

# **RAISING NANCY**



A FICTION NOVEL

BY

**Michel Poulin**

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## **WARNING TO POTENTIAL READERS**

**THIS FICTION NOVEL CONTAINS GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS OF VIOLENCE AND SEX, AS WELL AS COARSE LANGUAGE AND CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS WHICH ARE UNSUITABLE FOR CHILDREN. ALSO, THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION. WHILE MANY PERSONS MENTIONED IN THIS NOVEL EITHER EXIST OR EXISTED, THE WORDS AND ACTIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THEM IN THIS NOVEL DO NOT CORRESPOND TO REALITY OR TO PAST HISTORY.**

### **ABOUT THIS NOVEL**

This novel is a sequel to my science-fiction novel UNITED STATES SPACE CORPS and is the tenth novel of the Nancy Laplante Series. This novel can be best described simply as a fiction novel with a touch of fantasy rather than being a pure science-fiction work, as the story happens in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but in a much different World context than the history that we now recall. It is centered on the efforts of the recently retired commander of the United States Space Command, General Ingrid Dows, who still looks to be in her twenties despite her actual age of 59, to raise her young daughter Nancy while teaching her the human values she herself believes in and practices. Please note that the letter 'C' following the dates of the subchapter headings means that the action is happening in Timeline 'C', one of the three parallel historical timelines described in this series of novels, with Timeline 'A' being our actual timeline as we know historically and Timeline 'B' being a parallel branch which split from Timeline 'A' in 1940. Similarly, Timeline 'C' then split from Timeline 'B' in 1941, due to attempts at temporal manipulations by enemies of Nancy Laplante. However, this story stays nearly solely in Timeline 'C' and follows the continued adventures of Ingrid Dows 'C', the adopted daughter of the late Nancy Laplante.

**Other novels by this author**

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## **CHAPTER 1 – LEAVING THE SERVICE**

**09:49 (California Time)**

**Thursday, April 18, 1985 'C'**

**Base parade square, Vandenberg Space Base  
California's Pacific coast, U.S.A.**



There was a large crowd of spectators assembled and sitting in the bleachers on one side of the large parade square, waiting for the passage of command ceremony to start. Thankfully, it was a sunny day and a refreshing breeze blew in from the nearby sea, making it a nearly perfect weather for a military parade. Over 800 men and women of the United States Space Corps were already in attendance, lined up three-deep in unit formations on the vast parade square and standing at ease while facing the V.I.P. dais where the old and the new commanders of the Space Corps were to officiate the ceremony. The crowd of waiting spectators included family members, friends and relatives of the servicemembers, plus a sizeable number of press representatives, both American and foreign ones, including full television camera crews from all the main American TV networks. Civilian employees of the Space Corps, which actually made up a sizeable portion of the Corps as members of its Civilian Space Exploration Division, were also present in force among the spectators. Finally, in a bleacher section close to the V.I.P. dais, sat dozens of men and women wearing foreign uniforms. Those foreign military members, many of them astronauts, were actually officers who were temporarily attached to the U.S. Space Corps as either liaison or exchange officers. The United States Space Corps, pushed in this by its present commander and founder, General Ingrid Dows, had in fact been already welcoming for years such foreign officers, along with foreign scientists and experts, as part of its space exploration missions. Those foreign officers and scientists included a few Soviet citizens, something that had at first created some dismay among certain American political circles. However, the recent triumphal return into Earth orbit of the spaceship U.S.S. PROMETHEUS, back from a five-year mission to the Jupiter and Saturn Systems, had shown the real value of such international cooperation, with nearly fifteen percent of its crew having been foreign members.

