

CANDY HARLOW:  
SPACE DETECTIVE  
BY  
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AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES

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In loving memory of those who now stand before the Grace of God.

I saw this light and I asked: "Do you see that?" The Author

"What is the nature of the universe?" Is not for us to ask, a better question might be, "What is the nature of God?" From the Pages of Time

"God is Love." The Holy Bible

To my three wonderful children: Abiathar, Miciah and Victory

CANDY HARLOW  
Space Detective

“Per accident I find myself in times of trouble, what mysteries there abound.” Arat Vogner

Accidental death; this was suspiciously not one for Molly: who said her check was a perfectly good one, and yet she had chosen to cash it after opening a new account. What? And why, for that matter, had she bothered opening a new account when she had a rather sufficient amount in an active account at another bank?

There are only questions in security work, but they do not all add up to murder. Some add up to cold cases, and nobody in the galaxy likes that. The fools of the 17<sup>th</sup> would have preferred to sit on their behinds and sip Whisky, but the how-comes were there, so they put on their protective vests and their automatic plasma weapons and tried to find some convenient answers.

Malcolm Strumack systematically interrogated each and every person in the luxury apartment where Molly Fox had been killed. They all had alibis’ tighter than a businessman who just stole someone’s investments. In his report to the chief, Malcolm expressed the belief that none of the people were guilty of homicide. As far as he was concerned, they were all innocent.

Governor Packard attacked the 17<sup>th</sup> as incompetent fools. There were money-launderers galore in the district and the city, people who took ill-gotten gain and cleaned it, for a price. If someone had cashed a 750,000 check for Molly and kept 100,000 during the process, couldn’t that person conceivably be one of the suspects? He put the district on the edge, telling them to look around for word of an Inter-Solar System Corporation check. The cronies came up with nothing.

Detective Hacker took her laboratory personnel to the briefing room and went over it again. Once more. And once more. She reported that the lock on the door was a robotic lock, the kind that has AI, shut automatically when the door is pushed too. Whoever killed Molly Fox could have done so, without leaving an identification record. What they had to do was open the door using a computerized filter. Packard also reported that Molly’s bed had apparently not been slept in on the night of the murder. They found her shoes had been placed at the foot of a large comfort-chair in the room and an e-book was left on by the arm of the chair. She suggested that Molly had fallen asleep while reading, had awakened, and gone into the other room where she had met her murderer. She had no suggestions as to just whom that murderer might have been.

Malcolm Strumack was miserable and impatient and ignored. There were other things happening in the district. Things like burglaries and threats with vice and assaults and children with too much time on their hands. It might have seemed like all this was just too much for a small security station on a small moon orbiting a planet that was being raped of its natural resources.

The atmosphere on the main planet was incapable of supporting human life. But that didn’t stop a whole plethora of machines and robots and other sorts from doing the dirty work of the human race. It was the way business was done. But how do I fit into all this misery and mayhem? My name is Candy. Candy Harlow and I’m a private detective working here in space.

Out here in the Badlands, that area of space where law and order are scarce, but surprisingly lots of frontier settlers seem to want to migrate, there is an atmosphere of adventure and often excitement due to new discoveries. I guess you could say that mankind had come along

way since the early days of impulse rockets. Those things would have never been able to cross the vastness and the perils of interstellar space. It was with the invention of the lightning engine by Dr. Everet T. Pystrum that marshaled in a new age of exploration. It was said that if you want to travel at the speed of light, then look to nature and see what she has done to get there. After all Mother Nature always had done it first, the human race was just trying to figure out what she had known from the beginning.

Later a Doctor Patricia Ingram postulated that dark matter could travel faster than the speed of light, due to the Quantum Expansion Theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which predicted that dark matter in the expanses of the universe had to be moving faster than light in order to compensate for the Heisenberg Principle. There was no stopping mankind after that. Big business suddenly found it more profitable to mine other worlds and drill for preciousness, on planets that didn't have the laws and restrictions that were placed on Earth. If a planet or moon or asteroid had something of value on it and people knew about it, chances were, it was owned by some super-corporation.

While all of this might be fine and interesting, it doesn't fully explain me. Oh. Did I happen to mention, that with all my other talents and attributes, I'm a vampire? My clan isn't from the old school, like way back in the day. We don't go around sucking the life out of people, like they did centuries ago. My clan, headed by Victoria, long since opted to join the modern days. We have millions of nano-robots in our veins, compensating for the thirst. In fact I was brought up believing that such practices, as the old ways, were barbaric and offensive. The vampire society had evolved like everything else on Earth. My clan went about its business in a more dignified way. The same could not be said for our rival clan, headed by Beltaziar. Victoria and Beltaziar were distant cousins, think Hatfield's and McCoy's, then you get the picture. Beltaziar's clan hated everything that we stood for. And then there were the Lycans. Packs and hordes of werewolves that really didn't like anybody who wasn't like them. Truth of the matter was, they didn't like other packs of werewolves. So. You have the humans, the vampires, and the werewolves, and oh yes, your familiar aliens; which were finally acknowledged when mankind came out of the Dark Ages in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. And began to realize the answer to the question, are we alone? The answer was, of course not, silly!

I am co-owner of a small tavern on the outskirts of town. I had my own little booth that I used as an office and general place to sit and drink. The atmosphere in the tavern was mostly upbeat with folk songs from the old days, my partner, O'Mally liked it that way. Reminded the regulars of Earth and what was once home. O'Mally ran the business, while I found need to pursue my private investigator career. If you could call it that. Truth of the matter was that if it wasn't for the revenue of the tavern, I'd be broke and homeless most of the time.

I was at my spot and sipping a local-made wheat brew that the tavern specialized in. Wheat-beer had a more robust flavor and a special thickness along with a fine frothy head. While we did serve other beers that were my favorites. A short man, well dressed approached my booth, asked if I had a moment and indicated that he wanted to hire me. Turned out he was the grandfather of Molly Fox. Apparently he wanted someone to find his granddaughter's killer.

When the third captor had come on duty and settled down for the night, I started to practice with the long stick, stuffing a coat into my end of the air vent so that the thud of the pegs could not be heard. The strips of cover had shrunk into even tighter coils. It was a more powerful weapon than I needed, and heck to pull; I had to use both hands, my left on the shaft of the part,

my right gripping the ring, held vertically so that it did not catch as it drew through the aperture. At a range of six feet the part drilled clean through two cans of beans and buried itself three inches in the earth. I shot it off a few dozen times, for the construction was none too robust.

I unstopped the air vent and fanned for several hours to change the air. I don't know whether it really made any difference, but it was worth trying since my next task was to persuade my captor to shut up his end of the air vent, and keep it shut while I arranged my escape.

I began to complain and mumble to shake his nerves a bit. When he yelled at me to stop it, I said I would if he would give me something to eat.

"You eat when I say you do," he answered sulkily.

I stayed quiet for several hours, and then started my act all over again, sobs and manic laughter and pleas to him to let me out. He endured my madness with annoying patience hoping perhaps for that hypothetical peace of mind, but that compelled me to such a show of hysteria before he plugged the hole that I managed to begin to rattle my own nerves as part the act. My acting was good enough to be believed as release for my feelings.

The rearranging of the hole was easy and quite silent. I dug with a piece of wood and gathered the earth handful by handful. At times I let off some moans to discourage him from removing the plug. The sides vanished, and in its place was an empty hollow, like a snake's nest, with two ends. The plug was a piece of cloth. I opened out its folds on my side without bothering its position. I could breathe without any problem and heard every sound in the area.

I arranged my sleeping covers under my shoulder blades, and lay on my back in the mud with the weapon presented and the part fitted to the flexible area. I had to be ready to fire the moment that anyone's head appeared at the hole. The removal of the covering would give me time to draw, and if anyone peeked into the hole and noticed that its shape had been altered, that would be the last thing they ever saw.

I hoped that my captor would leave the covering alone. I felt no regret in killing him, but if he removed the plug immediately after the head of this group's arrival I might not be able to dig my way out in time to surprise my captors. I kept up enough annoying cries to prove that I was still in some sort of discomfort. But I knew it would be just a matter of time and I would be able to escape from this situation. It was what I got for snooping around and asking amateurish questions about the dead woman. Whoever killed Molly was not going to take to it, having a private investigator looking into the mess. Especially one that really was trying to solve the case, not like the cronies at the district, where half of them were on the take. And the other half didn't care one way or the other. I had told the dead woman's grandfather that I'd do the best I could. Took a nice retainer and began to make good on that promise. I hadn't anticipated such a response from whoever was behind this. These were rich people. I could tell because of the way I had been abducted, it was professional, and discrete. My supposed death would be explained as something uninvolved and nefarious. But that was all premature because at that moment, a head popped up. I tensed myself and in the next instant the man was dead and I was one step closer to escape. The opportunity had presented itself and I was not sticking around for an explanation.

That intensely, blueish coloration found on primitive tribes who spend a good deal of their time outside. The conclusion seemed to be a reasonable one, but death is a great equalizer not without a determined humor all its own, and the funniest kind of joke is a visual one. Death changes yin to yang, and when that grisly reaper comes marching in there's no question of coloration, pal. That woman in the photo looked blueish, but she was not, and whatever else she

was, also very cold and dead, and that's the worst anyone can do to anybody.

The report explained that the woman's body was in a state of advanced putrefaction, and it went into such enlightened terms as "ranked distention of the body cavities, tissues, and blood vessels with fluid," and "blueish discoloration of the skin, mucous membranes, and other things caused by hemolysis and action of hydrogen compounds on the blood pigment," all of which broke down to the simple fact that it was a damn hot week in July and the woman had been lying on a rug which retained heat and exasperated the postmortem putrefaction. From what they could tell, and in weather like this, it was mostly a guess, the woman had been dead and decomposing for at least seventy-two hours, which set the time of her demise on July fourth or thereabouts.

One of the reports went on to say that the clothes she'd been wearing had been purchased in one of the town's swankier department stores. All of her things, those she wore and those found in her apartment, were rather expensive, but someone at the lab thought it necessary to note that all her underwear were trimmed with Meljanian lace and retailed for six hundred a pair. Someone else at the lab mentioned that a thorough examination of her things and her body had revealed no traces of anything of consequence.

The coroner said the cause of death was strangulation. It is without doubt how much an apartment can sometimes yield to science. It is equally interesting, and more than a little disappointing, to get nothing from the crime scene when you are desperately seeking a clue. The furnished room in which Molly Fox had been strangled to death was full of suggestive surfaces conceivably carrying hundreds of latent clues. The closets and drawers contained piles of clothing which all seemed to belong to the deceased.

Detective Hacker entered the room, looked around as if trying to psychically discover evidence. Then she turned her attention to me, "So, you are here."

The detective and I had worked together on other cases before, I wouldn't call us friends, but we knew each other's ways, when it came to solving a crime. "Official business. The victim's relations hired me to look into the murder."

"What's wrong, the family doesn't have much confidence in local security's ability to solve the case?"

I responded, but not accordingly, "About a century ago, back on Earth, there was this case where this little girl was murdered. The locals and media persecuted the mother and father. Turned out, ten years later, they were all wrong. There was a third person who was the actual killer. So, no, the family hired me because they have the utmost confidence, that if this case can be compromised and screwed up: it will be."

Hacker laughed. "You know. You are right. Poor people can't get any justice and fall victim to the system. While rich people forge their own type of justice and control and manipulate the system."

"This family is very rich." I said while noticing something in the corner but then deciding I didn't want to share the discovery with Hacker.

Huddled in my overcoat, I merely set the moves and then crouched over the sofa, I was not going to fail, I wasn't just another pure blood vampire acting like nothing had happened.

When he was done, Malcolm Strumack shut his e-book and said: "Thank you, men and women and robots. Midnight going on morning, time to go home." He put a stick of gum in his mouth and went down into the hall and out through the front of the building.

Left alone in the building, I struggled with a sharp attack of deflation. I tried to call myself to order. This in itself hurt my pride, if not a salutary, exercise. If, I thought savagely, I had been a proper young lady, I would at this juncture have given up and locked myself away with an e-tablet and, after crying some mortified tears, forced resignation upon of myself. As it was, I set my jaw and worked it out there and then. The truth was, I told myself, I'd been up to my old habits again: I'd indulged in the most blatant kind of self delusion. I'd thought up an alternate theory and dumped myself down in the middle of it with half a dozen half-baked ideas that needed vetting. Because I looked younger than I was and because last night I'd had some mild success with a few clues adding up I was playing it off my nerves, I'd actually had the gall to hope. Then I felt my scalp creep and my face flush. "Okay now," I thought, "spit it out."

All right, then. I'd dreamed up a further theory opposite Strumack's. I'd noticed myself responding cautiously to his detective work, I'd heard him say regretfully that if there were more evidence, things would be different, I had been, at this point, overtaken with self-loathing, Strumack was giving up but that was a childish exercise of throwing in the towel. I began walking, violently, and thrusting my fingers through my long silky jet black hair.

"For crying out loud," I said, pitching my voice to the back of the room.

"Things are not quite as bad as all that." The voice was a familiar one.

Victoria came out of the shadowed area and down the center hall of the building. She rested her hands on the support of the stairwell. I gaped at her.

"You've got the right idea," she said. "Think it through again by yourself before taking any action. Then you can begin to think about the murdered victim. Get the sense of the building in your head. Come to know the environment. What was she doing that day before she was murdered? What was she thinking about? Why did she say the things she said and do the things she did? Listen to your inner wisdom. Come. Walk with me for a few minutes and we'll see what must be done to solve this case."

I was taken back by the way that Victoria was helping me. She had long since expressed a dislike for the profession I had chosen. Something about it not being a refined enough job for a vampire of my upbringing. Maybe she was right and maybe there were more noble professions out there for a vampire like myself. But I had long since felt the need to be something I wasn't expected to be. It wasn't that I was being rebellious, though that obviously was part of it, but I found myself needing to help those who needed help. I think it all started when I discovered the horrible things that vampires had done through the ages. I was shocked that I was part of that kind of culture.

"It is a culture that has nurtured and cared for you all these years, Candy." Her voice was filled with a kind of dark wisdom that came with being immortal, yet, her tall voluptuous body moved with such elegance. "There are others that are watching you. Watching to see if you fail."

I said. "I can't fail. Not this time. Not this case. Can you help me?"

It was evening and I took my little walk up to my apartment in the nicer part of town. I had never written a government official a letter, but I had been tempted to a few years back but with this Molly Fox business things were different. The first time I thought about it I was at my wit's end and was running out of ideas, but the notion kept on nagging at me. The reason for considering it was that I had the impression I was getting nowhere due to secret internal influences coming from top officials or I was infatuated with the case and had run into a dead end, but when the impression still stuck after awhile I knew. Rich heiress' should be seen and

heard, but not murdered. At that, I might have given the impression another thought in a different way if there had been an opportunity, but there wasn't. Molly had died suddenly and abruptly, for some time, there was even talk of a cover up.

So I read the official report again, twice again. It didn't say that she had been pronounced murdered, officially and finally, since there was conflicting evidence, but a nearly empty pill bottle had been there on a table, and on the floor by the couch that she died on, there had been a glass with wine in it, enough left to identify cyanide, all conflicting. I looked at a picture of her, the way she had been when she was full of life, I had gotten that impression. I asked O'Mally if he had ever seen Molly Fox, and he asked what circles she had frequented, and I said spoiled rich ones, she was much too wealthy for our level of engagement.

I didn't get to suggest calling Malcolm Strumack or Detective Hacker because when I came down from my apartment at seven o'clock they weren't there. As I was finishing my second mug of beer a call came from the Governor's office inviting me to drop in, and I went and spent a couple of hours at Holm's Street with an assistant to the governor named Vandyke. When we got through, I made sure I knew slightly more than I had when we started, but he didn't. He had a copy of the security statement on his desk, and wanted to know what could I add to that? I had a lot of fun, though. He would put a question to me and spend a lot of time studying the statement to see if I had tripped.

Getting to the bar late in the evening, I was prepared to find O'Mally grumpy. He likes me to be there on certain days, when he comes down from the office, and while he can't very well complain when the Governor calls me on business that concerns my case, this wasn't his affair. I had a client and no hard evidence and no new prospects. But I was surprised. O'Mally wasn't grumpy; he was too busy. He had my e-book turned on before him at the bar. He had actually gone to my desk, searched to find my e-book, lifted it, and carried it down to the bar. This was unheard of for him to mess with my things.

"Bottom of the evening," I said. "What's the big emergency?"

"There's no emergency. I needed to know a few things."

"Okay. Well, can I help?"

"No, not right now. But if you must know, this is about spotting a pack of Lycans over on the eastside. I'm not sure if it has anything to do with the case you are working on but it might be something you want to look into."

Lycans? I hadn't had any real contact with the likes of them for a long time. Mostly because of the treaty worked out by the vampires and the Lycans and the humans and familiar-aliens. Everyone knew to leave everyone else alone, because everyone had something to lose and everyone could make trouble for the other. There was a time when humans were greatly disadvantaged but those days had long pass. With the emergence of mankind's technological boom, everyone stood on somewhat equal ground.

"There is no evidence that s killed my client's granddaughter. What makes you say that?" I was seriously puzzled but looking for new clues even if they didn't add up.

"Not everyone kills so that a trail can be left leading to them. Humans are smart. Vampires are smarter. And while Lycans are somewhat slower than the latter, we all evolve."

The eastside had bushes of bramble and wild fruit extending far out into the pasture. I cut the fern and scraped out a channel for the water that ran down the lane after every shower. Then I hurled timber poles from bank to bank, where the distance was a bare seven feet, making a

surface platform on top of them with twigs and fern. A few days later, I stole some bricks from a broken-down farm and propped up my poles in the middle, the platform was strong and dry as a floor of latticework.

The eastern part was full of animal holes which ran into the heavy topsoil along the upper level of the sedimentary rock. On the same night I began to work on them, which provided me with shelter from the rain and with a fireplace. By morning I had made an opening about three feet in diameter, and long enough for me to move about. The roof and sides were of dirt and clay while the floor of sedimentary stone.

Digging into the stone, soft though it was, proved an interminable amount of effort; but I found that it was easy to reshape the surface, and thus lower the level inch by inch. In five days I had a stakeout shelter to be proud of. The ceiling had a high vault, packed with clay. The water trickled down the sides and was caught on two projecting ledges which ran the length of the stakeout and was channeled to lead the water into a path. The level was four feet below the ledges and crossed by a short bundle of wood which kept my sleeping bag from resting on wet stone. The stakeout was very much the size and shape of two large containers, one turned inside out upon the other.

As soon as I got to a point where I could stop, I walked into town and came back with a backpack full of groceries, a grate, iron pots, and a short implement, one arm of which was shaped like a small shovel. I'm not sure what it was for, but it seemed admirably fitted for working sedimentary rock in a confined space. I aroused no particular interest in town, a mere untidy woman, wearing old clothes, which gave out that I was one of the homeless that lived just across the back area. I had a hot meal at an inn and read the e-papers. There was only a passing reference to the Molly Fox murder. The coroner finally admitted that she had been murdered by a person or persons not known. When I climbed down the way onto the path I felt that I had come home in strange kind of way, but feeling melancholy as I realized I might be here for a while, gave me no tranquility.

I started a routine of sleeping by day and observing at night. There wasn't much to see by day and was too dangerous; Lycans might walk past the area while I wasn't underground, and discover that a vampire was spying on them. That vampire being little old me. There was a morning when I was nearly caught by a party of Lycans who were doing something I couldn't quite make out but involved killing some poor slob, along the edge of the pasture.

