way. He simply needed to find it. He believed he could get Nick returned; he had to believe it.

# Chapter One

Lilacs, pink zinnias, coral and lavender impatiens, and the bluest of blue morning glory scented the air, a glorious infusion of summer garden flowers that Gregory Hinckley had so lovingly planted. Harrison stood on the front porch of what used to be his brother's gracious white farmhouse with its elixir of scents, and he took a deep breath, "What a feast for the senses," he said aloud. "Oh, my, but it will be hard to leave this heavenly Catskill summer enchantment, with its tranquil powder blue skies and the cacophony of color." Everywhere he looked, there was wheat and yellow and red with deep green lawns, and purple flowers that made him think of picnics with pretty girls, their golden hair billowing around their faces, warm wine on his lips from the kiss he'd taken.

But alas, it was time for change; those blissful days were gone. Oh, how he wished he could pull off hiding behind the identity of Nick Dowling, but poor Nick had burned up in a car crash, and along with him, the notorious Harrison Hinckley. So essentially neither man existed anymore, and that was certainly to Harrison's advantage. But *if* he were able to pull it off, Nick's wife, Jenna, would certainly be worth the charade. Unfortunately, though, Harrison needed to disappear as quickly as possible before somebody noticed he was not his twin, Gregory. Besides, he couldn't pull off the identity of his twin any more than he could pull it off as Nick. Could he really pretend to be gay for the rest of his life? He thought not. He had no choice; he'd destroyed Harrison, which was a good thing, and put all rumor to rest. It was fact now: Nick Dowling had been an imposter. Harrison had created the perfect exit for himself, so naturally he couldn't risk being discovered hiding behind his brother's name, he couldn't live as a gay man when he wasn't in the least gay. He had to do what he had to do:

disappear altogether. It was his only choice.

But what if they insisted on exhuming the bodies of Gregory and Elijah? Then they'd realize that the two men had both been shot to death before the inferno of that horrific car crash had melted the flesh from their bodies, making them delightfully unrecognizable. He had to admit, those hokey hometown cops weren't very thorough. He assumed they'd be able to tell both men had been shot and that was the cause of death, but they didn't bother to investigate it any further. Just tossed those charred bones in a coffin. It was obvious from the wreck: the fire had killed them, bullet wounds weren't part of the equation. Luckily for Harrison.

But there was a problem, Harrison had botched it a bit. How the hell was he supposed to know that the Medicine Man also had a twin brother? Irony upon irony, how bizarre is that? So, Sam Hollander was still out in the world with a hate on for him, and Sam's twin brother Elijah was six feet under, what was left of him, that is. Of all the people to not recognize one twin from the other, it should not have been Harrison.

If only it had all been a dream, all of it. Harrison didn't like to think of himself as an evil man, a cold-hearted killer. But that's what people thought of him. Not true, he was a sane man with a strong desire for survival. He merely did what any man would have done with too many burdens to overcome. He got rid of the burdens.

Yet how nice if it had all been a dream, how utterly perfect if he in reality were Nick Dowling, and Harrison Hinckley had never existed. What if he was a loyal family man, a totally honorable man? His hallucinations about space abductions would probably have been dismissed as stress-induced fantasies. Like Nick, Harrison had those same abduction dreams, the same memory confusion. Harrison couldn't explain his past either, but he wasn't Nick Dowling. Nick Dowling had sought to discover the mystery; he sought the truth. Harrison never wanted the truth. He had never claimed to be abducted by space aliens. That was absurd. Harrison was who he was, a murderer. He wasn't anything else but a murderer. Harrison had killed his wife and child, and most recently, his brother,

Gregory, as well as Elijah Hollander, Sam Hollander's fucking twin, mistaken fucking identity.

Christ, he was practically a serial killer.

Well, murder was a means to an end. A necessity for survival. Certainly, for Harrison, it was a necessity for survival. So be it. He was the only murderer he knew, so he couldn't get a consensus. Murder is sometimes necessary. Harrison felt no remorse. After all, Gregory had to go: he was a liability. His wife had been a whore who'd cheated on him. His son was retarded, just like little Nickie, the boy out on Fox Hollow Road who conversed with aliens, or at least he said he did; Harrison was sure he thought he did in his weird little retarded mind.

In any event, Harrison's son would have required a shitload of money for his care, just like little Nickie, special hospitals, special camps, special education, special shit. Fuck that. And Elijah? Well, it was the death of an innocent man, not exactly a mistake, but a mistake, nonetheless. Harrison had thought he was doing away with Sam. He had no beef with Elijah. Shit, he and his twin brother Gregory were always confusing people when they were kids; confused people, that is, until Gregory grew up with a swish and a lisp. Sam and his brother just looked like any normal boring guys - who ever looked close enough to tell them apart? But maybe if he had, he would have killed the right man.

So Harrison couldn't explain the truth about his missing memory, but unlike Nick Dowling, he'd never tried to prove that aliens had been fucking with it. He wasn't esoteric about it; it could have been drugs for all he knew. Pieces of his life just gone. What to make of that? He had awoken by the bank of a river without knowing how he got there, and almost eighteen years had passed, eighteen years that he couldn't fill in. Well, he wasn't going to bother being introspective and waste his money sharing his nightmares with some Ph.D. who would never believe he'd been taken into space, infused with the brain and memories of another man, and then shot back to earth. Unless, of course, the Ph.D. was Sam Hollander. What bullshit Dr. Hollander claimed to believe. Harrison only believed he was blessed, not cursed. He had been given the



glorious gift of having another man pay for his sins, while most of his memory was gloriously erased. Like who cared – he was alive, wasn't he? His only hope was that Nick Dowling wouldn't suddenly reappear with proof that there are aliens, that there is a vast, empty hole in the sky with more dimensions than will ever be known, with more mystery than will ever be solved, just in case it's true. How the hell do we know what will be true in a thousand years?

As Harrison entered the old and glorious farmhouse, decorated like some frigging museum, he thought he still smelled Gregory's blood, but he had cleaned the kitchen so well. Still, to him the whole house stank of Gregory's decayed body and the pieces of his brain that had stuck to the wall. Harrison almost retched as he thought of it, the ugly, disgusting sight of it. He could never live in that house, he would always be aware of Gregory's presence; it would haunt him, the way his dead wife haunted him. Well, when he finally dies, he'll deal with those insidious little ghosts who prefer to believe they are winged angels, and there's a God up there in all those gasses, that there's a heaven and a hell, a place for killers like Harrison, a place with fire and brimstone, no redemption for Harrison, no God's love anywhere, just fire and nitrogen and hydrogen and the gaseous face of Satan to eat up his soul and spit it out.

Harrison called a broker the next morning and put Gregory's house on the market. He packed a bag and drove west in Gregory's shiny new Miata. He'd always dreamed of living in California with its mighty Pacific and myriad pastel colors, its resplendent women with faces like Nicole Kidman; every actress had a face like Nicole Kidman, according to Harrison and that was a good thing, of course. He saw that glorious face in every woman he looked at.

"Bye, bye suckers," he shouted as his radio blared out the old rock and roll that he loved and the clouds above him rolled in a storm, like omens in a crystal ball about to crack and splatter his fortune to the wind.