At about five to ten, a black military staff car rolled to a stop in front of the V.I.P. dais, with two general officers stepping out of the vehicle and prompting the military band waiting on the parade square to start playing the United States Space Corps hymn, while the men and women on parade were called to attention. The two general officers, one man and one woman, then climbed the stairs leading up to the dais' platform. The man, who looked close to sixty and wore the rank insignias of a lieutenant general, also wore an astronaut's wings, along with an impressive collection of medals. Since the Space Corps was formed of members who had belonged previously to one of the other armed services of the country, Ingrid Dows had at first let her members wear the rank insignias of their old service. However, in view of the unnecessary confusion this occasionally caused, she had recently decided that all her personnel would use the U.S. Air Force ranks equivalent to that of their old service. As for the woman climbing on the platform, she was none other than Ingrid Dows herself, her Space Corps uniform's chest covered with dozens of medals and decorations, including the Congressional Medal of Honor with cluster hanging from her neck and the long and large orange and white sash of the Order of Vietnam First Class worn across her torso. The reporters and cameramen present at once zoomed on her to film her impressive collection of medals and decorations and also to capture her beauty, incredible youth and sexiness, the last point being reinforced by her closely fitting dark blue and black, futuristic-looking Space Corps uniform. One of the press photographers present whispered a comment to a nearby colleague between two snapshots.

"Look at that girl! She is presently officially 59 years old, yet she looks to be only about 22 or 23 years old. What a babe!"

"Well, she also happens to be known to possess a few supernatural powers, supposedly received as some kind of divine gift. The important thing is that my newspaper's readers simply can't get enough of her."

"Yeah, the same here!"

Walking to the dais' lectern and microphone, Ingrid briefly scanned with her eyes the men and women in uniform assembled on the parade square as emotion filled her. She had been serving the United States for 43 years now, fighting in six wars in the process and being wounded twice in battle, once mortally. Only the intervention of the powerful spiritual entity she called 'The One' had saved her then on Guadalcanal in



1942, when she had briefly died on a field hospital' operating table before The One had resurrected and healed her. That incident had also resulted in her becoming a Chosen of The One, with many paranormal and physical powers, including prolonged youth. Even now, at the actual age of 59, she still had the body and face of a young woman in her early twenties. Quite tall for a woman, at a height of 175 centimeters, her angelic face and blue eyes, framed by reddish-brown hair cut at the neck, plus her long legs, firm chest and sexy curves, attracted legions of men to her, something that she enjoyed quite a lot. However, she also knew how to separate pleasure from work and was a highly responsible and mature woman. Her maturity was greatly boosted by the fact that, thanks to The One, she remembered all the lives she had lived as past incarnations along seven millenniums. The fact that she could remember her past incarnations had been public knowledge for over thirty years now, but her other paranormal powers had only become public in the last few months, while she was aboard the U.S.S. PROMETHEUS and on her way to Saturn. That was mostly thanks to an incident aboard the spaceship when she had healed via the touch of her hands a severely burned crewmember following a kitchen fire. Since then, things had noticeably changed for her, with her notoriety growing even more in the United States and around the World. A further, primordial change to her life had come a few months after that kitchen fire, when she had given birth aboard the ship to her daughter Nancy, now nearly two and a half years-old. Little Nancy was here today, in the arms of her nanny, Sarah Ur. However, unbeknown to all but a very few people, Sarah was in reality an angel of The One in human form named Natai. Natai's essence had inhabited persons along 9,000 years of successive incarnations, being last the soul within Nancy Laplante, Ingrid's adoptive mother and time traveler. When Nancy Laplante had died years ago in her own timeline, Timeline 'A', which was the original, unchanged historical timeline of Humanity, her soul had become an angel in the service of The One. In turn, Natai had been sent a number of times by The One to assist his Chosen, Ingrid. Now, she helped Ingrid by taking care and protecting little Nancy when Ingrid was away on duty. As for Ingrid, this was going to be her next to last day in uniform and on active duty. In two days, she was going to become a civilian, although she would still serve the United States in the capacity of Director of National Space Programs and as Special Presidential Advisor.

Looking at the men and women she had led and who had fought under her for so many years, Ingrid then spoke in a firm, deliberate voice in the dais' microphone.