My overall goal was to stay as long as I could. Stakeouts usually meant that I would have to do what I had to do and in this case, I had planned to observe for as long as it took. I was sure that the Lycans had a part in the murder but not directly. This conclusion came after a long and hard disagreement with myself. I had managed to forge a theory as to the murder and was reluctant to change my mind. It was only after talking to Victoria that I realized that there were layers of deception going on in this case. Obvious wealth pulling the strings and manipulation of lesser bodies; like using the Lycans in some capacity, if not directly. I hunkered down and waited.

"One would think that the thing was obvious," I uttered, the group was comprised of mostly humans and some familiar aliens.

A reporter asked, "If the daughter of the wealthy politician was murdered why then did the first report state that it was some sort of an accident?"

I didn't want to get into details. That was my whole point. To make the killer or killers



think I have solved the case and was holding out for some kind of reward. It didn't matter what kind of reward, when dealing with beings that killed on a regular bases, it would be easy to convince them that I was more like them than different.

"Rich people have always controlled our society. There are those who aspire to be rich and therefore cling to the ways and traditions of the wealthy. And there are those who seek to appeal to our better angels. They know that in order for a society to flourish and not to die, that we all must have the same freedoms and rights, even if those things once belonged to the wealthy. There is no secret that the wealthy can afford better lawyers and get lighter sentences even if convicted. The proof is in the pudding. . ." I let things go at that point seeking effect. It was better if the public, those that were interested in this sort of thing, managed to draw their own conclusions.

Another reporter said. "If she had bodyguards outside her home on the day she was killed, why is it that no one saw anything?"

That was a good point and I wanted to blurt out the answer but my whole plan counted on those involved becoming nervous. Rich people didn't like to leave loose ends. I wanted to make myself out to be that loose end. Up until this point, I'd been kidnaped and threatened. No doubt that whosoever was behind this was powerful and well positioned in society. They didn't want me here from the beginning. That point was obvious. But I needed a way to flush them out. Make them think I had discovered more than I really had. And the best way to do that was to appear to be holding back for some kind of a bribe.

"I have a few things that I still have to confirm. I don't want to unduly make an accusation until I have managed to close everything up tightly." Again, to those who were guilty, it wouldn't matter if I really knew anything or not, it was the perception that Molly Fox was murdered by those folks not yet revealed. And it came down to this: Do you take a chance that I might really know something that ties them to the crime or just to be safe, kill me and get rid of all the evidence I was suppose to be sitting on?

Yet another reporter said. "The police have threatened you with obstruction of justice. What are you going to do about it?"

I smiled because that was exactly the question I was hoping someone would ask. I answered, "The police are corrupt and on the take. Most of them already have a clue as to who killed Molly Fox but they are sitting on the evidence. When an innocent person is railed through the justice system, the government withholds evidence of exculpatory nature, in order to convict. In this case the opposite is happening. Evidence is being held back that would prove that one of our so-called pillars of society is behind it."

Then came the question I had to have anticipated before all this went into play. "Do you have proof?"

"Right now," exclaimed Dr. Quomo. "I'm also deputy coroner of this area!"

And they took some men and they went back to the old burying ground, and in the darkening day they dug up the remains of Molly Fox and they opened the casket and found, in the corpse's hands, a small diary made of paper and cloth but not locked. And, while two strong men held the grandfather to keep him from hurling himself at the expensive coffin, Doctor Quomo of the Coroner's Office held his breath while he raised the lid.

And it was crammed to the brim with all sorts of small gifts.

In memory of the young woman.

No one said anything for some time, not even I felt the need.

Then I said, "It stands to reason. We found all of this buried with her at the family mansion cemetery. She was obviously loved. If we are going to be digging her up again after she has been laid to rest then it is expected that we'd find items of sentiment in the coffin with her. They probably had some faint hope that it might show some respect. Those who loved her didn't care if the things were worthless, they decided to show how they felt. This has been a private moment of those who cared about her."

When Molly died a while back, the killer probably decided that, as the last to see her alive he ought to have the honor of being the first to view her body in rest and the modest treasure in perpetuity. Someone managed to slip the diary into the coffin before the lid was screwed on. And Molly's grandfather's note bequeathing his fortune to his beloved granddaughter, in view of what I've seen of his beloved granddaughter today, was the final blow to the killer.

Everybody nodded; and the corpse was mirthless as I continued on, the silence heavy, to be broken by a weak curse from Molly's grandfather and her grandmother nearby: "But Candy Harlow, that doesn't explain who murdered Molly Fox." Said Strumach.

"Well, now, Detective Strumach, it does," I said; and then I said in a very different tone: "Suppose we put poor Molly back the way we found her, for your re-exhumation later for another autopsy, Dr. Quomo," I turned, "and then we'll close the book on your granddaughter's murder."

I closed the diary back at the mansion, in the dusk, on the porch of Molly Fox's grandparents house, which was central and convenient for everybody. Myself and Detective Hacker and Dr. Quomo and Strumach and VanDyke, the grandfather was now clutching the diary dazedly, also on the porch, security was there as well.

I finally said, "Molly Fox was murdered because she dared to fall in love with a being not of her own species. There was a time when couples of different races were discriminated against equally as well. Way back on Earth, a century ago, or so. But history has a way of repeating itself. Specially with the intent on getting it right. If any of you are students of history you'll know that patterns occur in history, there are no real explanations as to why, except that there is an overall divine nature to the universe."

Detective Hacker asked, "So, what are you saying? That this was a hate killing?"

I nodded, "In a sense, yes. God has his eyes on all his children. Nothing done in secret will remain secret forever. In our case, the case of Molly Fox, the secret is out."

Molly's grandfather asked, "Then who killed my granddaughter?"

I looked over at VanDyke, "He did."

They all reacted and Hacker along with Strumach gathered around VanDyke. Of course he protested, sometimes violently, but after I pointed out the now obvious clues, his arrest for the murder of Molly Fox fell upon him with conviction.

The evening crowd was starting to gather at O'Mally's. I found my reserved booth and ordered a wheat-beer. I finally settled in and was just starting to get into the latest news on my leather bound electronic book. I quickly looked up the table of contents and then treed through items I found of interest. The book sprang to life with the articles I'd selected and then filed them in pages that I began to browse through, turning the pages virtually. There was a motion out to the corner of my eye and then I looked up. I was surprised to see Victoria along with obvious vampire bodyguards. She motioned them off and I gestured for her to take a seat across from me.

I cleared my throat. The beer was thick and smooth. "Can I get you something?" I asked,

not waiting for the Queen of my vampire clan to respond, motioning for the waiter who came quickly.

She saw my effort and politely agreed to try the wheat-beer I was drinking. Her attention then turned to the business at hand. "I heard about the arrest in regards to the Molly Fox murder. Well done, Candy. You have made your clan proud of you."

As we settled in, I happened to notice a Lycan woman who entered the tavern. Some of the people started to give her a hard time. Prejudice and segregation were things of the past and had no place in O'Mally's. One of the barkeeps glanced over to me for reassurance and I nodded, this sent a few staff and some loyal regulars over to defuse the situation. They kicked out the trouble makers and got the female Lycan a nice seat. Others slowly came over to try and make her feel at home. Prejudice was bad for business, if not archaic and stupid.

Victoria having taken it all in said, "You've done well for yourself."

I grinned, "I try. It's not like this all the time. Most of the time this is a really quiet place to come and have a drink. We even have a family section."

Victoria glanced in the direction, "I noticed."

"But that is not what brought you here. In all the time I've co-owned this bar with O'Mally, you have never come in here. Why now?"

Victoria was one of the most stunningly beautiful women around. I often wished I had her looks, might help me find a good boyfriend. She reached over and gave me something. A metal locket. Inside. There was a picture of her holding a child lovingly in her arms. She declared, "I miss you, my daughter. We all do. Come back to us. Where you belong."

Having vampire royalty in my blood was not something I found comforting. I was still ashamed of the awful things that vampires did. Even though my clan was very progressive, there were still clans like Beltaziar's. And his clan was the typical vampire clan. Most clans behaved like his, with disregard for the general public and the humanity of the races. That being vampires and Lycans and humans and familiar-aliens.

I took a long sip then neatly sat the German mug down. "I can't be the daughter that you want me to be, mother. It's not that I don't admire what you've done with the clan. How the others have revered respect for you and your authority. But you have to understand how I feel. . ."

Victoria countered compassionately, "I did it all for you. When you were young, I saw how much the reality of being a vampire distressed you and made a decision way back then, that our clan would strive to do better. Instead being part of the problem, our clan is at the forefront of being part of the solution. Surely you see this."

Just as we were starting to reach some area of mutual understanding, a woman came up to my booth. She was obviously upset and in need of help. Victoria sensed this and departed after leaving an invitation open for more conversation. I then asked the woman to sit down and she began to tell me her story. She had read how I was instrumental in solving the Molly Fox crime and that made me somewhat of a celebrity. I listened and handed out advice. Looked like my business was taking a turn for the upside and I'd find myself knee deep in another case soon.

## WHAT COMES OF TOMORROW

Often I keep them plugged during the day for fear that Roc-Cholee might notice such unnatural elasticity. Space: I am without any. The inner chamber is a tumbled quagmire of wet earth which I am compelled to use as a latrine. I am confined to my original disinterring, the size of these large robot enclosures, where I lie on or inside my sleeping bag. I cannot extend it. The noise of machines working would be audible in the path.

I spend a part of each day wedged in the large flue, with my head out of the top; but that is more for change of position than for fresh air. The domed, prolific hinterland is so thick and so shadowed by its companions and by the obstacle that I can only be sure it is day when the sun is in the east. The inert center seems full of gases, unsatisfying of them and carrying in suspension the brown dust and debris that fall from above and the carbon from my fires that has accumulated on the underside of dispensation.

Roc-Cholee, as always, is my comfort. It is seldom that one can give to and receive from a robot close, silent, and continuous attention. We live in the same space, in the same way, and on the same sustenance, except that Roc-Cholee has no use for grain nor me for field furtive. During the hours while the robot sits cleaning himself, and I was motionless and disintegrated, there is, I believe, some slight thought transference between us. I cannot order or even hope that the machine should perform a given act, but back and forth between us were thoughts of fear and disconnected dreams of action, I should call these dreams insanity, I knew they came from it and that its mind is, by our human standards, insane.

All initiative is at a temporal. All natural phenomenon are at an end. We are so dependent on natural phenomenon, good and bad. I think of those men and women, cases faintly parallel to mine, who live in one space and eat poorly and lie in new arrivals, since their incomes are too small for any marked activity. Their lives would be unbearable was it not for their hopes of a good natural phenomenon and fears of bad. They have, in fact, little of either. But mental representation magnifiers of what there is.

I have no chance even of mental representation. A natural phenomenon has reached a state of equilibrium and stopped. I had one thought of morally objectionable behavior when that large transport innocently attracted the notice of the maintained security, one stroke of a magnificent natural phenomenon when Roc-Cholee's projectile hit the narrow neck. In most other cases I have been able to account for the march of events by conscious planning or by my own instinctive and characterized reactions under stress.

Now natural phenomenon, movement, wisdom, and folly have all stopped. Even time has been put to an end, for I have no space. That, I think, is the reason why I have again taken refuge in this admission. I retain a sense of self.

Garrison was a large woman, not just in a figure but in height. I always had a thing for big women. I think it was because of the situation, hard times and tough ways, the ways of a new frontier. She treated me well though, I had no problems warming up to her.

I coughed. "You needed me for something?"

She smiled and then went behind her large desk, poured us both a drink and we settled in. "Jason, what do you think of production?"

I hadn't had a good drink in a long time. I wasn't really listening to what she was saying. My mind was on that drink and the sudden notion that it had been awhile since Garrison had me

up to her to her control room.

"I'm sorry, you were saying," I managed to act like I was alert.

She had those really big breast that most heavy women have and when she spoke in just the right way, they waved and shook just ever so slightly, I liked that.

Garrison put her glass down. "If I told you that we needed production up by 10 percent. Do you think the crew could handle it?"

I swallowed by Scotch. "Garrison. We are at a 100 percent most of the time. The machines can handle it so long as there are replacement parts coming in, to handle the worn ones. But. . ." I let my voice trail off.

"But what," Garrison finally picked up on.

I just came out and said it, "People. We also employ people and people can only be pushed so hard. Then they need some down time. Any business psychologist will tell you that. And even if you do manage to get them to work that hard, for how long? Short busts like that might work. But that can't be the new normal thing."

She got up. By the way she was nodding her head she agreed. "I didn't think it was a good idea. Like you said, we are already working pretty hard. I just got the last batch of the crew trained properly, won't want to lose them to unfair and unsafe work practices."

Garrison went to a cabinet and bent over while doing a combination on a safe. I couldn't help but stare at the big juicy behind of hers. But I wasn't going to say anything, her being my boss and all the sex discrimination laws on the books. Suffice it to say, looking wasn't going to cost me my job. But she looked around really quickly, a bag of gold coins in her hand and she noticed my looking at her. Her reaction wasn't unfavorable. We both smiled at one another, a silent gesture that perhaps after working hours, something interesting might happen.

"Here. Take this. Make sure the crew gets a little something extra for the efforts. Money is always a great motivator." She winked at me.

Why did I like big women so much? Was it because my mother was nicely sized and I noticed how much my father adored her, when I was little? Garrison seemed so sexy right now as she handed me that small bag of gold coins.

"I'll do the best that I can. I think I know a few workers that might be up to the challenge and in good enough health to pull it off." I tried to exude confidence. The bag was heavier than what I was expecting.

I started to turn to leave and that was when I felt a firm pat on my behind. I looked around. Garrison was smiling at me with that big breast encouraging me on. Damn. Why did I like big women? I was such a pushover for this one.

Out the door I counted the gold coins. Wow. I was sure I could motivate a few workers.

I suspect that resignation was a lot easier for me than for an assassin, since I had nothing at all to give away, no accessory, no motive. I couldn't preserve myself by telling them anything interesting. I had no right to pose a threat to others by irresponsible invention. So I kept on involuntarily repeating the truth without the slightest hope that it would be believed.

At last someone recognized my name, and my story of a distinctive stalk became faintly possible. But, whether it were true or not, it was now more than ever indispensable that I am discreetly murdered. And that was simplified. I had admitted that I had not spent a night under a building for five days, and that nobody knew where I was. They replaced all of my materials and possessions into my pockets, drove me fifty miles to the north, and staged the misfortune.

When I came out from that blasted conifer and found that my legs would carry me, I began, I say, to look forward. It would be supposed either that I was submerging or that I was lying hurt and incapable in some metropolitan cover where my corpse would eventually be found. The main security and the authorities in neighboring villages would be warned to look out for an expiring stranger, but it was most unlikely that any description of me would have been circularized to other regions. The security officers at the building had no official knowledge of my existence and would share their unofficial knowledge with as few outsiders as possible. It was a suitability to have no existence. Had I stolen with a discreetness instead of carelessly, the head of the organization would not have had my holographic photograph in all the security stations.

If I could walk, if I had new bullets, and if I could pass the susceptible zone without calling attention to myself, my chance of getting clear out of the territory was not negligible. I had my authorization, my maps, and my money. I spoke the language well enough to deceive anyone but a highly trained man listening for mistakes. Dear old Reverend Mucoso, my personal friend and their ambassador in Zecocjet, insists that I speak a dialect, but to him polished grammar is more important than expression. That's a superstition inseparable from essential affairs. A well-trained diplomat is supposed to write Zecocjet, for example, like an angel, but to speak it with the peculiar gutlessness of an Epoxian shyster.

I wish I could apologize to Reverend Mucoso. He had certainly spent some hours of those last twenty-four in answering private emails about me, hinting as respectfully as possible that the bodyguards of the alliance security were a pack of informal fools, and following up with a strong letter to the effect that I was a member of his parish and that it was unthinkable I should be mixed up in any such business as was, he could hardly believe trivialities, suggested. I fear he must have been rebuked. The bodyguards were, on the reference of it, right.

It was now, I think, the first night; it was last week when I was caught, but I am not sure of the lapse of time thereafter. I missed a day somewhere, but whether or not I was hallucinating I couldn't tell. I knew roughly where I was, and that, to escape from this collapsing world of rock and forest, I should follow any path which ran parallel to the stream. My journey would not have been so hard if I had crutches, but I could find no pieces of wood of the right height and with an angle to fit under my arms. It was, when I come to think of it, an impossible quest, but at the time I was angry with myself, angry to the point where I wept infantile tears of impotence. I couldn't make my hands use enough pressure on a cutting instrument, and I couldn't find sticks of the right length and shape. For a time I raged and cursed at myself. I thought my spirit had altogether let on. It was minor. When everything was insufferable, it was unreasonable.

I uttered, "It wouldn't be hard, if there is one thing we know for certain about Fasel, it is that he couldn't keep his hands off the woman. The greater of them, the better. It would be easy for a smart girl like Anne Bolt. So she played him and took him absently with her. She took him to Delgus Prime and there sent an email he knew nothing about. Finally she played him back to Vahlooa. She probably couldn't support that. He desired to go home and she couldn't let him get to far from her. Fasel was dangerous to her. Fasel alone could destroy all the indications that Anne Bolt had actually left Old Creek. When the search for Anne Bolt eventually began, it had to come to Fasel, and at that moment Fasel's life wasn't worth a plugged nickel. His first denials might not be believed, as they were not, but when he opened up with the indivisible story, that would be believed, because it could be checked. So the search began and immediately Fasel was

shot dead in his bathroom, the very night after I went down to talk to him. That's about all there is to it, excluding why she went back to the house the next morning. That's just one of those things that premeditated assassins seem to do. She said he had taken her money, but I don't accept it. I think more likely, she got to thinking he had some of his own concealed away, or that she had better change the job with a cool head and make sure it was all in order and pointing the right way. Or perhaps it was just what she said, and to take in the cover and the tributary. Anything is suitable. She went back and I found her there and she put on an act that left me with rocks in my mouth."

Krokane said: "Who terminated her, son? I gather you don't like Fasel for that little job."

I looked at Krokane and said: "You didn't talk to her on the cell phone, you said. What about Candy Harlow? Did you think she was divulging anything to your wife?"

Krokane shook his head. "I doubt it."

It would be ironically hard to fool her that way. All she said was that she seemed very different and subdued. I had no impression then. I didn't have any until I got down here. When I walked past the wooded area last night, I felt there was something wrong. Inside the house, it was too morally pure and neat and orderly. Anne didn't leave things that way. There would have been things all over the bedroom, paper stubs all over the house, bottles and glasses all over the kitchen. There would have been unwashed dishware and bugs and insects. I thought O'Tally's wife might have cleaned up, and then I remembered that O'Tally's wife wouldn't have, not on that particular day. She had been too busy quarreling with O'Tally and being bitchy, or just being hormonal, whichever it was. I thought about all the things that could have gone contrary at this moment in time. Was this some sort of basic illusion and was I somehow swept up in all of this because I just was too foolish to know when to get out of it?

The lights dimmed. "So who was it then?" Came a cold and shallow voice.

I suddenly felt my leg again. It hurt, "I just got here and I've been away for a while."

The security woman didn't seem to buy it or just wanted to make up her own set of facts based on prejudice and convenience. "You've been in some trouble?"

I didn't want anyone to go there. I thought about the gold coins and the trust Garrison had placed in me or rather what she'd have done to me if she found out what I was really up to. "Like I said: I just got here."

"You seem hurt. How did that come about?" asked a thin man in a gray suit.