“PARADE, AT EASE! Ladies and gentlemen of the United States Space Corps, I am here for the last time as your commander before passing my command to my successor, Lieutenant General Eugene Cernan. Commanding you was both a privilege and a pleasure for me. Your courage, dedication and professionalism were and are still an inspiration to our whole country, while your work helped to greatly advance science and our knowledge of Space. I would like in passing to thank as well for their service all our members who could not be here on Earth today: the crew of the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION, presently on its way to Mars for its second mission to the Red Planet; the crew of our lunar base, Moon Base Alpha; and the crew of our AURORA orbital space station. Be assured that your service will continue to be primordial for the development and the exploration of Space by our country, and this for the decades to come. Equally important is your contribution to World peace via our international space missions, missions which have enhanced international cooperation and goodwill. That contribution to peace is in my mind as important and rewarding as our work to defend the United States and to develop its space capabilities. You can all be proud of your work, as I am proud of having you under my command. Now, as you know me, I am no parade beast and do not wish to force you to wait for hours via a lengthy ranks’ inspection or long speeches. Instead, I am now going to present to you your new commander, Lieutenant General Eugene Cernan, a fellow astronaut and a great officer. I will also mark this ceremony by promoting Lieutenant General Cernan to his new rank of full general as he becomes Commandant of the United States Space Corps. Afterwards, we will watch you as you parade in front of this dais, then will break up the parade to go celebrate in our combined base mess. General Cernan, please step forward!”

Cernan made three steps, ending next to Ingrid, who then added a fourth star to his shoulder rank insignias.

“Lieutenant General Eugene Cernan, under the authority of the President of the United States, of the Secretary of Defense and of the Congress, I am now promoting you to the rank of full general and name thee Commandant of the United States Space Corps.”

Cernan, flush with emotions as Ingrid pinned the stars on him, was then invited by her to speak to the assembled troops. Like her, he kept his own speech brief, concluding it with an order to the troops to start marching in succession of units past the dais. The march pass itself, led by the military band, actually took much longer than the speeches

from the two generals. As units were still walking in cadence past the dais, a growing roar in the sky marked the approach of three successive waves of aircraft. The first wave to overfly the parade square was made of seven F-83E supersonic fighter-bombers of the Space Corps, flying in 'V' formation, followed by a second wave made up of three big ASP-100 space interceptors, each of them the size of a large civilian airliner. Finally, three huge C-2000 ultra-heavy transporters, used to carry up to the upper atmosphere a variety of space vehicles of the earlier generations, overflew the parade square, their eight high-bypass turbofan engines per plane creating a mighty roar on their passage as the reporters and camera crews filmed them from the bleachers.

After marching past the dais, the units on parade then directly exited the parade square, marching back to their respective assembly areas, where they were dismissed and told to prepare for the celebratory lunch buffet waiting at the combined base mess. On his part, General Cernan shook again Ingrid's hand as they were preparing to leave the platform to go to the combined mess.

"Ingrid, I must thank you again for having confidence in me and for having nominated me as the new commandant of the Corps. Being worthy of replacing you will be a hard job indeed."

"I am certain that you will be up to the task, Eugene. Be assured that, as the Director of National Space Programs, I will do the utmost to continue to promote the interests of the Space Corps and support it politically and technologically."

"I must say that I was a bit surprised to see that you are not going to seek a job as a top aerospace designer and engineer with one of our big aerospace companies, Ingrid. You could have made a lot more money than what you will earn as a simple presidential advisor."

"You know me, Eugene: I was never interested by money. Money for me is only a means to help accomplish personal goals, not to live in luxury, although my combined military pension and salary as a presidential cabinet member is nothing to spit at. Besides, nothing prevents me from providing some counsels to the aerospace companies who will seek my advice. First, however, I will want to take some well-deserved vacation time with my little daughter."

"A vacation you richly deserved, Ingrid. Where are you planning to go for your vacation?"