I was already looking for a door out. "How long has this investigation been going on?" I put forth hoping that I could shift the questioning. It wasn't that I couldn't handle things. It was that with undue self confidence or pride came a slipup. I was an industrial spy working for a company funded by organized crime. People were starting to die and I might be responsible.

The coast, Amanda herself must be here, and Lisa Eckhart. Plus two domestic robots.

I stopped hammering the knocker. I groped for and found the knob of the door.

The door was disengaged.

I opened it on display. In the hall, rather over decorated like so many of Amanda's possessions, several lamps shone on gaudy furniture and a polished floor. But the interior passage was empty too.

With the wind carrying and whistling at my back I went in and kicked the door close behind me. I had no time to give a hail. At the back of the hall a door opened. Lisa Eckhart, Amanda's cousin, walked toward me, her arms hanging limply at her sides and her enormous

eyes looked like a person in shock.

"Then you did get here," said Lisa, moistening dry lips. "You did come here, after all."

"I . . ."

I stopped. The sight of her brought to me, acquired realization. It didn't explain my uneasiness or my fear, but it did explain much.

Lisa was the quiet one, the dark one, the unobtrusive one, with her glossy black hair and her intimidating elegance. But she was the poor relation, and Amanda never let her forget it. I merely stood and stared at her. Suddenly Lisa's eyes lost their faraway look. They were blue eyes, with very black lashes, they were filled with life and vivid, as if she could read my mind.

"Lisa," I blurted, "I've just comprehended something. And I never comprehended it before. But I've got to express . . ."

"Stop!" Lisa cried.

Her mouth moved. She put up a hand as if to shadow her eyes.

"I understand what you want to say," she went on. "But you're not to utter it! Do you understand me?"

"Lisa, I don't know why we're standing here yelling at each other. Anyway, I, I didn't mean to act so distant. I mean. I must tell Amanda . . ."

"You can't tell Amanda," Lisa cried.

"Why's that?"

"You can't tell Amanda anything, ever again," said Lisa. "Amanda's dead."

There are some words which at first do not even surprise or stun. You just don't accept them. They can't be correct. Very carefully I put my traveling bag down on the floor and straightened up again.

"The security," said Lisa, swallowing hard, "have been here since light of day."

"Why? How?"

"There was some kind of an accident. I'm not sure? Where have you been? You look terrible and you have been hurt. What's going on?"

I didn't want this to get anymore complicated than it already was. I needed medical attention that didn't arouse attention and that was why I was here. But I needed to get her mind off the events of the morning and back on here and now. All this, without questioning me too much.

"I was in an accident too."

"Wow! What in the heck is going on today? No. I'm just glad that you are okay. Well, relatively okay. I'll get some stuff to take care of your injuries." She would help me now.

I needed to get my injuries under control and then I needed to figure out how I was going to get out of this mess. But first things first.

"Sure. I was answering a howl. It's bad enough I had to use my own hydrogen car, but for Heaven's sake, to get a ticket!"

"I prefer my own hydrogen car," Samantha said. "Those four cars belonging to the unit are ready for the junk collection."

"Three," I corrected. "One of them has been in the security garage for a month now."

"Zigfield went down to see about it the other day."

"No, the repairman told him there were four security cars ahead of the sedan, and they took precedence. Do you know anything about that?"



"Sure, it's probable. I've still got an investment for the hydrogen I used. You know that?"

"Forget that. I've never got back a fraction I laid out for hydrogen."

"What did Zigfield do about the car?"

"He slipped the repairman fifty pieces. Maybe that'll hurry him along."

"You know what the urban area ought to do?" I said. "They ought to purchase some of those used taxicabs. Pick them up for twenty or thirty thousand pieces, paint them over, and sell them back to the city. Some of them are still in very good shape."

"Well, it's a thought," Samantha said dubiously, and we entered the building. We found Mrs. Thyme, the manager, in an office at the rear of the ornate entrance lobby. She was a robot woman, a late model with a well-preserved figure and a very husky voice. She wore her hair heaped on the top of her head, an implement stuck rakishly into the dark-brown pile. She looked at the duplicate negotiation and said, "Oh, yes, I see now."

"You knew Miss Clark?"

"Yes, she lived here for quite some time."

"Do you have any idea how long?"

"Seven years."

"When did she leave?"

"It all started at the end of May." Mrs. Thyme crossed her splendid legs and smiled graciously. The legs were remarkable for a mechanical woman of her model, and the smile was almost radiant. She moved with skillful femininity, a calculated conscious fluidity of synthetic flesh that suggested availability and yet was totally respectable. She seemed to have devoted a long time to learning the ways and wiles of the female and now practiced them with familiarity and charm. She was pleasant to be with, this robot woman, enjoyable to watch and to hear, and to think of touching. It was like watching perfection and understanding that it could never exist in this world. No, not entirely. Oh. I'm sure that there were things and events that neared it, sure, we saw it all the time, in sports and science and the arts. But that wasn't really perfection. That was all relative to the event or circumstance.

The robot female smiled. "You know a lot of strange things have been going on lately."

I acted like I wasn't part of the strangeness. "I know what you mean. Was hearing a lot of stuff myself?"

"We are not used to getting deaths in this part of the area. Not really connected with the mining or the manufacturing facility."

Death was part of the process in those parts but the mechanical woman was right. "Well. I guess the more outsiders come in the more the natural balance of things is disrupted."

She looked in my eyes for a long moment. "Sure. I suppose so."

Miss Allen was tall and curvy. She didn't mind putting on a tease if the notion struck her mind. I found myself wanting to seduce her even though I knew better and had other business.

"Not any. It's not a right. It's a choice. I have no reason to ask you to have dinner with me this evening, which might not be a bad idea, but it's a choice, too. You're at a point where you can tell me you'd rather dine at the vending machine with a monkey, only that wouldn't be very nice. Also, when I asked if you have any gold coins from Garrison, you could also to tell me to go to heck if you find the question lacking tact. I might add that I would be at liberty to go to heck instead of being offensive. Have you any gold coins from Garrison?" I'd lost some of them.

She found it humorous. She had large teeth. She stopped laughing suddenly. "Oh my God," she said, "I haven't laughed like that for years. This mess, what happened here yesterday, and then Amanda. No, I have no gold coins from her. You don't have to go to heck." The laughter was all gone, and her green eyes, stared at me, they were cool and keen. "Anything else?" She was up to something, trying to charm me with her feminine wiles.

Again I had to withstand temptation. With Lisa the temptation had been genuine and natural; with her it was only partly genuine and only partly without exception. Larry had said she was in charge of communications and morale, and one more affair might be good for her.

Having protested, I shook my head. "Nothing else, unless you know of something. For instance, if you know of anyone who might have those gold coins."

"No, I don't." She considered me. "Of course I'm interested, if you want to call it that." Then her mood shifted. "I was very fond of Amanda, and this coming after all her trouble, naturally I'm wondering why you came here. You say Garrison is making an inquiry?"

"Yes, she sent me. I don't know who her client is, but my guess would be that it's some friend of Miss Barnstein's." I got up. "Someone else might be curious. Thank you, Miss Allan. I'm glad I don't have to go to heck."

She got up and offered her hand. "You might tell me what this is all about."

"Only if I knew." Her hand was cool and firm and I kept it for a moment. "I'm sorry I bothered you in here." That was very true. "By the way, one more question, is Miss Cazemore around?"

She answered no and came with me to the corridor and left me, heading for the place I'd come from. I went the other way, to the platform. Down on the main level a woman was there alone, at a table with a case, she seemed nervous. Being apparent, I turned left, found a few things that seemed out of place and began to examine them.

The woman, the other one, came up to me and asked, "Did you find everything you were looking for?"

She must have taken me for someone else. "Yes, I think I've been able to figure out what has been going on here. And you? Why are you here?"

"Me? I'm always where I shouldn't be. It is my nature. Why, coming to this planet next to a gas giant was something I shouldn't have done. But look at me, here I am." She smiled at me and then seemed to take interest of something in back of me. But only for a second and then she shifted her attention back on me. But her face had changed. Her expression dimmed.

"I see," I said. "I'm just passing through myself. Got business and things to do. Messy stuff, all of this."

Her mind was somewhere else. "Yes. Very messy stuff. Death usually is."

She found no argument with me and I was relieved to be moving on without complications.

The flashes kept coming down like a dripping waterfall; I squinted my eyes cagily, kept one hand shielded up over them to protect my eyesight. I thought I saw one spark shoot across horizontally, instead of down vertically, like all the others; it was a different color too, more vibrant. I thought it must be an optical illusion produced by the alternating glare and darkness we were all being subjected to, either that, or a detached part of combusted metal from the roof, ricocheting off the wall. I closed my eyes all the way, just to play it safe.

There wasn't much more to do after that. The noise and sparks stopped suddenly. We pried up the curved-shaped flap that was cut in the roof with heavy iron levers, to keep it from toppling

inward and crushing those below. The cool, icy beams of light flickered through. A security man jumped down into our midst and ropes were sent snaking down after him. He said in a quick, matter-of-fact way, "Okay, who's first now? Who's the worst hurt of everyone?"

The light showed three forms motionless at the feet of the others in the confined space. The agent, huddled in the corner where I had propped him; the sophisticated looking guy with the thick glasses (minus them now, and a deep cut under one eye to show what had become of them) laying senseless on his back and the young guy, who had got on at the last moment, tumbled partly across him, face down.

"The agent's dead," I answered the security man for the rest, "and the others, all hurt and in pain, even now. There is a guy with a broken arm here, take him first."

The security man deftly looped the rope under the armpits of the red-faced would be assassin, who was knotting the slack of one sleeve tightly in his other hand and sweating away like a pig to slaughter.

"Haul him away!" the security man shouted toward the opening. "And be careful, the guy's hurt."

The assassin went up through the ceiling, groaning, legs drawn under him like a sick puppy.

The sophisticated man went next, head bobbing down in unconsciousness. When the noose came down empty, the security man bent over to fasten it around the young guy still on the floor.

I saw him change his mind, pry open one eyelid, pass the rope onto the crying woman who had been such a crybaby, and who was shaking all over from the nervous reaction to the fright she'd had.

"What's the matter with her?" the security man uttered, pointing to the floor.

I tried to act like I didn't care about what had happened, or that I didn't feel for the woman and what she and, we all had been through. But the truth of the matter was that an assassin sent to kill me had managed to rake havoc on all of us, before being overcome.

"She's frightened. She's never experienced anything like this before. Fact of the matter, nor have I." I was lying but doing it convincingly.

"Okay, you'll be next."

"No! I mean, take the others first, they need immediate help, I can wait." What I wanted was time enough to gather the missing coins I had hid and came back to claim. I still needed to complete the assignment Garrison had given me and I had plans of my own for the other coins I had managed to hide throughout the local area.

In the Badlands, where we were, paper money and plastic meant nothing to anyone. Only precious metals and gems carried any weight. This was the Wild West of space, not for fools.

Her face was flushed and she made odd, uncertain movements with her delicate hands.

"Yes . . ." Anna said, and spoke harshly, loudly, and so that the word was almost a shapeless sound. "Yes . . ."

And then Anna Morgan, taking both hands from the rails, pitched headfirst down the staircase. In a great moment of quietness, her body made a strange, soft thudding on the stairs. She did not utter a word.

At the bottom of the blue-carpeted stairs she lay quite still. Her head was at a hideous veer to her body, an impossible twist to her body. So that was how she died.

Anna Morgan died of a broken back. There were internal injuries. Seven people had seen her fall. Now she rested at the bottom of the stairs and no one would ever forget her swift fall down

the flight. An ambulance robot confirmed the cause of her death and a doctor from up the way, called when it seemed the ambulance would never get there, established it, too.

But after he had knelt for some time by the body, the doctor beckoned the ambulance robot and they went out into the hallway. Then the ambulance robot beckoned one of the security who had arrived with the ambulance, and a security woman went into the hall with them. After a few minutes, the security woman returned and asked, politely enough, that we all wait upstairs. There were, she said verbosely, a few formalities.

We waited upstairs, in the dinning room. We waited for more than three hours, puzzled and in growing uneasiness. Then a tall woman of a medium build, about whom there was nothing special in appearance, came into the room and looked around at us.

“Why, Wilma!” Edna Powell said.

The tall woman looked at her, and then at Frank Powell, and said, “Yes.” Then she said there were one or two things.

And then Edna said, “Yes,” with a strangely flat tone.

How one introduces a security officer, who happens to be an old and close friend, to other friends who happen to be persons of interest, else why was the tall woman there? This had long been a moot question with Edna and Frank Powell. Edna said, “This is Wilma Dickens, everybody. Chief Dickens. She’s. She’s a security person. So there is a . . .” And uttered no more.

“All right, Edna.” Wilma Dickens said. Then, “everyone saw her fall. Tell me what you saw.” She looked around at us, back at Edna Powell. It was she who told her.

I wanted to get away from this place. Too many people turning up dead. And all over what? My cover had obviously been compromised. It was one thing to spy for a government but quite the other to spy for a large company. Industrial espionage paid well and usually it only involved stealing secrets. But in my case, things had gotten out of control. I had the information I was sent to gather but in the process I must have triggered a reaction from certain members within the company. A reaction that was leaving a death trail; leading to my involvement. No matter how removed from the actual fact. Time to finish gathering the gold coins and book the next rocket flight to another planet. There were a few places I could go where no one would know me and better yet, no one would care. My plan was to give Garrison what she wanted in the form of workers, but hire them cheap. Cheap enough and skilled enough so that no questions would be asked. Then she wouldn’t come looking for me. Once they were recruited, my ties with Garrison would be over, leaving me free to disappear. I hated being a spy but that was all I new. It was what I was good at. Stealing secrets and selling them to other businesses. But now this.

It all goes without question that what comes around goes around. Me. I’ve lived a life of deception and suspicion. And yes: I’ve had to pay the price. No close friends, friends yes, but no one I can trust. Not with my life. I’ve had a few affairs. Feared getting married. And never saw children of my own grow up to become people that would make me proud. Now I’m sitting at the shuttle port along with lots of strangers. Some leaving this tiny planet because they have business else where in the system. Some leaving because they have loved ones they haven’t seen or been within decades. Others like myself, leaving to escape what is sure to come if I stay.

The shuttle was slated to take off within an hour. It would then dock with a waiting spaceship that would take us all to whatever destiny our fates proclaimed. I’d managed to find just the right people to fill the slots for Garrison and she seemed happy with the choices. This planet was a mining and manufacturing planet. Lots of people left quiet lives to work here. The hours

were long and the work hard. Even though the really dangerous work was done by general purpose and specialized robots, there was still enough uncertainty to render the occasional accident. I was able to gather about half the gold coins that was given to me for the recruitment. I was taking them with me to somewhere else, anywhere else, I just needed to get away.

When I spoke with Garrison and told her I was leaving she seemed sad. Almost disappointed. I think she truly had feelings for me that went beyond the playful sexual tease the two of us had going on for so long. Sex was fine but a woman like Garrison needed more than that. She needed the trust and the hopes and dreams of a man that was going to be there for her. Like she'd been there for me all this time. Oh, we had one last night together. Parting souls and all that. But this thing was bigger than what I had signed on for. Organized crime was rampant throughout the colonizes. No sooner did a new planet get discovered that had something of value on it, then here came big business, crime and the military. I kept thinking of the woman who I watched commit suicide by plunging herself to her death. The attempts on my life that left chaos in its wake. Maybe I was getting too old for this stuff. This kind of living, where stealing from one, to give to another; and all for money and not for glory. Wow. What a spiritless life style. I think Garrison was right: you have to have someone to come home to eventually. Otherwise, you are prone to madness. Madness of the worse kind. Loneliness.

There was this kid sitting over there with her mother. They looked all happy to be going. I wondered what they were leaving behind. Was it family? Was it friends? A career for the mom? Just then I looked up and was surprised.

"Garrison?" The word came out my mouth without me being aware of it.

She beamed at me the way she always did. Made me feel that one person in creation truly cared about me. "I didn't want you to leave without a final goodbye. I know what we said last night. But that was all in the heat of passion. You know," she found a seat next to me. Her scent was like roses mixed with flowers I didn't know the names of. "Out here in the Badlands, it's not often that people like us find each other."

I stopped her and kissed her on her soft lips. She was right. But if I stayed, death would keep following and I didn't want anything to happen to her. We talked and held hands. Finally my flight came up and I had to leave. I remember seeing her parting face. Was there a tear in her eyes? I know I felt sick inside. Was I in love with her? What happened to my professional detachment? We all transferred to the waiting spaceship. Once strapped into our inertia seats I heard the sound of the lightning engine winding up, the thunderous vibrations shaking the structure of the vessel. Then with a flash of light we were all propelled toward tomorrow.

## A BROTHER OF DRAGONS

“Yet she betrayed at times a glean of sense” Byron

The village night was cold as the Winter frost closed unkindly, Alantia walked over to the others, next to the freshly kindled fire, the night sky was diamonded with stars, “That Norkellan patrol we encountered must have known of our recent battle with Lord Crecos.”

The others motioned her to sit next to them by the fire, Samson voiced, “Sometimes the patrols are cautioned to do nothing, even when they suspect that something is wrong. This cuts back on ambushes and unwanted attacks.”

The old man, Rampart nodded and began to speak with his breath frosting and smoking out, “Samson is right, we have to beware because we are not dealing with simple barbarians, these are different, they are well trained and disciplined. They will go back to their commander of their squadron, they will report that they have encountered riders that are of a suspicious nature. But tonight, we give our horses rest and provender.”

Samson uttered, “We will reach Kufa by noon if we rise early and ride hard. “

Alantia said, “You are assuming that we don’t run into trouble along the way.”

Samson countered, “That is the whole point in starting to ride at the crack of dawn.”

Alantia put forth, “I was thinking about a trouble that can catch us no matter what, I was thinking about Minekis the dragon. He does Crecos’ business.”

Rampart spoke, “He only does Crecos’ business because it pleases him at the moment, know you that dragons are deceitful creatures, they come in many forms. Once they ruled the world in darkness, way before the rise of mankind. They were terrible creatures, but God Almighty spoke and there was light, and the heavens and the things there in formed, some that were too powerful were relegated to the pit, that ancient portal to the netherworld. While others slipped about, seeking to deceive the newly formed creation.”

Alantia glanced at Samson, she and he had been in love for quite some time, but they also fought side by side, “They take many forms also . . .”

Samson nodded, “Once, when I was in battle, I saw one of them transform right before my eyes. I’ve always wondered about this sort of magic and wizardry.”

Rampart cautioned, “Don’t be taken in by the dragon’s magic, it comes from somewhere where darkness can only exist. They often make themselves out as creatures of light and reason to deceive mankind so they can steal souls, because in the end, that is all dragons feed on, the souls of men and woman.”

Some of the others sitting around the fire listening reacted to what was being said, someone spoke, “If a dragon comes near to me I’ll cut it asunder with my Celtic sword!”

Rampart smiled and nodded, “No doubt, my friend, this would we all do. But our mission is to inform the king of Kufa of what we have spied out.”

Samson said, “Crecos doesn’t take kindly to spies in his part of the woods. No doubt we have been betrayed by a traitor, from somewhere inside the castle.”

Alantia nodded, “This I think we all can agree on, Crecos has managed to plant one of his own inside our very ranks, the problem is why would anyone want to side with such evil?”