"I have a few places I have wanted to go to for some time already, Eugene. First, I want to go visit the site of Berlin, my city of birth. Apparently, the levels of radiations among the ruins is now down to safe levels, some 41 years after its destruction by a British hydrogen bomb during World War Two. Then, I may go visit Vietnam, where I met and adopted my eldest daughter Hien. Finally, I will tour parts of Europe to expose my little Nancy to new sights."

"That sounds like a judicious itinerary, Ingrid. I wish you a good time while on vacation."

"Thank you, Eugene! Well, I will now go collect Nancy and her nanny, so that we could go for lunch together at the combined mess."

"Before we leave for the mess, know that, if you want to fly from time to time to keep your pilot certifications, you always will be welcome at any of our bases for training flights on the various plane types we have in the Corps. I will also make sure that those flight hours will be properly compiled together, so that your aircraft type certifications don't lapse. General Grayson, the boss of the Air Force, told me that his bases and planes will be similarly open to you for training flights. You will just need to book a plane a week in advance. He also said that, if you want to play 'Red Airforce' opponent during one of his fighter units' training missions, he would be delighted to have you to, quote, wipe the asses of his more pretentious young pilots, unquote."

Ingrid laughed briefly at that, both amused and pleased.

"That was the best gift General Grayson could have given me for my retirement, Eugene. Tell him that I will take him at his word on this and ask him to send me a notice in advance when he will plan such fighter pilot training. You know my home address in Arlington, near the Pentagon?"

"Of course I do, Ingrid! I will make sure that Grayson knows it."

"Good! Let me collect my daughter and her nanny and I will follow you to the mess."

The mention of the nanny sobered up Cernan, who then looked questioningly at Ingrid.

"That nanny, is she..."

"The angel who appeared aboard the U.S.S PROMETHEUS while the ship was halfway between Jupiter and Saturn, and this to help me take care of Nancy? Yes, Sarah Ur is that angel, but please treat her like a normal nanny: I don't want all those reporters to realize who she is in reality."

"Uh, I understand. I'll wait for you here while you go get them."

Ingrid didn't have to walk for more than a few steps before she met Sarah, who was walking to meet her while carrying little Nancy in her arms. Ingrid was not surprised by that, as Sarah was a powerful telepath and probably had read her intention to get her and Nancy.

"You are just in time, Sarah: it is time to go to the combined mess for lunch."

"Excellent!" replied the small but very beautiful young Semitic woman. "I believe that Nancy is getting quite hungry."

That made Ingrid smile tenderly at her little daughter: at the age of two and a half, Nancy was already a most beautiful little girl, with dark blond hair, big blue eyes and an angelic face.

"We will be at the combined mess very shortly, my sweet Nancy. You just need to be patient a bit more."

"Yes, Mommy!" replied Nancy in her little voice. Ingrid then took her in her arms and started carrying her towards the waiting staff car, with Sarah following her closely. The reporters and cameramen still present took that chance to film and photograph the trio but, thankfully, did not deluge her with questions. The fact that she had Nancy while aboard the U.S.S. PROMETHEUS was well known publicly but this was one of the rare occasions when Ingrid exposed Nancy to public sight, so the cameramen filmed her until the trio entered the staff car with General Cernan. A photographer who had some gray hair and was a grandfather smiled to himself as he watched the car roll away, then spoke to a more junior reporter near him.

"General Dows' little daughter is really as cute as a candy, don't you think?"

"She definitely is. Does anybody know who is the father? Was it an officer aboard the PROMETHEUS?"

"Nobody knows! General Dows is still very secretive about that. Well, let's get to the base mess: I am getting really hungry."