The trails that lead us all to a different reality and a different possibility is covered in gold and dreams of creation, the essence of our lives and the passiveness of the created’s ability to

change that which is not meant to be changed. The times of the future and the times of the past, looking out into the heavens, we see not the nameless stars and galaxies of a universe created by the hands of God, but our own alternate reality. Behold it is upon us even as we ponder the mysteries of the universe and the mystery of creation, for there are things both seen and unseen, and the greater are the things that we cannot see.

In the kingdom of Gossarmoth, there dwelled a multitude of dragons, and most dragons conformed to the spiritual shackles of their damnation, for dragons hate mankind, and ever seek to do battle with the children of man. But even in that state of being are those who dare to defy the word of God, and do dwell amongst the living, they are the great deceivers, the ones that can change their form, shape-shifters are they, even in ancient folklore, tales have been told about beings that can change their form, in order to do evil among the villagers. Witches they were called and wizards they were supposed, but deep inside of them were the seeds of deception and the invasion of the spiritual world, for who said that all alien occupations have to be in the physical realm of existence. Is it not more probable that beings from another reality than our own, have inhabited our tiny world, from the beginning. The forests thrive with creatures both fantastic and grotesque.

We are truly living in a world and universe without time, for the self-imposed concepts are contrivances of mankind, given to us by beings that hope to change the outcome of a not so distant war, by changing the past one can change the future, but at what cost? Smarter than ourselves, the dragons, beings that are as diverse as the stars, truly, no two dragons look exactly alike, are true testament of God's creative powers. For there are multitudes of forever of angels in God Almighty's service, and the Fallen Ones, they came from the ranks of the Holy Ones.

But the power of God is greater than any man can imagine, and indeed, no angel or demon or man can even unlatch the Lord's sandals. For it has been foretold that the Kingdom of God comes at a heavy price, the blood of Jesus Christ.

It was at morning, just at the crack of dawn, the light was all but detectable, the early rise of the sun, the group with Alantia and Samson rose and gathered themselves together, and they began their quest, riding like their lives depended on it, because they sensed in their souls, that it did. The mystical creatures of the forest sensed it also. For some flew by and whispered warnings of a coming danger, because Crecos had gotten word, not doubt from the spy within the castle walls, and was sending his hell-babes to do battle with the brave warriors of the Castle Kufa.

Rampart was the oldest of the three friends in the riding party, he had seen things that few men could live to see, but because of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, God had allowed him to live so that he could share his wisdom with the others. For brave Rampart in his youth had fought dragons of all sorts, for they do disguise themselves as men. Gaining unfound wealth and riches and power here upon the land of the living. And all those who seek to copy their ways with envy, are blind to what and who they are offering to be like, for there are many things unseen, and it is exactly those things that can undo a man or a woman.

As always, death comes with the ugly creatures and fairies fluttered past the riders, whispering things to guide them on for the forest knew and sensed what was coming. It was a time to seek shelter for the Winter cold sank into the bones and caused them to ache. Samson called out to the others that they would find lodging when they could up in a village.

Samson had been fighting a band of demon trolls, he took a jaw of a dead lion, the bone and beat the band into submission, about time that the others got wind of the battle, most of the

demon trolls had been defeated. But the others took swords up and began to slay the remaining ones, however in the process of rescuing their colleague, Rampart got wounded and they had to take him to a nearby inn, where he could get medical attention.

Alantia entered the bed chamber where Samson had been sleeping, she whispered, "I checked with the healing-woman, Rampart is going to be all right, but he will require considerable rest."

Samson rolled over, his mighty chest showing, "We should have been there for him, he's our friend and our mentor, how could we have been so careless?"

Alantia slowly undressed and climbed into bed with him, "It is we who should have been there for you, those horrible demon trolls could have killed you."

Samson kissed her softly on the lips, "It is not about that, I can take care of myself, didn't you see how many of those foul creatures I had slain before the rest of you came into the battle."

Alantia kissed him back, but more passionately, their warm bodies touching, "Yes, and it was very impressive. However, you should be aware, that not all of your battles have to be fought by yourself. We are a team, appointed by the King of Kufa himself. But there is greater meaning in these doings than meet the eye."

Samson agreed as he touched her warm full breast, "Crecos has found us, he has sent his evil demon trolls to draw us out. And in this part of the forest, the Woods of Vahall, it can only mean that the evil Sorceress Plagia, that vile witch is now once more in league with Crecos."

Alantia uttered as they made love, "You are right, in the past it would have seen that Plagia and Crecos were at semi-war with each other, each one trying to gain the advantage, trying to get the others land."

Samson said, "Yes, but the land once belonged to the kingdom of Kufa until the vile dragon, Minekis came into the realm, siding with the evilness of the Dark Forest. Minekis has managed to keep the balance of power off scale ever since."

Alantia uttered, "I think the old dragon has other plans, while he does indeed side with Crecos and because of recent revelations, also with Plagia, but this could mean that the evil Slumona is in the forest."

Samson spoke, "That would explain why the creatures of the forest are so upset, the whispers that they tried to convey to us."

Alantia said, "I am afraid that all of this goes way beyond the spy in the castle walls, if the Slumona is indeed coming, then there must be a greater threat to the kingdom than was first expected."

Samson howled, "Perhaps they seek to overtake the kingdom itself, this time, by uniting all their total evil, all together?"

Alantia agreed, "It would seem like they are working together, more so than in the past."

Samson stated, "And the spy within, this traitor must be revealed by the revelations of the Prophetess Zorina. We will bring the scrolls to her, she will be able to interpret the writing, and it will reveal the traitor to the kingdom."

Alantia put forth, "But first we must make sure that Rampart is going to be well and that his health will be resorted."

Samson answered, "We can enquire of Zorina, she will pray to the Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

The wicked evil sorceress Plagia and the good prophetess Zorina had it out, with a battle to determine whose powers were greater, and to allow the group to pass through the Dark Forest, the



section in which Plagia had influence. In the end the Prophetess Zorina defeated Zorina for a season by using the power of Faith in God Jesus Christ. But there would be other battles that the two would engage in.

Samson rode up next to the horse drawn wagon, which carried Alantia and Rampart, because Rampart was still too sick to ride a horse alone, Samson said, "I just got through surveying the road ahead, it looks quiet enough, for now."

Alantia uttered, "Now that the Prophetess Zorina has deciphered the scrolls that we found in the land of Mog, we know who the traitor connected to Crecos is, it's a woman who works in the palace as a servant to the queen."

Samson said, "We can use this information to our advantage."

Rampart, who was wrapped in warm blankets said, "Indeed, instead of just revealing who the traitor amongst us is, when we get back, perhaps we can calm the king's anger, and offer up a better plan, to watch the traitor secretly and make sure that the information that she gets is controlled."

Alantia nodded, "It is a good plan, but something still bothers me about all of this."

Samson voiced, "What could bother you? We have defeated the evil witch sorceress Plagia! We know who the traitor is that has been feeding Crecos information, and the dragon Minekis, can not complete the plans to forge an alliance against us, because we can control the information that the spy receives."

Rampart uttered, "Not to mention that we may still have an ally to the south, the good king of Itsaem, they are reported to be full of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as is our kingdom of Kufa. According to the now deciphered scrolls, Crecos and Minekis were unable to subvert the kingdom of Itsaem, they are hated by Minekis and Crecos, just like we are hated by them."

Samson announced, "I think I will take a journey to Itsaem, maybe get the king of Kufa to finance a small group of warriors to bring greetings and a letter of invitation, to join forces against the dragon Minekis and Crecos and Plagia."

Rampart smiled, "That is the exact idea I had, perhaps it can lead to stability in this region. I will join you on this quest."

Alantia quickly interjected, "Hey, hold on there for a moment, you forget how sick you really are, there will be no taking of journeys for you!"

Samson tried to smooth over the thing, "Perhaps, we can wait until Rampart is well again, then we can go to the kingdom of Itsaem."

Alantia smiled and nodded, "Now that sounds more sensible. We can't have you getting worst, just when you are starting to get better, besides, we need to see how much the traitor in the courts of Kufa knows."

Samson blurted, "Still I have concerns, serious reservations."

Rampart questioned, "About what?"

Alantia spoke, "You worry too much about things that none of us have any control over."

Samson went on, "If there is one traitor amongst us, is it too much to consider that there might be more spies amongst us?"

The group fell silent for a moment, all considering the ramifications, Alantia finally broke the silence, "We have to deal with what we know, but we can limit who comes to know what . . ."

## AMBASSADORS BY THE SEA

“This day be bread and peace my lot; all else beneath the sun” Alexander Pope

Eiopa Dynamic sat at the café counter drinking some kind of strange brew, “You really need to do better than that, I mean, think about it. I came all the way here, to this little hole in the wall of a town to get a story, I’m not leaving without one.”

Borghin was a strong man, one of the locals, he needed money, “Okay, but you have to understand, the people in this town are like one big extended family, I mean, hell, they all know each other’s business! And if that isn’t enough, they are all into each other’s business. You, well, you stick out like a sore thumb . . .”

Eiopa laughed under her breath, “I am a sore thumb, now tell me what’s going on here?”

Borghin looked about, as if to see if anyone was noticing that he was talking to her, a reporter, “Something has happened here . . .”

Eiopa said, “Okay, what has happened here?”

Borghin replied, “I can’t put my finger on it, but it is big and it seems to be affecting all the people in my town. Things are different, I mean, they don’t look different on the surface, but I can tell.”

Eiopa looked over her shoulder a few times, yeah, there was a seemingly odd feeling in the café, “Okay, I’ll grant you that your fellow town’s people seem a little off, but hey, you seem a little off, I mean, how do I know that this isn’t the way that you folks are? Just weird?”

Borghin countered, “In this town, some big-shot reporter for some tabloid, who writes about all sorts of sleazy things, you seem a bit off to me.”

Okay, she had that one coming, Eiopa said, “Are we in any type of danger? I mean, are there locals that might not want me here to the point of killing me or you?”

Borghin studied her face for a moment, “I once went to see this big-shot attorney, you know, to see about getting a divorce from Darleen, she’s now my ex-wife . . .”

Eiopa interjected, “Because you are now divorced . . .”

Borghin answered, “Something like that.”

Eiopa questioned, “Oh really, so the two of you are still married?”

Borghin became kind of moody, more so than he already was, “Are you sure that if I tell you my story, that your paper will pay me some money, I mean, real money, enough for me to get the hell out of Fofhe?”

Eiopa pulled out a wrinkled contract, “Here it is, you sign there, keep the bottom copy for yourself. Only do it if the money amount in the contract is enough for you, because once you sign, that’s it, you won’t get a point more.”

Borghin seemed to be reading the contract carefully, “Okay, I’ll sign,” and he did so.

Eiopa frowned, “You’re not as dumb as you appear . . .”

Borghin was not offended, “Dumb is how one survives in this town, you don’t get rewarded for being too smart.”

Eiopa said, “So, what’s the story?”

Borghin whispered, “Darleen died six months ago in a car accident, that’s her over there!”

Vsews Badkid was the town’s local rich man, he owned most of the stores, and the newspaper, shops, “So, you are some kinda big-shot reporter, come all the way down here, to

report on a story?"

Eiopa was visibly uncomfortable, "Your town is, well, interesting to say the least."

Vsews grinned, "You think so, because I've been trying to get the state government to fund us more money for development, but can't seem to get anybody's attention."

Eiopa said, "What have you been using for bait?"

Vsews said, "Why, me of course . . ."

Eiopa answered, "Then there you go, that is your problem. You have to use something that the fish want . . ."

Vsews uttered, "Fish, I'm the fisherman!"

Eiopa answered, "Then I suggest that you are the fish and that the state government has simply thrown you back into the pond."

Tension grew heavy, a woman, looked like a secretary was in the room with them, "I'm sure you are aware, being a reporter from the big city, that small towns like ours, usually get ignored when it comes time for appropriations."

Eiopa spoke, "What you are saying is true, but, it also helps to have an honest, elected local government, so that the powers that be don't become nervous when they look your way."

Vsews took in a deep breath, "Are you saying that your story is on the local governing establishment, are you looking into corruption in the fair sea town of Fofhe?"

Eiopa studied them both, "You are the mayor of this little town, what do you think of the people?"

The secretary fielded the question, "We are a quiet little town, there was once a time when the fishing was great, the town thrived, but things changed, partly out of regulation and partly out of environmental changes."

Vsews motioned to the secretary, then turned his attention to Eiopa, "Your paper, best I can tell, it is a tabloid . . ."

Eiopa nodded, "Some might call it that, others might call it an independent presence in a sea of corrupt and controlled news organizations, who do more to undercut and please the powers that be, oh, ever so much in a sneaky, pretend kind of way. Trying to make the people think that they are reporting objectively, when in fact, all their editors get their pulses checked each day by the covert news monitoring secret service."

Vsews frowned, "You are working for a tabloid though . . ."

Eiopa smiled, "I write the story as it presents itself. If there is something sensational, or if the truth gets muddled up with so-called facts, did anyone ever tell you what a fact is?"

The secretary interjected, "The facts are the truth."

Both of them looked at the secretary, Eiopa said, "The facts are nothing more than manipulated lies, seasoned with a sprinkle of truth, just enough to get you to believe the fact being put forth."

The secretary said, "That's not true . . ."

Eiopa continued, "The greatest fact was one told by the devil to Eve, oh you won't surely die. Well, no, not that instant, but my God, the entire human race was doomed to something that could have been avoided."

Vsews voiced, "Well, I hope you manage to find something good to write about . . ."

The heat was up and it had been a long hot night, Eiopa and Borghin had been in a small pub drinking ale for most of the night. One thing led to another and they both found themselves in

a motel room, the passions rising and the emotions flowing, unchecked. They made love that night and in the morning, when Borghin woke up, she was alone.

The ships seemed to be set in a kind of surreal pose as Eiopa gazed onto the sea, white sails moved ever so slowly across the calm ocean's plane of view. A man approached her and sat next to her.

Malchok said, "This is my favorite spot. I come here often and just watch the sails of the boats out in the distance. There is something soothing about it all."

Eiopa studied the elderly man then said, "I decided to come here because I have a hangover and I wanted to get away from some guy I slept with last night."

Malchok grinned wisely, "Some nights are best forgotten, if one can . . ."

Eiopa cut in, "You are so right about that, I'm going to have to remember that from now on. Just in case I find myself in bed with a stranger again, drunk and not executing better judgment."

Malchok voiced after awhile, "You are the reporter that the town is all abuzz about. Going to write a big story about our little sleepy seafront town?"

Eiopa nodded, "That's me, guilty as charged, I guess. The problem is, the people I want to talk to, don't really want to talk to me. And there is something weird going on in this town, but I either don't believe it, therefore I won't write about it, or I will write about it and your town won't be sleepy anymore. You'll have all sorts of crazy people wandering in . . ."

Malchok uttered, "Ah, therein lies your dilemma, you are torn by wanting to write the truth, but the sensationalism of the lies are more interesting, thus is your conundrum."

Eiopa kind of laughed, "Well, to be honest with you, I do work for a tabloid, we write pretty much crap anyway, hey, but it sells copies, virtual papers, beamed to countless subscriber's data-pads."

Malchok nodded, "It must be liberating . . ."

Eiopa said, "What?"

Malchok continued, "To be able to mix a little fact and fiction into a story that narrowly passes as a news story. What have you learned about this little sea town?"

Eiopa took a deep breath, "Well? A few people seem to think that they are seeing the dead walking, that is the most interesting little bit of fact that I've picked up, but when I try to interview these, er, resurrected individuals, they just seem to vanish."

Malchok raised an eyebrow, "Oh my, well that would be a problem, any theory on what might be causing all of this?"

Eiopa answered, "You know, I could go out and dig up a few good theories, but to be honest, I'm on a deadline, and I've all but come up with zip. So, I'm probably going to make up a bunch of stuff, sprinkle a dash of truth here and there, and call it a story."

Malchok smiled mysteriously, "And there you have it . . ."

Eiopa said, "What? I have what?"

Malchok answered, "Why, your story of course, you are going to write about the truth as you see it. People vanishing and coming back to life, in some little seaside town, that happens to serve up a damn good clam chowder."

Eiopa said, "You know, you are right, the clam chowder is great here!"

The way seemed mysterious, fog and a strange charge of static electricity filled the air, Eiopa had been asked by Malchok to interview a local boy, they sat on the porch of his

grandmother's house.

Eiopa said, "So, maybe you can give me your spin on what's been happening in Fofhe, this little sleepy port town, that seems to have something else going on?"

Kwood didn't say anything right away, as if thinking on the question put forth, then, "You don't believe . . ."

Eiopa smiled, "Believe what, what do you mean, I have to know what it is that I'm suppose to be writing about, I really don't think it matters if I believe or not, reporting is suppose to be objective."

Kwood said, "But that hasn't been the case in quite some time, has it?"

Eiopa studied the child for a moment, "You know, for such a young snot, you really do have a handle on the world."

Kwood smiled, "The world is irrelevant, what matters are the things that pertain to the inner man and woman, the soul . . ."

Eiopa said, "I can't believe in what I can't see . . ."

Kwood cut in, "Can you see the air?"

Eiopa finally shook her head, "No, but that is different . . ."

Kwood asked, "How so?"

Eiopa answered, "Because we breath the air, we can see the trees moving with the breeze, we can feel the coolness of the air as it passes over our skin."

Kwood answered, "And so is the soul. Have you ever seen the body of someone who has died?"

Eiopa nodded, "All too often . . ."

Kwood said, "And when the person is alive, we can see the person smile and speak and ambulate throughout the world. Are these signs of the soul just like the signs of the air? Of course they are, for though we cannot see a thing, does not invalidate, it, in fact, those things unseen are often more powerful than those things seen."

Eiopa said, "Name one, because I don't believe you . . ."

Kwood quickly interjected, "A virus, it is a small creature, yet, throughout the history of mankind, starting with Adam and Eve, a virus introduced into their bodies, slowly and with malice, killing them . . ."

Eiopa thought on the saying for a long moment, it was her turn to think, "But we can prove that viruses exist, we can see them using sophisticated machines."

Kwood answered, "Likewise the soul can be seen using sophisticated machines. You are of here, this world, this time, the children of darkness are wiser in their own time than the children of light."

Eiopa said, "Hey, now wait a minute, I'm no child of darkness, just because I need scientific proof for something, doesn't make me evil!"

Kwood agreed, "No, it makes you natural, of the world and the universe, there are two scenarios happening in this universe, those who are saved and are leaving to a better place, and those that are damned and are staying here, even after death. Hell is full of her children."

Eiopa said, "Then pray for us all, that we learn to believe as you obviously do . . ."

Kwood answered, "Each person has to accept Jesus Christ as their God and Savior . . ."

## CHAPTER 1

“Bending down the weeping willows, while our vesper hymn we sigh” George Darley

The grass was just starting to turn green after what had turned out to be a long and hard Winter, Spring was quickly erasing all the affects of the last season and birds were now fluttering about, with their songs. The corridor that led into the main hall, was big and grand in nature, embedded into the walls, were high relief images of heros and saints, people and events that told the story of ancient-Christians. Earth some times seemed distant, even though it wasn't anymore than a foot step away, but the past of Earth Prime, as it was now called, was marred with bloodshed and corruption, something that seemed to have spread, as mankind reached out, to explore the galaxy, and colonized on distant worlds. Though Mars was not a distant world, there were hundreds of planets, now colonies of the League of Worlds, which was a subsidiary of the United Planets, the first twelve planets to have been colonized by humans.

On Mars, races from other planets came and went, but a race called Coloraceans were generally attributed to have colonized Mars, thousands of years before Earth was inhabited by intelligent life. They left the planet, and colonized amongst the stars, when shifts in the orbits of the near planets, caused Mars to lose its natural resources, those natural resources which made the planet an inhabitable paradise.