Five minutes later, the staff car rolled to a stop in front of the large building complex housing the various military messes of the base. Since it had been transferred from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Air Force Military Space Command over three decades ago, the base, already quite old at that time, had been extensively rebuilt under the directives of Ingrid Dows, who had introduced a few quite revolutionary concepts in its redesign. One such concept had been to assemble together around a central kitchen

and common lounge the Junior Ranks, Senior NCOs and Officers' Messes. Each mess still had separate lounges and clubs, but everybody ate the same quality of food and officers could mingle with junior ranks for meals if they wished so, something in which Ingrid had often shown the example. She had done so in order to push down on the notion that officers were above their subalterns in social terms and thus should not mix with them, a notion she despised as being both elitist and snobbish. As she had often said to her officers, 'a leader whose subalterns do not follow willingly is no leader'.

Stepping out of the staff car with Nancy in her arms, Ingrid then climbed the few steps of the main entrance to the combined mess, with Eugene Cernan and Sarah Ur at her side. Following the main hallway, on which the various messes connected, the group finally arrived at the huge reception hall forming the core of the complex, where hundreds of the parade's attendants and participants were already in, discussing in small groups at dining tables while going from time to time to the service counters set along one wall and offering a variety of hot and cold food items. As per a rule long established by Ingrid, nobody shouted 'ROOM!' when she entered, as would usually happen on other bases. Ingrid's first move was then to go to the service counters, to collect some food for her little Nancy. A small plate of macaroni and cheese, something Nancy liked a lot, and a glass of cold milk were enough for Nancy, so Ingrid then brought her to a free table, with Sarah staying with her as Ingrid returned to the counters to serve herself. She was filling a tray at the counters when she bumped in one of her old comrades, Gertrude Meserve, who was now 65 years old and had retired from the service some three years ago. Temporarily putting down her tray, Ingrid then shared a happy hug with Gertrude.

"It is so nice to see you again, Gertrude. How is life treating you these days?"

"Reasonably well, Ingrid. However, I cruelly miss flying. Unfortunately, my eyesight is gradually deteriorating and I now must wear glasses in order to read."

Ingrid took one step back and eyed soberly her old comrade, who had fought at her side in four wars, including World War Two. Gertrude certainly looked her age and her face and hands were starting to show wrinkles, while her hair had a lot of silver in it.

"When I remember how we both were when we first met in 1942, when you enrolled in the 'Fifinellas'."

"Yet, you still look to be about as young as you were then, Ingrid. I am jealous."

That triggered a thought in Ingrid's mind, a thought that was suddenly drowned by a powerful mental voice.

***'YOU HAVE MY BENEDICTION AND SUPPORT FOR THIS, AMDIRA. GO SEE YOUR OLD COMRADES AND GRACE THEM.'***

Shaken by what had obviously been a mental message from The One in person, Ingrid pressed Gertrude's hands in her hands while looking directly in her eyes.

"Gertrude, are there other veterans from the Fifinellas present here in this hall?"

"Yes! There are six more of us sitting at or near my table."

"Then, lets fill our food trays before leading me to your table."

Ingrid was about to add a telepathic message to warn Sarah of this but was preempted by a mental message from her angel.

*'Go ahead, Ingrid: I will take care of Nancy in the meantime.'*

*'Thank you, Sarah!'*

Filling quickly their plates, the two women then walked to two tables set next to each other in one corner of the hall, where eight aging women were already sitting. Ingrid's heart jumped in her chest, while tears filled her eyes at the sight of her old war comrades. All of them were visibly in their sixties, with three of them being even older. Putting down her tray of food at one empty spot on one of the tables, she then hugged emotionally in succession her old comrades, starting with Shirley Slade, who had been her wingman in 1942, during the brutal fight for Guadalcanal.

"Shirley, my God! I missed you since you retired two years ago. I wish that I could have been present at your retirement ceremony, but I was then in the Saturn System, aboard the PROMETHEUS."

"No need to excuse yourself for that, Ingrid. I can understand why your duties kept you away."

"And what about your private life, Shirley? Have you married since leaving the service?"

Shirley's smile faded at that question and she answered Ingrid in a soft, sober tone.