On Mars, the first human colonist had to live in bio-structures, most of which were underground, with portals leading to the surface. It proved to be cheaper, to dig a hole and cover the top, than to create structures on the surface, also, the harsh Martian climate, facilitated the design and perfection of underground housing and cities. Later, that same engineering science would have to be used on Earth Prime, as the Earth's magnetic fields failed, and unforeseen atmospheric changes, forced most of the survivors into subterranean homes and cities, for survival. The biggest shock, was when the Martians came back, and wanted their planet back, oh, there were signs that other civilizations once lived on Mars, centuries before true colonization began, true colonization being, massive amounts of money poured into creating homes and cities on Mars with the intention of permanent colonization. There were carvings found, structures sticking out of the Martian sand, and basically, alien-anthropomorphic writings found, as exploration turned into colonization. Around that time, translaser and transdoor technology was perfected. The age-old search for monomagnetism became a reality. That led to the so-called anti-gravity coils, that created all sorts of flying machines. Also, the creation of total energy regeneration machines, so small that they could fit in a flashlight, allowed for more aggressive designs in robots and replacement organs in human beings, where artificial organs became as good if not better than the original ones.

Schools of all sorts became the main thing, as children from different walks of life and parts of the galaxy were sent to attend the boarding schools of Mars. One such school was Angelcross Seminary for Faither and Christian Studies. This was a famous boarding school for people who did not ascribe to the teachings of Technoligion, they sent their children to schools like Angelcross. Martians seemed to be particularly interested in human schools for their children, after the cultural gap had been bridged, human schools were as sophisticated and popular as non-human

institutions of learning. Archibald Gardner, Sheyouany Trough and Lewanda Ferret were three children who were on Mars to attend Angelcross Seminary of Faithers.

Pastor Azimuth looked across the room at the young faces staring back at her, she moved over to the table and began to teach, "Welcome to a new semester at Angelcross. Your parents have spent lots of money, to guarantee you a place this year. In the following months to come, you will learn secrets that have been kept from time to time."

Lewanda raised her hand, "Pastor Azimuth . . ."

Azimuth recognized Lewanda with a nod and point of her finger, "Yes."

Lewanda cleared her throat, looking about the class at the other students, "What does this class have to do with being a Faither?"

Azimuth smiled ever so slightly, "I teach the Healing Arts. This class has a great deal to do with being a Faither."

Lewanda went on, "But, I thought all we had to know about being a Faither was that everyone else didn't like us?" The rest of the class laughed.

Azimuth approached Lewanda, "Jesus Christ healed countless souls, when he walked amongst us, in the flesh. Healing is important."

Lewanda voiced, "But if you get sick, you go to the hospital, and they fix it."

Azimuth almost laughed, then stopped, "That is an infidel's point of view. God can heal without the need of medicine or physician."

Sheyouany decided to get into the conversation, "How did Jesus Christ do this?"

Azimuth looked over at the young Martian girl, "God, in the form of Jesus Christ, exercised his Almighty Will."

Sheyouany frowned, "I don't understand, how did he do that?"

Azimuth nodded, then began walking back to the front of the class, "He used virtue. When he would heal someone, a little bit of his divine virtue would leave him, now days, we call that energy, and as we know, energy can never be used up, it just changes, is converted from one form to another."

Lewanda said, "But how could someone back in those days, so primitive, have used something so advanced?"

Azimuth raised an eyebrow, "Ah, there is the real mystery, we often think of ourselves as being so advanced, but in truth, people have been de-evolving, to a less perfect state of being, ever since we left Eden."

Archibald questioned, "What was Eden, then?"

Azimuth smiled, "Eden was a perfect bio-environment, for all of the creatures of Earth Prime to live in, it was the perfect environment, everything in it was perfect. Thus, nothing could grow old, and nothing could die."

Archibald said, "But, when Adam and Eve sinned, they caused all humanity to die."

Azimuth nodded, "Yes, but God kicked them out of Eden, because nothing imperfect could live in Eden, it was a perfectly balanced ecosystem. Outside Eden, imperfection reigned, as was evident, when they left, and found things hard and unfriendly."

Sheyouany uttered, "Why don't we just go back there, to Earth Prime and find Eden, and discover all of its secrets?"

Azimuth stated, "Because God, in his Almighty wisdom, has hidden the thing from mankind. Mankind can not move into the future, without first moving into the past. The end of time is the

beginning to something new.”

Archibald spoke, “Is that why the infidels hate us, because we believe in the truth of Jesus Christ, and they only believe in the lies that were told, by the Dragon, in Eden?”

Angelcross Seminary for Faith and Christian Studies was a large sprawling campus though most buildings and facilities, homes and businesses, communities were underground, the challenge to the architecture was to build habitable environments that were both functional and artistic. In that vain, Angelcross was very artistic, because the structures were underground, great attention was paid to the inside, with all sorts of artistic reliefs and murals, curves and corners. High vaulted ceilings, gave way to the illusion of open space, something that was much needed, in order, not to feel cramped in, after all, Martian society dwelt almost entirely underground.

As Lewanda and the Martian girl Sheyouany rounded a corner, headed to the library, Archibald caught up with them, “I need to talk to you two.”

They all stopped in front of the fake water fountain, part of a center piece on campus, Lewanda voiced, “Hi, Archibald, we are headed to the library, some of the assignments given are too difficult for us to figure out on our own. We are going to get help from the robot librarian, Manypage, she always helps us.”

Archibald uttered, “I thought we were told not to get Manypage to do our homework for us, we got caught before, you know.”

Sheyouany nodded, “But this time, we are going to ask the questions, and let her assist us in finding the answers, the real work will be done by us.” The Martian girl looked anthropomorphic in many ways, but there were also vast differences. For starts, Martians had nine fingers, four on each hand, they had nine toes, again four-on each foot. They had an articulated tail, which seemed to vary in length, depending on the Martian, as a general rule, girls’ tails were a little shorter than boys, but again, it varied. Then there was the reason why they were called Coloracean, they were a multi-colored race of beings, coming in shades and hues, it was not uncommon to see a Martian, that’s skin color was purple, or blue, bright red, yellow, brown, black, orange. It went on and on, and then there were the ones that were mixed colors, with patches of color. So, from a Martian point of view, Human’s proclivity towards racism seemed silly, stupid, even dumb. Because the color of ones skin couldn’t possibly make you superior, the dumbest Martian had an I.Q. equal to one hundred and fifty- four, on average. That wasn’t to say that there weren’t stupid Martians, they were just smarter than most Humans. But humans used cyber-implants to augment their learning, built in memory chips and computational implants. And with all of that, modern learning was still hard, there was simply more to learn, and as always, less time in which to learn it, so the challenges still worked out.

Archibald looked over his shoulder, “I got this in my mail last night, you won’t believe it.”

Lewanda questioned, “What is it?”

Archibald said, “Someone sent me a clue to the murder of Pastor Hipshot.”

Sheyouany looked about to see if anyone was watching them, “What does it say, Archibald?”

Archibald whispered, “It says that, he’s still alive!”

Lewanda stepped back, “It can’t be true, Pastor Hipshot’s car was found all wrecked and blown up, it flew into a cliff on the surface.”

Sheyouany voiced, “But there was so much wreckage, and only little pieces left, because there was a storm, that blew evidence away, that they couldn’t find his body. They assumed that it was taken away in the storm. But, if he is still alive, we have to tell someone, Pastor Lighthouse, he’ll know what to do.”



Just then Pastor Lockrock came around the corner, "What are you children doing?"

They stood there a brief moment, then ran off as a group to find Pastor Lighthouse for help.

Pastor Prettyfield and Pastor Lighthouse were in the inner room, seemingly talking about academic lessons scheduled for the students, when Archibald and Sheyouany along with Lewanda found them. Pastor Lighthouse stopped what he was doing and approached the children, "How can I help you?"

Archibald stammered for a moment, trying to get the words out, "Pastor Hipshot is still alive," he finally spoke.

Pastor Prettyfield quickly came over, "Where did you hear such a thing?"

Lewanda uttered, "It came from Archibald, someone sent him a cosmic-email, telling him that the pastor was still alive."

Prettyfield looked at them all, "I can see that you three are serious, but surely you know that the good Pastor Hipshot is no longer with us. I know it is hard to accept, believe me, even as an adult, we all are finding it hard to believe, he, he was like family to us. All of you are, we are a family in Christ."

Sheyouany interrupted, "But he has proof, the person that sent Archibald the cosmic-email, wants him to meet him, in a secret place, a place where the proof can be revealed."

It was at that time, that Pastor Lighthouse, the Seminary's principal got into it, "See here, you all are bright children, you know the danger of meeting in strange places, with strangers that you meet on the cosmic-web. You all have been educated to the facts, often, evil men and women, seek to harm children, and lure them places, by telling them things that they want to hear, in order to kidnap them."

Lewanda voiced, "We know, sir, that is why we decided to come to you, because we know that you'd know the right thing to do."

Prettyfield snapped, "The right thing to do is alert the authorities!"

They all stopped for a moment and looked at Prettyfield, she was taken back by them staring at her, Lighthouse finally said, "Did this mysterious informer give you a name?"

Archibald shook his head, "No, just the place to meet. But what if Pastor Hipshot is still alive, out there, in the Martian wilderness?"

Lewanda uttered, her voice breaking, "Poor Pastor Hipshot, some one has got to save him."

Lighthouse ran his short fat fingers across his face, "The Martian wilderness is a hostile place, even in now days, with all the settlements and colonization, people still come up missing, presumed dead."

Sheyouany jumped in, "And some are found alive, much later on. We read about it all the time on the cosmic-web. That could be what has happened to Pastor Hipshot."

Prettyfield was most disturbed, "I can not believe that you are indulging these children in such wayfarer ideas, you know the facts of the accident, Pastor Lighthouse. It is obvious that someone is using poor Pastor Hipshot's death to pull some kind of prank, or worse."

Lighthouse slowly nodded, "You have a point, Pastor Prettyfield, if there were real evidence of Pastor Hipshot being alive, the same person would have alerted the police and authorities."

Archibald said, "They don't listen . . ."

Prettyfield asked, "What?"

Archibald went on, "The authorities don't listen, even us kids know that, and then you factor in the fact that Pastor Hipshot is a known Faither, teaching at the Seminary, they don't listen, because they are prejudice."

The heavy doors closed, in the big chamber sat Pastor Lighthouse, Pastor Prettyfield, Pastor

Lockrock, Pastor Azimuth and the robot librarian Manypage, the table in front of them was oval shaped, allowing them all to look at each other.

Lockrock uttered finally, "This can't be real, it has to be some kind of trick."

Then the others seemed to relax, relatively . . .

Prettyfield said, "That is exactly what I thought, and I told the children so. But still, it does seem odd, I mean, we all know that Pastor Hipshot is dead. The police found what was left of his aircar."

Manypage pointed out, "It hit the cliff at nearly three hundred miles an hour."

Azimuth voiced, "Nothing could have survived an impact like that. This cosmic-email to one of the children must be some kind of a trap, to draw us out, get some one else killed."

Lighthouse finally uttered, his wise old voice filling the echoed room, "Draw us out into what? This seminary has been established for more than a century, and six out of twelve prime planets in the United Planets have ruling votes in the Council. We are protected by the law, the very law that killed our ancient relatives, for their beliefs in Jesus Christ, we have managed to get a permanent and powerful foothold in the League of Worlds, by having a majority vote in the Governing Chambers."

Lockrock nodded, "You are right, this whole thing has to be about something else."

Prettyfield muttered, "They hate us . . ."

Lockrock asked, "What was that?"

Prettyfield repeated, "They hate us, that was what one of the three children said, and they are right. The followers of Technoligion hate us, they always have, because we pose a threat to their advanced society of machines and technical invention, all of which they believe has been accomplished without God Almighty. Let's face it, Pastor Hipshot was murdered because he was a Faither, teaching at this Seminary. They don't want more young minds to learn the truth of Jesus Christ. These are dark times."

Lighthouse spoke, "Our fore parents would have loved to have lived long enough to see the progress we Faithers have made in this current society. To think, after the decree of separation of religion and state, once the whole world, Earth Prime, became one world government, and when colonization of other worlds became a permanent reality, the notion of creating a false religion in order to control the vast settlements, was the only viable process that worked. In order to make the atheist governing body work, they declared Christianity outlawed. Finally, the only religion officially sanctioned by the Governing Machines, because by then, Governing Machines had begun to rule over mankind, they called themselves Technoligion, false gods, collectively willing great power and influence across the civilized galaxy. In order for ancient Christians to survive, they had to unite, gone were the petty differences, the sects, divisions, all those who believed on and worshiped Jesus Christ as their God and Savior, had to unite to survive."

Manypage voiced, "So, you are saying that Pastor Hipshot was murdered by an agent of Technoligion, and that now they might be trying to implicate one of us, by drawing us into something, perhaps eventually, killing another one of us."

Lockrock questioned, "That is all fine and good, but why the children, and why those three? They happen to be the children of very powerful families, ruling families on the planets that they come from."

Azimuth said, "Who got the message?"

Prettyfield answered, "Archibald Gardener, he's a young prince. They are all royalty!"

## CHAPTER 2

“He hears his daughter’s voice singing in the village choir” Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Mr. Flink walked at a pace that showed he was in charge, “So, you are the one that came up with the Sullivan ad campaign.”

Amy Silverberg kind of smiled for a brief moment, glad to be noticed for her efforts, but when she turned her face to the new client, she was stoic, “I do the best I can for my clients, that is what makes the advertising firm of Harrison, Byrd and Silverberg different from the others.”

Mr. Flink’s eyes rested hard on her young and pretty face, “I suppose you want me to believe that the other firms don’t try hard.”

Amy stopped for one moment, and when she did, for one brief second, so did the rest of the business pack they were walking with, including Mr. Flink, she walked onto the lift, “What I meant was that no matter how hard they try and sell your product, and I will admit that there are good firms out there, our firm can reach more potential customers.”

Mr. Flink asked as they entered the lift, “Do you know what I’m selling?”

Amy returned as the doors closed, and a sudden feeling of panic came over her, but only for a moment, maybe it was the crowded elevator, the high-powered men and women in company, or maybe she just wanted the account so badly, that she didn’t want to make any mistakes, “No, but I can sell anything!”

Jodie Byrd jumped in, sensing her friend sinking in her own pride, “What Amy is saying, Mr. Flink is that she’s the best. Why, did you know that she sold meat to a colony on Riner that were suppose to be total vegetarians?”

Not the meat account, Amy was trying to stay on track, this client had been known to just get up and walk out on the ad campaign if he didn’t like it, she didn’t want him walking out of the lift and leaving the building before anyone had a chance to see what he wanted them to sell, “That was a long time ago, and I am well aware that you are a vegetarian, yourself, no disrespect intended.”

Mr. Flink left the elevator as it stopped on the six hundredth floor, it poured right into the conference room, where all of the top senior marketers had already gathered, smiles and nods from some, it seemed all had something nice to say to Flink, as he rounded the table and sat before his console, that the company had linked to his corporate office, “Thank you all for coming, as you are aware, I’m looking for the right company to launch a multi-billion shekels advertising campaign. And after careful assessment, I’ve come to you.”

John Harrison uttered, “We are pleased to have your confidence, Mr. Flink”

Mr. Flink smiled, because it wasn’t about that, pushing a few buttons, the multimedia show began, “This is what I’m selling, total body transplants, this is the most sophisticated surrogate body ever designed, the human head is removed and grafted onto this machine body, which looks and works just like a human body, better, no sickness, disease, death. People I want you to sell to the public, physical immortality!”

There was a sudden quiet in the conference room, the fact of the matter was that for about ten seconds, no one moved, then Amy glanced out onto the landscape through the window, she got up and went to it, slowly turned around, facing the eyes on her, “This is the ultimate beauty and health product, the campaign will read: Heaven on Earth . . .now you too can be perfect!”

Flink nodded and smiled, then there was spontaneous applause for the slogan.

The restaurant was modestly crowded, not where they were sitting, John, Jodie and Amy, the three musketeers they liked to think of themselves, friends since college, now taking on the big boys in the corporate world of psychic advertising. They sat around a table and were eating lightly, Jodie had something on her mind.

Jodie finally uttered it, "I know the two of you have been with me since Cindy and I have been trying to get pregnant, well, I'm the one, well I am."

John still had food in his mouth, "Yes, you are the one, what are you the one of?"

Jodie looked up, then her eyes fell on her friends, "I'm pregnant, Cindy and I are going to have a baby."

Amy sat back, "You mean the cross genetic sampling worked, the two of you are going to have a baby from both of your genetic chemistry? Well, that's fantastic."

John smiled, "To think, two lesbians, having a baby from both of their natural genetic makeup. They have finally gotten it right."

Jodie cautioned, "There are still some rough points to overcome. First of all, it's going to be a boy."

John was surprised, "A boy, but the two of you are the parents, both of you are women, how can you have a boy?"

Jodie smiled, "That was the tricky part, inverting one of our genetic chemistry enough so that the egg being implanted could be fertilized by an XY genetic sequence. I don't know, it's all Greek to me. But it seems to have worked."

John looked over at Amy, "What's wrong, no, let me guess, you want a baby too?"

Amy smiled, "I used to want one with you, remember, but you had to go off and marry Malissa."

John voiced, "I thought the two of you were best of friends?"

Amy moved her food around, "Your wife and I are friends, John, and don't you go, with your big mouth and tell her anything different. I was just saying, back in our college days, we all thought it was going to be you and me, the baby thing, you know."

Jodie interjected, sensing the heaviness of her friends moods, or maybe she just wanted the attention focused back on her, "A lot can happen after college, and it has. John and Malissa, me and Cindy, Amy and, Amy and . . ."

Amy finished, "Her robot boy friend, go on and say it! I'm attracted to artificial humans as sexual partners."

Jodie said, "I wasn't going to say that. But Cindy and I do have a little problem, we were going to take a second honeymoon on Mars. But now that the baby has come, well, let's just say that I have a lot of other things going on right now."

John sensed something, "Why, is everything going well with you and Cindy?"

Jodie became jumpy, "I didn't say that they were anything other than great, did I?"

Amy smoothed things out, "Hey, we are here to eat and celebrate the new news of our friend's pregnancy, synthetic-wine, waiter, our friend is drinking and eating for two!"

John put forth, "You can't drink, you are pregnant."

Jodie uttered, "It's okay, synthetic-wine is alcohol free, but it tastes great all the same."

John nodded, "Okay, just looking out for my friend, here."

Jodie smiled at both of them, "And I love you for it, the both of you. Anyway, I want you to have the tickets to Mars, Amy, find yourself a flesh and blood guy, stop the creepy android-sexual

thing. You are better than that.”

Foster helped Amy as they fixed a salad and picked a nice wine to go with it, “I don’t think I fully understand.”

Amy stopped what she was doing for a moment, then looked flat on, “No, I suppose that you won’t. You couldn’t really.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Because you are my robot lover, you are only programmed to do the things that I want you to do. Oh, God, maybe she was right . . .”

“Right about what?”

“All of these years, I’ve been hiding, I bought you because I was lonely, I wanted the perfect boyfriend, lover, I don’t know. But now I’ve been given a chance to go on a vacation to Mars. I’ve been given an opportunity to change my life, and not feel like a jerk, for doing it.”

“So, you are saying, that you feel like you’ve wasted your time with me?”

“No, no, that is not what I’m saying, I’m saying that I chose to live my life with a machine, that looked like a man, speaks like a man, even makes love like a man, but lives to please me all the time.”

“And this is bad, this is suddenly not what you want?”

“No. You are wonderful, Foster. I guess, in some way that I can’t even understand myself, I love you, and you can’t help but love me, because that is how you are made.”

“Do you remember when you first got me, do you remember what you told me after the first night that we made love?”

“No, refresh my memory.”

“You told me that you were happy, that now you had found a man that wouldn’t cheat on you, or forget your birthday, or lie to you, or ever grow tired of being with you. You were happy, because, my eyes never wander to another woman, no matter how many, and at parties, my attention is always on you, making you feel special. I’ve been designed to protect you, both physically and emotionally.”

“The perfect man . . .”

“No, from what you’ve been trying to tell me all night, I’m the perfect robot substitute for a man. If I didn’t know any better, and I don’t, because I can’t, I’d say that you don’t love me anymore.”

Amy took the evenly poured glass of wine from Foster and looked into his eyes, “What do you see when you look at me?”

Foster smiled as he traditionally seated her at the table, then he sat across from her, Amy supposed it was some fancy programming that caused him to mimic like he was thinking about what she had asked him, it never dawned on her that he might actually have real thought, “I see the love of my life, questioning whether or not to leave me for someone else.”

Amy was completely taken aback, “I, er, no, Foster,” but she looked at him and began to realize that he was right. Damn, he really can think, not just copy actions, and mimic behavior, did he have a mind?

Foster uttered after taking a sip of wine, “What’s wrong?”

Amy finally snapped out of it, “Nothing, I just never considered that you felt that way, that you might have real feelings. I always thought that robot mates, were simply programmed to act like the owner wanted them to act.”

Foster responded, "I am acting like my owner wants me to act. I can't tell you to just turn me off, literally, and leave me in the closet until you decide to reactivate me, I want to live."

Amy's mother busied herself preparing dinner, it was rare when she had all of her children over the house for a home cooked meal, she finally let her eyes rest on her oldest daughter, "So, what are you saying, that you are going to take this vacation to Mars, so that you can find yourself?"

Amy felt foolish, when her mother put it that way, "No, mother, I'm okay with who I am. I've already found myself a long time ago. I'm just searching for something . . ."

Amy's dad came into the kitchen, felt the tension between the two of them, quickly grabbed an import beer and was trying to get out of there when the matriarch of the family cornered him, "No, Charles, you tell your daughter that she isn't going anywhere, specially to Mars of all places!"

Amy's dad smiled at Amy, then seriously looked at his wife, he could clearly see that there was no way out for him, "Honey, don't you think that I'm as proud of Amy as I can be." He seriously hoped that would get him off the hook, but it just sank him in deeper.

Amy said, "See, why can't you be supportive, like did?"

Oh, that was the wrong thing to say, Amy's mom just went at it, "Look what you've done, you do it every time, men! Now I asked you a simple question, it didn't require a lot of thought or fancy wording on your part, all you had to do was agree with me!"

Amy's dad looked at Amy, with the expression, help, "Honey, this really seems like a subject that the two of you have been hashing out. Don't you think that it would be better for the two of you if I just stayed out of it?"

Amy's mother put her hands on her broad hips, "Stay out of it? How can you stay out of it, she's you daughter . . ."

Amy's dad voiced, "I do have other children, you know, grand kids too."

Amy's mother turned her motherly concerns back to her daughter, pushing her loving husband out of the kitchen, "Men, if I didn't love your father so much, now you, you are going to listen to reason. Running away from your problems has always been your way of coping with them. You can't run away from life!"

Amy was biting on a bread stick, "Run away, mother, I'm not running away from anything, I'm just going on a vacation."

Amy's mother corrected, "A vacation that was designed for your gay friends, I love the two girls grandly, but they don't have anymore sense than you do. Why didn't you come to me or your father?"

Amy waved her hands in the air, some of the little nephews and nieces came in, wanting to hear things that were none of their business, Amy smiled at them, motioned something that made them all laugh, then she turned back to her mom, "Mother, Mars has been colonized for more than a hundred years. There are businesses and corporations and communities, good grief, it was where the first transdoor technology was tested, linking Earth Prime to Mars by means of the transdoor continuum. Now we go to Mars in the blink of an eye, like we travel to hundreds of other off world locations. It's really no big deal."

Amy's mother shook her head, "Yes it is, it's where people go when they want to gamble and act in ways that are unacceptable to decent folks here on Earth Prime."

Amy sat on a stool, looking on as her mother continued to make food for everyone, and more people were coming into the house, the door bell just rang again, and she could hear happy

voices floating in from another room in the wonderful old neo-Victorian home, “I love you, mom.”

Amy’s brother came and sat with her on the swing, the back yard opened up into a wooded ravine, beautiful vista with other houses popping up here and there through the thick, he sat with her for a long moment seeming concerned, “Mom tells me that you have given up on ever finding a guy that you can settle down with.”

Amy kind of looked off, then placed her gaze square on him, “Mom is nosy, she means well, but face it, mom’s idea of happiness is conventional.”

The nieces and nephews ran pass them, playing some game, her brother uttered, “What’s wrong with being conventional? That is how we got here, mom and dad had good Christian values, raised us right, or tried to, anyway.”

Amy nodded sourly, “No, they raised us right, they did a damn good job of it if you ask me, those two worked together, neither of them had much of anything when they fell in love, but God blessed them. Now, look at them, in the latter age, they are enjoying grand children, us, with our problems, and soon to be, next generation of grand kids, if our sister has anything to say about it.”

Her brother squinted, “Okay, let’s talk about it, our sister is going to be a grand mother, she got married young, and now, well mom and dad are very happy with her. And that doesn’t seem to be the case with you, are you ticked off or just like making mom’s life rough?”

Amy stopped swinging in the two seat swing for a moment, then slowly resumed, “Look, I was here first, I came out here to get a little peace and quiet, from the rest of the family. I just wanted to enjoy the gorgeous view that mom and dad have in their back yard, and maybe think a little.”

Amy’s brother nodded, “Where is your robot boy friend?”

Amy’s eyes went up to the sky for a moment, “He’s a companion, not my boy friend, and I left him at home.”

Her brother voiced, “Most people now days have robot servants, but few decent people have sex with them, they are just machines, appliances.”

Amy shrugged, “You ever see a pretty woman and wished that you could be with her?”

Her brother stopped swinging and stood up, “What does that have to do with robot appliances that look like people?”

Amy went on, “Ever think, wow, that girl looked just like I’ve always wanted a woman to look, but she doesn’t even notice you. So, for just one brief moment, your mind moves to, what if I had a robot companion that looked just like her, and don’t lie!”

Amy’s brother gave in, “Okay, now days, with all sorts of technology available for people to make their lives better, yes, I think everyone has done it. But that doesn’t mean that I went out and really did it, pay all of those thousands of shekels to buy a robot that looked like the perfect woman, for me. I mean, there are limits to which a decent person will go in order to be happy.”

Amy frowned, “Maybe what you are saying is that you don’t think that I’m very decent. But I’ll tell you this, he is nice and cares about me, and makes me happy.”

Amy’s brother said, “Then why the big trip to Mars to try and find true love. The people on Mars are even more consumed by technology, that is how they live and survive on Mars, they rely on technology for the most basic of things. You are never going to escape your fetish until you get rid of that machine that you profess to be in love with.”

Amy barked, “What if I decide to take him with me, on a second honeymoon, just me and

the robot? What's wrong, that would shame the family too much?"

Her brother shook his head as he walked away, "Real people, Amy, real love."

Mrs. Anderson uttered, "It's been a long time since I saw you, Amy, how have you been?"

Amy didn't respond quickly, "I've been okay, doing just fine."

"I've talked with your mother, she seems worried about you all the time, oh not in an obvious way, but I can tell."

"Why would my mother be worried about me?"

"You know . . ."

"No I don't, oh, yeah, that."

"Do you still have him?"

"You mean the robot?"

"Yes, the, er, android you live with."

"There is no easy way of saying this, I live with a robot that looks like a man. I'm one of those awful androsexuals."

"Oh, please, dear, I'm not the kind to judge."

"Now that is strange, because everyone else seems to be the kind. Why not add you to the list of others."

"It's just that it's not natural."

"What, to not to want to be lonely, to want someone that won't cheat on you, good Lord! I was involved with someone who would just cheat on me right out in the open. Damn them! That hurt me so much, but they didn't care about my feelings, just there own perverted lusts. Finally I got up the nerve to get rid of them and finally I bought the robot."

"Are you happy with the decision?"

"More happy than the people around me who seem to be constantly upset that I own him. To be honest, I'm very happy with him."

"Don't you care about what people say about you, behind your back?"

"If I were having an affair with a human man, people would talk about me behind my back, and it would probably be that they would be saying that the guy I'm sleeping with is cheating on me. Now, I don't have to worry about that, because he never cheats, he belongs to me."

"What about the fact that he, it, isn't alive?"

"Well, think about it, now days, most people live very long lives, and in order for them to live that long, most of them have had all sorts of organ transplants, a good many of the organs are artificial, and semi-artificial, meaning that part of the replacement organ is synthetic while the other part is organic."

"Some of the people do it that way, but I, myself, I have had multiple organ transplants, that is why I am so old, yet, I'm in great health and look much younger than my age, ever since the A-sphere was invented, that artificial organ that, when implanted into your body, allows you to receive transplants from any species, or any human being, without fear of rejection."

"So then, you are not natural, because natural would mean that you would have died a good century ago."

"It is true, people do live a long time now, centuries. Can you imagine a time when the average life span was less than a hundred years?"

"No, it seems so primitive. But you can't fault me on my decision to live with a robot, because a lot of people do, and for all sorts of reasons."



"I heard you were going to Mars, on vacation, they are more accepting over there."

Heidi just got through ordering another pitcher of imported beer, "So, you are really going to Mars to find whatever it is that you don't want to tell anybody about."

Amy took a sip from her mug, "I'm going to Mars on a vacation, I didn't even plan it, it was suppose to be Jodie's vacation with her wife, but she's pregnant and well, I guess her doctor doesn't think traveling is a good thing right now."

"But I thought you had everything you wanted right her on Earth Prime, Mars is suppose to be really liberal in some places and in other places, really strict, old school, strict!"

"Yeah, I know, I've been reading up on it ever since I decided to accept the tickets and go. You ever been through a transdoor? I mean, I know it is established technology and all, but I've never had to use it."

"Hey, a lot of people on Earth Prime don't like the technology, they think it takes away from them, something that is sacred, or something like that, I don't know. But to answer your question, yes I have, once, it's really no big deal. You just step through the machine and into another world, in an instant, like walking through a door into another room, only the next room happens to be light years, if not millions of light years away."

"What about those paradoxes, you know, the ones that everybody talks about, the creepy things, there being more than, one you, and after you're dead, you're still alive, in the transdoor continuum. You know the stories, how on some planets, the laws allow people who have lost loved ones to go back in time, through the transdoor, and bring them into the current time."

"Those things are illegal here on Earth Prime, and on most of the civilized worlds, just the Dark Planets do that type of thing."

"I don't know about that, I've heard of worlds with similar laws as ours, giving special permission to people, to bring back the dead."

"It does sound, creepy, doesn't it."

"I guess you have to be born in that culture. Do you believe that you have a soul?"

"A what?"

"You know, a soul . . ."

"Hey, what type of talk is that, you sound like one of those religious nuts, you know, the ones that defy the government, with talk about ancient books and a guy that was suppose to save the world, but he could save himself!"

"No! I'm not one of them, a Faither! No, I just was wondering if there was something to all that talk, about going through the transdoor and losing something important to you, a vital part of your humanity, or something."

"Your soul? Now I get it, I don't know, science has proven that we are made up of the same things that the world is made of, hell, we can even transplant organs from animals, without fear of rejection, thanks to the invention of the A-Sphere."

"Yeah, the artificial immune organ they implant. That's creepy too."

"Gee, everything is creepy to you, you sound like you do need that vacation, you've been working too hard. Maybe a nice stay on Mars will change everything for you."

"You think so, because I have been tired lately, maybe I do need to just relax, see the universe from another perspective."

"You are not one of them, are you, because I'm your friend, but you know, if other

people heard you talking like you were, they'd think you were a Faither. And you know, a lot of decent people don't like Faithers, because they don't like Technoligion."

"No, don't worry, I'm not one of them, I worship Technoligion just like everyone else."

Amy looked over the documents that she needed so that she could get her passport, Andrew happened to notice, so he asked, "Are you going to Mars?"

Amy gazed up at him and she felt a sudden lack of breath for just a second, that second was all she needed to know, she'd felt it a long time ago, there was chemistry, "Why, yes, yes I am and are you taking a vacation, too?"

Andrew smiled, "In a way, business mostly but every time, I try to mix business and pleasure."

"Oh, does it work?"

"Work? My mixing, I'm guessing that you mean, some times, I try and bring my kids along on the really good business trips, that way I can keep an eye on them, at the same time, try and teach them a little about the culture."

"Oh, you are married . . ."

"No, I am not, I have children, but my wife and I are divorced. We, er, well, let's just say that she wanted her freedom after having three wonderful kids, and talking me into marrying her for over sixteen years. In what would have been our seventeenth year, we got divorced. So, I gave her freedom and she gave me and the kids peace of mind."

"Wow, do women really do things like that, I mean, usually it's the guy that is the bona fide flake, but you are telling me that a mother left her children and husband for, what, some other guy, to be free?"

"You know, to be honest with you, I have never been able to figure out what the problem was. When we met, she begged me to marry her, she was so depressed, talking about killing herself, if I didn't."

"Hmm, she sounds unstable. You shouldn't have married her."

"You think so."

"Look, how did the marriage end, with her running off, leaving you and your three kids, how old are they now?"

"Oh, they are still young. The oldest is twelve, then the middle is ten and the youngest is eight."

"What are they?"

"One boy and two girls, the boy is the oldest."

"Wow, that is just, so not right! You must have been very angry."

"At first I was, really angry, but then I decided to place my feelings and the mess of the fallen marriage, in God's hands."

"God, you mean Technoligion . . ."

"Oh hell no! That false religion is for nothing more than monetary gain of the very few. No, I'm talking about the one and only really God, Jesus Christ. I put my fate and trust in Jesus Christ's hands, and never looked back."

"So then, you must be a Faither?"

"Yeah, I guess you could say that, ancient Christians, is what they were centuries ago, now because of all the off world travel, thanks largely in part to the invention of the transdoor, people

who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are called Faithers. I belong to one of the local churches. We all worship Jesus Christ.”

Amy was amazed, “You are not afraid to confess your God?”

Andrew laughed slightly, “Confession is good for the soul. Besides, Faithers have a majority on the Ruling Council, six planets in the United Planets are Faither dominated.”

The man was mysterious in a dangerous kind of way, the little café was dark and the food wasn’t that good, a robot waitress came to the table and took their order. Amy sat across from the much older man, he was well groomed and wore expensive clothes, they did not say very much, nothing that would warrant them being together, but business was business, a new client, Amy started, “So, what are you representing, that you want my firm to market for you?”

Mr. Wayclose grinned then let it go, “I’m not a client.”

“I don’t think I understand,” Amy was really confused, why was she eating that really bad food then?

“You were seen talking to a man the other day.”

“Okay, so you are some kind of stalker?”

“I’m a government agent. I work for a special branch that keeps an eye on all of the citizens of the world.”

“That’s a tall order, seeing that there are more of us than you, how do you do that?”

“When you were born, you received a chip, implanted in your hand or forehead.”

“Yes, everyone knows about that, it’s a banking chip, so that a person’s identity can’t be stolen, the chip broadcast a unique number, that number can be read by various machines, that are designed to handle money and verify identification.”

“We can watch each and every person using that device. You can’t go anywhere without someone in the government knowing where you are and what you are doing and who you are doing it with.”

“Okay, so we have no privacy.”

“Privacy was outlawed a century ago, when it became obvious that the only way to combat criminals was by knowing everything about everyone at all times.”

“Technoligion, that was the cry of the machine gods. As kids, we all learn the same thing. Always suspected that those chips were being used for more than just tracking our money. Did anyone happen to remember when I first had sex?”

“Yes. But this is not about you, specifically, this is about a person that you were with, when you were getting your passport certified, so that you can take your vacation to Mars.”

“Okay, I know who you are talking about, Andrew.”

“Does he have a last name?”

“I thought you knew everything about everybody, the implanted chip, spy chip, peeping-tom device, you tell me what his last name is.”

“We can’t, you were talking to a person that does not have a chip implanted, we were unable to find any information on him. Yet, he was able to function at all terminals as easily as if he did have an identification chip. We need to know who this man is and why he chose to contact you.”

“You are kidding right, no one can have an ID chip removed. It’ll kill them. Hell, some chips accidentally kill people who are in certain kinds of accidents, when the chip mistakenly thinks that it is being removed and kills them.”

“This man never had a chip, his birth was never recorded, he doesn’t exist. Your chip, is a link to a system of machines that monitor yours and everyone else lives. Because of that, no one can commit a violent crime without being detected, fact is, crimes of violence do not exist anymore, because the criminal can’t hide.”

“This man, has committed a crime, he’s violent?”

“This man is unknown, he’s a danger to society, we want you to draw him out.”

Pastor Daij-eiuh’qok looked at her for a moment, then uttered, “Okay, I’ll talk to you about it.”

Amy seemed troubled, “What I’m trying to say is, are the Faithers dangerous?”

“Well, Faithers are just like any other group, there are good and bad in all of us. But if you mean, are the Faithers a threat to our society, the answer isn’t that simple. They are accused of doing all sorts of things, but most of the things they are accused of, don’t turn out to be true.”

“So then, which society is good, Technoligion or Christianity, the Faithers, they are called now days.”

“Hmm, you’ve been doing research on ancient Earth cultures and religion.”

Amy shook her head, “This isn’t academic, Pastor, I was approached by someone from the government, and asked to spy on a man I just met. Apparently, he is a Faither, he doesn’t deny it. I’d think, because of all of the political fall out, and the hatred for any religion that conflicts with Technoligion, that most people would be afraid to admit that they are Faithers.”

“Most people are, and they hide it, they meet in secret and pray in secret and practice their religion in secret. But if this person has told you that he is a Faither, well then, he’s not hiding it.”

“Why not?”

“They believe in God Almighty, Jesus Christ. They were forced into the underground, when the false religion Technoligion gained popularity. People wanted a religion that reflected their love of technology, because technology and science has solved all of our problems, modern people began to worship the very technology that they had created, elevated it to the official religion of all the civilized colonized worlds.”

“It became the world religion, why?”

“Because mankind was at war with himself, the world was fighting over, religious points of view. Then they created one world religion, called it Technoligion, it worked. Suddenly, people could agree on one thing, progress began to flourish, before anyone knew it, translaser technology began to show promise, to bridge the gap, between the vast distances of the stars, solar systems so far away, that it took hundreds, even thousands of years to reach them. But, with the invention of the transdoor, once a colony reached their destination, they could build a transdoor on the planet, and instantly, link the past to the future. It was as if, you could just walk from one planet to another, in a twinkly of an eye.”

“But, it took the explorers who originally colonized the planet, hundreds, maybe thousands of years?”

“Yes, but once they arrived, they could transdoor back, to a few moments, right after their spaceship left, and announce that the expedition was a success. Time and space have no meaning in the transdoor link, and that is what revolutionized space travel. No one had to break the laws of physics, translaser technology bridges the gap, between space and time.”