"No! In that, I am like the others here: we are now too old to attract most men and none of us married, because the men we courted got cold feet when told that we wanted to continue on with our military careers, instead of leaving the service and following them around their own careers. As for Theresa, her husband James died of cancer four years ago."

Ingrid looked sadly at Shirley, then at Theresa James, who had long been her second in command in past wars. Theresa actually looked to be the second oldest of the group, after Helen Richey.

"I am sorry about Georges, Theresa. Please accept my most sincere condolences."

"Thank you, Ingrid." replied the stoutly-built woman with curly hair. "And you, will you ever get married? What about the man who fathered your little Nancy on the PROMETHEUS?"

That attracted a sardonic smirk on Ingrid's lips.

"Well, to be truthful, I could never hope to marry him: he is way above me as a being, and he would not fit in this life of mine."

"Above you as a being?" said Denise Bateman, who had retired after the return of the PROMETHEUS into Earth orbit. "How could that be? You are the most exceptional individual I ever met in my life."

"Well, I will explain that to you all, once in private. First, I would like you to accompany me as a group towards the executive offices of the mess: I have something to show you there. Leave your trays where they are, so that nobody else takes those tables."

"You are decidedly quite mysterious today, Ingrid." said 76-year-old Helen Richey while getting up with some effort from her chair. Ingrid eyed with sadness her friend, whose general health had clearly declined since the last time she had seen her, some twelve years ago.

"Believe me, Helen: it will be worth it. Follow me, all of you."

Crossing the large dining hall, Ingrid and her friends left it and walked to the hallway along which the offices of the various mess managers were situated. None of them were occupied at this time and she was able to enter one of them, inviting her comrades in after checking that the office was empty. She then closed and locked the door behind them and faced her now intrigued friends.

"We are here for two reasons, my friends: first, to tell you who was the father of my little Nancy; second, to give you a gift to all of you. About the father of Nancy..."

"No need to present me, Ingrid." Said a male voice from one corner of the room, making the women jump up in surprise. "I am here and I will also help you pass your gift to your friends."



Except for Ingrid, the women in the room all sucked air in at the sight of the 192 centimeter-tall, incredibly handsome man now standing near the work desk of the office. The man, who was wearing a simple robe and sandals, then walked to them and stopped in the middle of the wide circle formed by them before speaking again, a benevolent smile on his face.

“My name is Michael, and I was the one who fathered little Nancy.”

“My God, Ingrid, why didn’t you marry him at once! He is gorgeous!” exclaimed 64-year-old Elisabeth Gardner. “I could marry him in an instant!”

Elisabeth’s declaration made the smile on the man’s face change to an amused grin.

“I should be flattered by your comment, Elisabeth Gardner, but I could not realistically marry you or any of your comrades, for a simple reason: I am not from this world.”

“What do you mean, not from this world?”

Elisabeth, like the others at the exception of Ingrid, then opened wide her eyes and took a step back as the man became a brilliant, translucent being with a humanoid shape. A strong mental message was then heard by all of them.

*‘My name is Michael, Archangel of The One. I fathered Nancy with Ingrid because any human male on the PROMETHEUS who would have slept with her would have then been hounded by unending rumors and insinuations. I came here today to help Ingrid gift you with something you richly deserve through your dedication and human qualities. Do not fear what is now going to happen.’*

Michael’s shape then quickly became much brighter, to the point where the women could not look at him directly. That brightness then diminished after some fifteen seconds, as Michael returned to normal human form. Looking around him at the women, he made a large mirror appear in his hands, a mirror that he then slowly turned around so that it would face each woman in succession. Gasps and strangled exclamations went around as he spoke further.

“You are now physically thirty years younger, while your various ailments have disappeared. You are now in perfect health and will be able to enjoy your next decades the way you richly deserved. May you live happily for the rest of your lives.”

Michael then faded away into nothingness, leaving behind Ingrid and nine shocked and awed women, all of whom now appeared to be in their early forties at the most. Ingrid quickly gathered them in her arms for a group hug, as moved as her friends were.

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