“Should I spy on this man?”

“Do you want to, what has he done to you?”

“Nothing, in fact, he’s very nice. The man who wants me to spy on the Faithful, now, he bothers me.”

“Hmm, then I think it is a matter of moral character.”

“Whose moral character?”

“Why, yours of course, do you do harm to someone who hasn’t harmed you, or do you blindly follow a government that you don’t trust, and question their authority?”

“The only thing I know is, I’m taking a vacation . . .”

## CHAPTER 3

“She dies, and leaves her life the victor’s prize” Richard Crashaw

The Martian rail system was hooked up to every major city and settlement, if one wanted to, one could go from one end to the other, with stops in major areas. Most of the long distances were above ground, this exposed the rail system to the harsh Martian elements, but the design of the rocket powered trains were more than enough to deal with it. Archibald and Sheyouany took the first evening train to the city of Namgoy. It was one of the largest settlements in the region, it had its own subsystems and links to all the other major cities and suburbs, it was possible to go to the other side of Mars, once you entered Namgoy. Most major cities had a transdoor, though only a few existed on Mars. Some planets had only one transdoor, and it had to serve the entire planet, needless to say, in those cases, the transdoor was very large, some could fit enormous train systems through them. This allowed the import and export of materials from one planet to another, even though the planets might be hundreds or thousands of light years apart. The most-distant colony known was on the opposite end of the galaxy, with some other distant colonies located deep within the galaxy cluster. Still, that counted for only a percent of a percent of the entire galaxy. All in all, just over a thousand settlements were official, though new ones popped up from time to time, this was due to the paradox of the transdoor continuum, which once a new transdoor was opened, could never be closed. It was thought by scientist, that if you were to close one transdoor, all of them would collapse, and that this would cause an anti-matter inversion in the proximity of the galaxy, causing the entire galaxy to fold upon itself.

The thought of the entire galaxy being destroyed seemed unthinkable as Archibald gazed out of the window of the super fast rocket train, “Everything always seems a blur . . .”

Sheyouany sat next to him, it was obvious if you were paying attention, that she like Archibald most fondly, but for some reason, feelings like that were never spoken, “What?”

Archibald took in a deep breath, “Even if you take the rocket train during the day, everything is still a blur.”

Sheyouany smiled, “Unless you look way off in the distance, you might see a robot wildcat howl.”

“Can I ask you a question?”

“Go for it.”

“When your people, Martians came back, and found that people from Earth Prime had colonized what had once been your planet, did they want to go to war?”

Sheyouany giggled, “You mean, did we act like the people of Earth Prime acted? No, but we were surprised to see that your people had settled on Mars.”

“Why?”

“Well, I suppose because we left it, to find a new place to live, a new solar system, this one had seemed too unstable to try and live in it anymore. It wasn’t until we started to get strange readings from the surface of Mars, that we turned our instruments to Earth Prime and discovered that there was a civilization on it. Earth Prime was in a primitive state when my people left. But a few went to Earth, deciding to take a chance, and colonize.”

“If that is true, then why aren’t humans just like Martians?”

"I believe at first, that humans and Martians began to interbreed, history at that point is vague at best, we know that there was some type of planetary shift, caused by a solar anomaly."

Through the back ways, Amy ran and her heart pounded. She ducked and dodged in between the shadows and lights, how had she gotten herself into this mess, stay out of trouble her mind kept telling her, but it was too late. She was in trouble, two mysterious strangers chased her, she ran into local residents, merchants mostly, selling things, small things and large. Any other time, she'd have stopped and looked and maybe shopped, you could get some real bargains by shopping on Mars, then bring them back to Earth Prime and sell them, if one wanted to, or just put them in your house and let your friends amaze with envy, your Martian imports.

But this was not time for that, those people, looked like two big ugly guys were after her. She tried running up to a local and asking for help, no good, the locals around here spoke some other language, Martian maybe? She wasn't sure, there were so many languages spoken on Mars, it all depended on what area you were in. They were getting closer, she was really starting to panic, up ahead, a man, sitting at a table, it was right out in the open, if the men chasing her were going to do something, then they'd have to do it out in the light. She ran up to the table and quickly sat down, pretending like she knew the man at the table, so that the strangers chasing her would be thrown off, or at least be forced to back off for fear of being discovered.

Amy raised a hand and ordered a small Martian coffee, coffee on Mars was different than on some other planets, it was intoxicating, then she turned to him, "I'm sorry, I'm having trouble, some men are chasing me, do you mind if I just sit here for a moment, until they get the message, and leave?"

The man looked up, it was Andrew, he smiled, "Believe me, you and sit with me anytime, and as for someone chasing you, show me who they are, and I'll do my best to discourage them!"

She was shocked, more taken aback, "You . . ."

Andrew nodded then took a sip of his drink, "I never thought I'd see you here, on Mars, but I can't say that I'm disappointed. Besides people chasing you, how have you been, Amy?"

Amy was still trying to digest her good fortune, or was it, remember what Wayclose told her, this man could be more dangerous than the strangers chasing her, "I, er, I need your help, I'm in a little bit of trouble. You see, I wandered off from the tour, thought I'd get a better view of the locals, I did, I stumbled into some type of illegal activity, I think, then I started to be chased. Could you pretend like we know each other?"

"We do."

Amy leaned closer then kissed him, "I mean in a romantic kind of way, so that they will think that I'm protected, I'm with someone . . ."

The kiss was soft and surprisingly tender, both their eyes met, Andrew said, "They are gone." Amy's lips were still locked to his, "What?"

"The people that were chasing you, they saw us and have decided to back off, it worked."

Amy slowly pulled away, "Yes, it worked, gee, you must think the worst of me." She tried to pull herself together, but that kiss . . .

Andrew sat back, a pleasant look on his face, "I'm going to be leaving in a bit, maybe you'd like to go with?"

"Yes, I'd like that, I mean, thank you, Andrew," he didn't seem dangerous, why were

Faithers suppose to be so evil? What was wrong with believing in Jesus Christ, from what she had heard, that Christ healed countless people, with a way that to this day, was a miracle.

Namgoy City was a hub, it was the place that most of the tourist come to when first arriving on Mars, there were all sorts of merchants set up in it, and the city was divided into burrows, each one for a different type of selling. The whole thing behind Technoligion was that in the vast League of Worlds, everything depended on the art of buying and selling. At night, the city took on a festive feel, with lights, and signs and all sorts of things to lure out the traveler and potential customer, restaurants abound throughout the city, it all depended on what type of food a tourist was willing to brave into their stomach. For obvious reasons, Martian cooking and Martian food was the tourist favorite, but there were samples of cuisine from all the sectors of the League of Planets.

There was a small restaurant which served Earth and Martian cooking, quite good, most people that went there just loved it, but it was also a quiet place, where one could bring a date and talk and relax, a good place. Archibald and Sheyouany were instructed to go there and find a table. For children to be out at night in Namgoy, without parents, was unusual, and they did draw attention by more than a few locals and tourist who knew that while Namgoy was a wonderful place for mixing up culture, it was also a dangerous place, and children should be at home, safe in bed.

Archibald said, "I don't think they are going to come . . ."

Sheyouany voiced while keeping her eyes open for trouble, "Let's just give it a little more time, we took a risk coming down here, God knows the city is scary enough, at night."

"We were told never to come here at night, it is one of the first things we learn when we start school at Angelcross."

"Yes, I know, but lots of kids do it anyway."

"And some get lost, maybe even . . ."

"Don't say it, I'm shaking as it is, wait, someone is coming over to our table."

It was a waiter, she was very worried, "Why are you two here in the middle of the night? Where are your parents?"

Archibald cleared his throat, "Er, we are waiting for someone, we'll be going right after that."

The waitress surveyed them and then the room, couples eating and enjoying the night life, a night life designed for grownups, not for kids, "It's the middle of the night, and judging by the clothes you are wearing, you are from that Seminary just out on the outer part of the city. I know they don't let their kids out late at night, it's a religious school, they have strict rules."

Sheyouany uttered, "Please, we will only be a few more moments, then we'll hurry back and take the first rocket train back."

The waitress didn't like it, but motioned that she'd be keeping an eye on them, she left and shortly, someone else came up, their face was partly covered, but by the hands, the kids could tell that it was a Martian.

The stranger said, "Sit quietly, and listen, I'm being watched," that caused them all to just look around to see if someone was looking at them, "don't be too obvious. Your teacher, the one that was suppose to have been killed in the aircar, he's alive."

Archibald said in excitement, "He is, where is he?"

The stranger had already began to get up, "Here take this pad, on it are instructions, your teacher is the victim of a group, a very dangerous group that hates Faithers. They are known as the



Infidels. They are a branch of Technoligion, a part of the system that is not suppose to exist anymore, now that equality has been achieved in the government, and Faithers have power.”

The hotel room was small but elegant, Amy sat at the open window, which had a view of open undergrown vista, on Mars the architects had a way of creating space by using caverns to build buildings that went into the ceiling of the caves. Tunnels spread throughout the city, linking one part to another, with patches of nodes, that opened to community life, buildings, walks, shops, the first attempts at designing and building underground dwellings had their draw backs, in them, you felt cramped and everywhere you looked, were walls. But as time went on, and more people moved to Mars and settled in various areas of the planet, the architecture took on a new direction, one of not just survival but of art and beauty. Centuries later, Martian architecture was renowned, in fact, on other planets that mankind settled, where he had to live underground, Martian architecture was a blueprint for cultural survival.

Amy’s back was still to Andrew, who was doing something at the other end of the hotel room, “Tell me something, and if you can, be honest.”

Andrew looked up, waited, “What would you like to know.”

Amy’s eyes met his, “Why does the government want you? Who are you?”

Andrew nodded and came over to her, he looked out the window, the circulation of air in the vast cave and cavern systems, created breezes and cool air flowed in, “I’m not from here.”

“Oh, nor am I, I’m from Earth Prime, but I first met you on Earth Prime, so where are you from?”

“I’m a time traveler, of sorts, technically, I’m from the past.”

“Oh please, a person from the past couldn’t get along in this type of future, you know things, you are being chased by a man . . .”

“What man?”

Amy had messed up, she had let her emotions get the better of her and now she had gone and blown it, “Forget it.”

Andrew was very serious, “No, you said that I was being chased by a man, whom?”

“I don’t know, there was this strange guy, to be honest, he frightens me, he said that you were dangerous, an enemy of Technoligion, a Faither spy.”

“You know I’m a Faither, I told you that. But I’m not the enemy, he is, I am from the past. In your future, a project will be created, to travel all the way to the end of time, using transdoor technology in order to link one sector of quantum events to another. At the threshold of the event horizon, between the end of time and the beginning of time, these explorers, will manage to bridge the gap between the past and the future, thus, linking mankind, there will be no more time as you know it.”

“You are telling me that you were part of this expedition?”

“No, I was born in your past, centuries ago, but the past is the future and the future is the past. The illusion of time is that it is moving forward, but it is not, it is moving backwards, the way God created the universe, everything was created in a very short time, and in their maturity. That means that things have not been evolving, but de-evolving, ever since Adam and Eve fell from grace, and were expelled from the Garden of Eden.”

“You mean that was real?”

“The Garden of Eden, oh yeah, we have documented proof. But there was an evil group of assassins, they secretly traveled through the bridge, following the expedition, they had a mission to

change the future, by changing small things in the past.”

“How can you change the future, I thought that it was impossible to change destiny?”

“It is, but you can influence events in the future by change little things, not big ones.”

The event schedule was now posted, there were events for every grade level at the Seminary, seeing that the grades went from K-12 and then on into college levels and graduate levels where students could earn doctorates in Religion and other spiritual related subjects. The purpose of Angelcross was to train young minds to become priest and ministers and pastors, spiritual leaders in the Dark Ages. The times in which mankind had managed to colonize on hundreds of planets throughout the galaxy, they were mixed with amazing technology and advancements in science, and marked with great spiritual dread. There were twelve schools like Angelcross in the United Planets, six of them were Faither driven, and six were driven by Technoligion. These schools were the ivy league of the schools like them, they set the standards for all other institutions of learning in the League of Worlds and the League of Planets, which were all subject to the Dynasty.

The three looked at the events boards, Lewanda uttered, “Our names have been placed in the Quad Soccer Events. We will be representing one of the four sectors, our school, Angelcross is ranked at the top, competing with Demonsword, no one wants to play against them.”

Sheyouany said, “That’s because most schools that play against them lose, I can’t believe that we are slated to compete against them.”

Archibald voiced, “I don’t think we are going to have time for this.”

The two girls looks puzzled at him, finally Lewanda spoke, “This is a great honor to play for the school, Archibald. It means that everyone is going to be counting on us, the school’s honor is at risk, not to mention the fact that I don’t want that Demonsword to win, the Dark Planets in the Dark Sectors can’t be allowed to prevail.”

Sheyouany nodded, “We have been chosen, called if you will, it is our duty to represent our school, and the other grade levels that are going to be playing in various events are counting on everybody doing their best.”

Archibald said, “What about saving Pastor Hipshot? Have we forgotten about that?”

Lewanda shook her head, “No, of course not, but if any of the clues are right, in order to save him, we are going to have to go into the Martian Wilderness, that’s where it is said that Hipshot is being held captive.”

Archibald interjected, “And now I know why, just look here, the information on the events board, they correspond to the instructions given us by the stranger that we met at the café in Namgoy. We are being called to throw the game . . .”

Sheyouany yelled, “What!”

Archibald looked around, “Don’t react, who knows who is watching us, to see if we are going to comply or if we are going to do something else.”

Lewanda concurred, “I think Archibald is right, just look, the instructions that we were given are linked some how to the events, and we all have been put in the same event, soccer, something that we are all very good at, and something that would be easy for whoever is watching us to keep an eye on us. Pastor Hipshot has been kidnaped in order to put pressure on us to throw the game.”

Sheyouany studied the board and nodded, “You are right, this has been planned, and not by rival students, the Dark Planets want to win, lots of money rides on these games, you know. The government of Technoligion is based on buying and selling, even when it comes of Faithers, we

can't escape it."

Archibald said, "But we don't use the numbers of the beast either . . ."

Sheyouany spoke, "Even though I'm Martian, most of my people believe in Jesus Christ."

Amy wiggled a glass of wine as she stood out on the veranda, "Now, tell me what is going on?"

Andrew lit up a Stygonia cigar, "There is an organization that exists within the Technoligion government called NTCIS. It is their job to crush and subvert factions that oppose the Dynasty. But the NTCIS has roots that go all the way back to ancient Earth times, to witch crafts and wizardry. They are a dark organization serving the evil spirits that were forced into captivity on ancient Earth thousands of years ago."

Amy looked out onto the city lights of Namgoy, "Science has proven that there are no such things."

Andrew uttered, "Science is an instrument of the Devil! Ever notice that whatever God Almighty says, the evil ones try and counter his words. The evil ones knew that mankind, the vast majority would not accept the teachings and the words of demons, so they simply changed the wording, instead of calling the dark arts witchcraft or using other sacrilegious terms, they changed the names of the things that people had trouble with, but if you'll just trace the origins back to their sources, you'll see that science is nothing more than wizardry."

Amy nodded, "Okay, so how does all of this fit in with you?"

Andrew voiced, "There is a man, I've been chasing him throughout time, he is an assassin. You see, the Dark Powers discovered early on, that if you try and change big events, nothing gets changed at all. You can't change the future by trying and changing key events, those things have to happen, they are pivotal in all incarnations of time and space. But they discovered, quite by accident, that if you change tiny events, things that seemingly go unnoticed, for example, you have a glass of wine in your hand right now, but if in another Time Sweep, if I saw to it that you held a beer instead, a change would take place in the future, small, but change none the less."

Amy leaned against the rail, "So, this is a pain staking process, in order to make significant changes in our future, many people have to be affected, but only slightly. A red dress tonight instead of a green one, that I'm wearing at the moment."

Andrew nodded while blowing smoke rings, "Exactly! The time line has been permanently contaminated, no one can tell what is the original Time Sweep. And the beauty of it all is that the Holy Bible accurately records all of the anomalies."

Amy looked him in the eyes, she wanted to kiss him, but maybe it was the wine, she wasn't sure, "I met this man, as I told you, Wayclose, he told me that you were dangerous to society."

Andrew laughed slightly, "Is that the name he's using right now? Wayclose is a cold-blooded killer, I've been chasing him throughout time, he has the authorities blessing, you see, to Technoligion, I'm the enemy, but to God's People, I'm one of them. That is why there are paradoxes in the Holy Bible, someone has been messing with the time line. In an attempt to change the future."

Amy moved in closer to him, "But for what purpose?"

Andrew looked her clearly in the eyes, "To try and win the war to end all wars, the evil ones know that they have very little time left, they have been mounting a counter attack since the beginning, planning and plotting, do you think Adam and Eve's assassination in Eden was just chance? They have been manipulating time and events since its inception."

Amy stepped back, "They think they can defeat God Almighty? That's insane no one can stay the hand of Jesus Christ," it was then that she realized, she believed, she was a Christian, a Faither. What was she going to do, this man she had met hand managed to convert her.

A rather large group of children, boys and girls, mostly aliens, faced off with Archibald and his friends, Fredead was the leader of the pack, "So you think that you have a chance to win against Demonsword this year?" He looked at his friends who all started laughing at the same time he did.

Archibald glanced, his eyes falling on Sheyouany and Lewanda before seeing the others behind him, "The odds are just as good for us as for you. If everyone plays fair, anyone can win."

Now the other group was laughing so hard that they couldn't control themselves, finally Fredead, a horrible looking alien boy with an extra set of tentacles coming out of his back voiced, "Most of our players are from the Dark Planets, we have powers that you haven't even imagined. Why just look at you and your lot, a few pathetic Martians and mostly humans, there's no way that any of you can out play us! This soccer event is going to us, and our school will get a big fat check for a million shekels! And we'll be famous, again." They all laughed some more.

Sheyouany couldn't take it anymore, "The only way that you'll win is if you cheat!"

That got Fredead really ticked off, "Oh, so the little Martian girl can speak, too bad that your people just up and abandoned your planet, only to have the humans over run the place now!"

Lewanda yelled, "Eat worms!"

Fredead smiled, "Love to, they are my people's favorite snack!"

Archibald said, "Then we will crush you like a worm!"

Fredead's fist hurled towards Archibald's face but in those split seconds, Sheyouany's articulated tail wrapped around his arm and pulled his fist back, things suddenly got very tense, then around the way came Pastor Prettyfield, the children all changed their countenances.

Prettyfield still sensed tension, "Is everything all right, children. I see that the visiting team has met the home team, getting along all right are we?"

Archibald didn't look at Pastor Prettyfield, "Yes, ma'am, we have met . . ."

Prettyfield nodded and smiled, "Good then, the lot of you need to be off to get ready for a grand feast in the visiting school's honor, dress up for dinner tonight." Then she went on her way.

Fredead uttered before they all departed, "Next time, Archibald, your little Martian friend won't be able to keep me from crushing your face in!"

Archibald didn't say anything so Lewanda spoke up, "Next time, on the soccer field . . ."

They all started off to their dorms, the three of them walked together, Archibald voiced, "Thanks, Sheyouany, it's good to know who your friends are in a tight bind."

Sheyouany said, "We are all friends for life. Our respected cultures forged alliances centuries ago, but it had to come from our families first finding common ground."

Lewanda uttered, "The kingdoms of our people are friends, just like we are." What she spoke of was the fact that the three of them were from royal blood, Archibald was a young prince and Sheyouany was a young princess and Lewanda was also a young princess. One day they might be called upon to rule their kingdoms, the alliances they forged in their days at Angelcross Seminary would last a life time.

Archibald finally spoke, "Still, they do have a lot of creepy alien players on their team. The Dark Planets have no controls to stop the proliferation of outlawed technology and illegal alien breeding. Some of those people on those planets are like living nightmares."

Lewanda added, "Some of them are really big for their age too."

Sheyouany agreed, "They smell bad . . ."

There was a brief moment of silence, then the three of them started laughing as they went.

Amy stood there looking at fancy cut precious stones in a store front, "Do you think that I'd ever be able to afford something like that?"

Andrew looked on, "To be honest, they are just rocks dug up from out of the earth or minerals forced to undergo extreme pressure in order to form so-called precious stones. It really doesn't make sense, not when you think about all the things that are going on in the Dynasty."

Amy gazed up at his handsome face, "Don't suppose you have someone waiting for you when you get back, some woman, maybe in another dimension or time?"

Andrew kind of smiled then shook his head, "I'm not coming back."

Amy was taken back, "What do you mean? Surely after you finish stopping this man you are after, surely you will be allowed to go back home, isn't there anyone?"

Andrew began to walk slowly away from the store front with Amy following as he told her, "Remember, this is a very complicated thing that I am involved in, there are no easy ways out of it, once a person has volunteered to do this, you can't go back, back to what? If the bad guys succeed, the future will change and maybe your part of it will change too much for you to be part of it any more. If I and the many like me succeed, the future changes all the same, but for the better and not for the worst."

Amy uttered, "So no matter who wins in the end, the future is going to change, it's just a matter of good winning over evil."

Andrew took a deep breath, "Something like that, already some of the people that I knew, friends and loved ones, some of them don't exist anymore, or they have taken different paths, due to the subtle but profound changes that Planters have been making in the past."

Amy questioned, "Planters?"

Andrew nodded, "Yes, we are called Planters, because we plant the seeds of change and ruin, we alter the course that was originally laid down, with the hope that our side will win in the end."

Amy said, "It sounds like the Planters have been going through this for a long time, just how many alternate outcomes have there been, I mean, do you always met me in all of your incarnations?"

Andrew voiced, "From my side, we don't work like that, I'm too busy trying to keep the bad guys from doing damage to the future, while the bad guys are busy trying to do as much damage as they can, without overpowering the cosmic system and having God reset the results."

Amy said, "You mean, if things get too far out of hand, the Lord will get involved in the process, that is fantastic, we need to tell the people about this, so that they will believe, as I now do."

Andrew uttered curtly, "No! No one must know about the things that I am telling you, it would make them targets for the evil Planters. You can call the good ones Sowers and the bad ones Planters, because the Sowers sow good seed and the bad ones Plant bad seed, weeds, briars of evilness."

Amy protested, "But you have told me?"

Andrew nodded and looked her clearly into the eyes, "Yes, I have told you . . ."

Amy suddenly felt an emotional chill run up her back, "I'm different, aren't I, some how it is okay to tell me, because some how, I'm involved in this process."

Andrew took her in his strong arms, "Don't be afraid, I'm here to protect you, you are my

assignment, Wayclose won't hurt you."

Amy felt comforted in his arms, "Oh my God, Wayclose wants to kill me, I'm it."

The corridor was long and wide, vaulted and full of school and seminary memorabilia, a small group of students had just rounded the corner and left when Archibald came around, then suddenly from the side came Gothatina, Fredead's sister. She had a serious crush on Archibald ever since they were little and they met because of some diplomatic ceremony, which brought her royal family and his royal family temporarily together. Her long dark hair flung below her hips, she was very voluptuous for her age.

She cornered him in the hall, "I was wondering when we'd have a moment, Archibald Gardener, now looks like we do."

Archibald acted reserved, though he couldn't help to be attracted to her obvious beauty, "Gothatina, I was wondering if you had come with your brother, now I guess I don't have to wonder anymore."

Gothatina smiled, "You look great, Archibald, how have you been?"

Archibald tried to maneuver around her but she kept positioning herself close to him, "I'm fine and you look great, so let's just leave things at that."

Gothatina took the compliment with a big smile, "You know, I've written you several letters, you wrote me back saying that you missed me."

Archibald sighed, "Gothatina, you know as well as I do, that if your brother or those mindless zombies that he associates with, discover that you and I are even just having a conversation, alone, the two of us, there is going to be trouble. Our families don't mix, you are from the Dark Planets and I'm from a Faither planet, the two cultures don't mix."

Gothstina took him by the arm as they began to slowly, ever so slowly walk on, "I've spoken with the Head Soothsayer of my palace, she has told me that our destinies are bound together, that we will be married in the future."

Archibald recoiled when he heard that, "We will never be married, Gothatina, the soothsayer only told you what you wanted to hear."

Gothatina moved into him and gently kissed him on the lips, looking him in the eyes she said, "She told me what has to be done, I love you, Archibald, I always have, ever since we first met, when we were little and our parents tried to keep us away from each other."

Archibald took in a deep breath, "You love what you can't have."

Gothatina stepped back a moment, "I can have whatever I want, I a princess of Digon-tryk, I command and others do . . ."

Archibald said, "I'm a prince of Riner, and I'll tell you, my parents make me do my own chores, it's degrading, but one day, I'll thank them for teaching me independence. We can't all have what we want, that is the difference between our two cultures and between us, there is a dark side about you, Gothatina, and frankly, it frightens me."

Gothatina tried to recover from her emotional pride, "That is where you come in my life, you can teach me to be different, better, maybe even convert me to your ways."

Archibald uttered, "Digon-tryk women don't easily convert and subject themselves to much of anything, not without force, it is a commonly known fact. Look, you are here to play in the Quad Soccer Event, so are a lot of other kids. But it isn't a good idea for us to be seen together."

Gothatina uttered, "Tell me that you don't have feelings for me and I'll leave you alone."

Archibald lied, "I don't have any feelings for you."

Gothatina kissed him once more and began to walk away, just before she went around a corner, she voiced, "I will have you as my soul-mate, Archibald Gardener, it is destiny."

## CHAPTER 4

“From wants, from shames, from loveless household fears” Leigh Hunt

The great room was filled with students, both from Angelcross and from Demonsword along with a few other schools that had events that were to be played at the Seminary. Pastor Lighthouse stood before the large gathering explaining the spirit of competition and the true test of a winner, the spirit of losing, because it wasn't about the winning that the games were played, but that the schools involved and the planets that they represented, wanted to encourage a type of bonding, but each planet had its own reasons for that bonding.

They were seated in seminar fashion and to Archibald Gardener's right were his life long friends Sheyouany, the pretty and smart Martian girl and Lewanda who was also very pretty and often thought of as a genius when it came to her engineering studies. Now, seated to his left, and for reasons that Archibald did not understand nor really wanted to give much thought to, were Fredead and next to him his beautiful sister Gothatina, along with some of the Demonsword kids that liked to hang around with Fredead.

As the opening festivities continued, Fredead leaned, “I hear that you are having trouble finding that dead or lost teacher of yours, Hipshot! What's wrong, haven't figured it out yet?”

Archibald leaned over looking at him for a moment, so did Sheyouany, but Lewanda was all caught up in the ceremonies going on below them on stage. Archibald said, “If you know something, and you keep suggesting that you do, then tell us, Hipshot is a beloved teacher here at Angelcross.”

Fredead smiled, “I know, we all know, Hipshot is a Martian, what is he doing believing in Jesus Christ? That is a human concept.”

Sheyouany entered the conversation, “Believing in God Jesus is not just human, God fills the Heavens and the Earth. Martians have first hand knowledge and experiences with God, our history is also filled with wonderful things that Jesus Christ did, don't forget, other so-called alien cultures tell of God in their religious writings too, not just Earth and Mars, God Jesus is our creator and our savior!”

Fredead glanced over at his friends, who were laughing and giggling at what Sheyouany had just told them, but he noticed that Gothatina was silent, “Those stupid twits, our god Technoligion is greater than their God.” He thought that his sister would react in kind, but she glanced a loving eye over at Archibald and sat back, seemingly ignoring her brother. This got Fredead really ticked off, “So, Archibald, do you have it in you? Can you take on the power of the Demonsword soccer team and win?”

Archibald shrugged, “It's not about winning, haven't you been listening to the ceremonies below, it's about playing, sportsmanship!”

Fredead murmured, “Oh please, if that is the case, then why is so much money riding on these games, why all the media coverage, why not place a wager?”

Now this caught Lewanda's ears, “No way, we don't bet on events or things, it is un-Godly. Or, maybe it is just not right, I'm not sure, but betting is not allowed at Angelcross, not even by the college aged students.” Who often bent the rules, because of their upper academic standing, having been at Angelcross the longest.

Fredead uttered while looking away, “I'll bet your teacher's life, that we win!”



All three of the Angelcross students uttered, "We'll take that bet!"

Amy and Andrew made their way around a corner in an old office building, Amy glanced out a window that led out to the huge dome that covered parts of the city, most of the cities on Mars were like that, there were sections that were positioned underground, and sections that led to the surface and were covered by domes. Those sections led into tunnels which rounded the area and came out into parks and communities of residence. The two of them had been followed for some time and they were trying their best to shake the tail. The door in front of them said: Veger Aircar Rentals. Aircars were specially suited for travel when it came to individual transportation, when it came to mass transit, the rocket train was the ticket, linking vast distances and cities located on opposites sides of Mars.

They opened the door and the smell of stale smoke and some kind of Martian food which had been thrown into an open trash can hit them, a woman looked up and smiled, "Hi, how can I help you?"

Amy said, "Er, we want . . ."

Andrew cut in, "We need an aircar for a local site seeing trip, we want to see the real Mars, not the one that the travel agency is trying to sell us."

There were other people in the back, doing something, keeping busy, a few kind of looked up and got back on the phone and doing something else, the woman uttered, "Great, you have come to the right place, and you are right, most of the tours are pretty watered down, the real Mars is outside the city dome, that's where all of the old dwellings are located, the areas that the first settlers developed centuries ago."

Amy smiled, "Do you have maps?"

The woman shook her head, "You don't need them, the GPS in the aircar can fly you to just about anything of interest. Now, read over this disclaimer, scan your Business Electronic Analysis Security Transaction number, if it's on your hand, okay, if it is on your forehead, use this."

Amy started to pay for it with her B.E.A.S.T number when Andrew caught her, smiled at the woman, and scanned his own hand, "Anything else?"

The woman watched a screen until all cleared, when she saw that everything was in order, she smiled at them and said, "Just go out of this office, down the hall, there is a garage where the aircars are kept, pick the one you want from what is available, and off you go."

Amy frowned, "Don't you want to know where we are going?"

The woman had already started to go back to whatever she was doing before they came in, she looked up at her, gave one of those phony smiles and said, "Have a nice trip, bye bye."

As they walked down the hall Amy voiced, "Do you think we can lose them, the people following me, the ones trying to kill me?"

Andrew spoke, "We have to, I don't want anything to happen to you."

Amy asked, "How many people, throughout time has he killed, Wayclose?"

Andrew said, "They don't always kill people, some times, it is enough to just keep someone from doing something that they did, in the past, in fact, killing is rare, it causes too many paradoxes, and can be very unpredictable in the results. Don't forget, it is easier to just keep a person from accomplishing a task, than to off them. Killing them, you run the risk of all the other people that person came in contact in life, and you have to compensate for all of them as well."

Amy murmured, "If killing is too radical, then maybe Wayclose just wants to keep me from doing something, like you said, that is why he didn't kill me when he had the chance."

Andrew opened the door and out into the parking lot, where there was a good selection.

Pastors Lighthouse, Lockrock and Azimuth sat about while Archibald, Sheyouany and Lewanda stood opposite to them, they were all concerned and viewed a small golden box covered with Martian silver symbols, it had to do with Hipshot, now becoming more obviously not dead but kidnaped.

Lighthouse cleared his throat, "Let me get this straight, you've gone and made a bet with some of the children at Demonsword, that Pastor Hipshot will be freed if you win the up coming soccer event?"

Archibald nodded, "We did say that, but it was Demonsword that brought up the whole thing."

Azimuth shook her head, "How many times must we teach you, betting is wrong, gambling is not Christian, Faithers adhere to the old ways, the ways of Jesus Christ. I can't believe that you children took on such a venture."

Lockrock voiced, "Still, the whole thing is very troubling, that the children of Demonsword, even some of them would try and sway the results of the Quad Soccer Event by stooping so low. I've contacted the heads of Demonsword, they have assured us that there is nothing to what the children of Demonsword are saying."

Lighthouse agreed, "Hmm, apparently word has gotten out to all, that Hipshot might be alive, rumor abound, and there are some who would hope to capitalize on our poor fallen pastors misfortune. Now the authorities are starting to take the who thing more seriously, this golden box, it is suppose to hold a clue as to Hipshot's where-about?"

Lewanda said, "It came to Archibald in the mail, but we can't read it, even Sheyouany, who is a Martian, can't decipher the writing."

Lighthouse nodded as he slowly got up and took the little box in his old hands, "That is because this is ancient Martian, not modern Martian, this is written in a Martian dialect as old as ancient Mars, maybe even a dialect of Atlantis, where the ancient Martians originally came from."

Sheyouany said, "My people came from Atlantis, it was a planet that some think was between Earth and Jupiter, now there is only Mars, but there once was another planet, Atlantis. Some legends have it, and there are many different versions, some say that a solar anomaly forced a planetary shift, causing Atlantis to switch orbits, with Mars and Atlantis, in the violent orbital switch, or planetary shift, Atlantis became unstable, and eventually exploded, but the people of Atlantis, had enough time to move to Mars, some did, some decided to leave this solar system all together, fearing another solar anomaly. Mars was fine for a few centuries, but then, because of the planetary shift, Mars began to lose its atmosphere, it's magnetic field had been damaged. So some of the now called Martians, came to Earth, found an isolated island and lived there until disaster struck them again."

Lewanda shook her head, "It seems like, whatever they did, bad luck was sure to follow them. But why would someone send Archibald this artifact, and who would have a box from Atlantis?"

Azimuth said, "This box could be thousands of eons old, for all we know. There are many unexplained mysteries here on Mars, and lots of things that seem to contradict former theories and writings. But, it was discoveries of scientific writings, that helped mankind, to really put his foot out into the galaxy, by finding the blueprints to build the first translaser, that technology led to the first transdoor being built. Scientist on Earth prime reverse engineered other technology, but it was

the theories of Dr. Evert T. Pystrum, his work and subsequently his famous daughters work in the field of physics, that finally gave way to the development of the finished transdoor.”

Flying out over the Martian landscape, Namgoy just off in the distance, Andrew piloted the rented aircar across the Martian Wilderness. The area was spotted with older settlements, some still going, others long since abandoned for the better living environment of the nearby big city.

Amy said, “So, this is the Mars that the tour guides don’t talk about.”

Andrew glanced over at Amy, she seemed sad, “Mars has patches of settlements, it started out just trying to get people to invest in colonization, but this planet has a lot of strangeness about. After living here long enough, Mars does strange things to people’s minds and perceptions of the universe.”

Amy looked over at him, “How were you able to rent the aircar?”

Andrew asked, “What?”

Amy voiced, “You used your banking number back there, if you are who you say you are, how is it that you have a banking number. I thought that those who profess the Lord Jesus couldn’t have the number of the B.E.A.S.T., because it would mean that you are damned, like all of the rest of the people that do.”

Andrew finally understood what was bothering her, “It’s not real.”

Amy frowned, “What do you mean that it’s not real, all banking numbers are centralized, there isn’t a colonized planet in the Dynasty, that the banking number in your hand or forehead can’t be tracked. How could you do that?”

Andrew said, “It’s complicated, but let me put it to you this way, God Almighty still has a remnant of his people, even in the Dark Ages of Space Colonization.”

Amy relaxed a bit, “That is what Faithers call these times, the Dark Ages, why?”

Andrew cleared his throat, “Well, mostly because all the saved have been taken. Remember in your history books, it talked about an alien invasion, which used a genetically advanced weapon of mass destruction to kill only certain people on Earth Prime, leaving others, some would be lying in bed, one was taken and the other left, or two would be walking, one would be taken.”

Amy nodded, “Yes, it is part of ancient Earth history.”

Andrew finished entering coordinates into the console, “Well, it was all a lie, God Jesus Christ came and took his people, the saved. First the dead in Christ rose, then those that were alive were taken. That left the planet in the Dark Ages, no one living that was left believed in God Jesus Christ. But the evil spirits had been planning for that moment for eons, they tricked mankind into building machines that could look way into the past, which is actually the future, telling mankind that they were building these machines to explore the universe, or to get ready for meteorites or giant heavenly bodies falling down onto Earth. The truth of the matter is, the evil spirits had tricked mankind into building a warning system, for the fallen-angels. People influenced by evil, do things believing one thing, when in fact, the truth is hidden from them.”

Amy uttered, “Then we are all doomed, anyway, what you are saying is that the Rapture has already taken place.”

Andrew voiced, “And the anti-Christ rules the civilized galaxy, the colonies of mankind.”

Amy suddenly became depressed, “Then there is no hope.”

Andrew said, “With God Jesus, all things are possible. Just like me going back in time, to try and stop the Children of Darkness. My job is to keep from happening what has not happened, and to try and save, what can not be saved.”

Amy asked, "Are you an angel, or just a man sent by God's people, is there a difference?"

The group of children walked across the way, all dressed up in bright sports apparel they looked all the fashion for the Quad Soccer Event. There would be four teams, one from each general age and school class group, the teams were picked because of the play-offs. It had now come down to the final games. Two games would be played at Angelcross, the other two games would be played at Demonsword. There was a lot of big money being bet on the school games, it was big business, non-professional sports. Professional sports had long since become jaded, with big salaried players, poor sportsmanship, then came the idea of investing in non-professional events. The players would win prizes, good ones, homes, aircars, scholarships to some of the finest schools and colleges in the Dynasty. All of that and more, and it was still cheaper than paying professional athletes. A sponsor could award an entire team fabulous prizes, what it would cost to pay just one professional athlete.

Prettyfield caught up with Archibald and the others as they headed on over to the stadium for the first of four Quad Soccer Events, she kind of pulled Archibald over to one side as they walked, this caused Sheyouany and Lewanda to cluster over also, "You know that all of the teachers, the staff are wishing you all good luck."

Archibald frowned, "Thanks, I think, you came all the way over here just to do that? There is going to be an official announcement, stating just that, when we get settled on the field, just before game."

Prettyfield gazed at the three for a moment, "I really hope that you do win, for the Seminary, for the planet, for Mars, for good. After all, soccer is an inter-planetary sport, it's like war, but without the bloodshed."

Sheyouany said, "Easy enough for you to say, you don't have to face Demonsword out on the field . . ."

Lewanda added, "They have all sorts of illegal tricks up their sleeves, they are all from the Dark Planets, where outlawed technology is legal. They are all probably genetically enhanced, robotically enhanced, and just plain old good at cheating!"

Prettyfield looked worried now, but when she saw the reaction on the children's faces, she tried to hide it, "Well, God is on your side!"

All three of them uttered, "Amen!"

Prettyfield seemed to feel better, "You know, even though all of this might just be part of the game, to undermine us, and try and determine the winner, it is our strong resolve to Jesus Christ that will ultimately overcome those little monsters!"

Lewanda uttered, "Pastor Prettyfield . . ."

Prettyfield realized what she had said, "Oh, sorry, I guess I'm getting all caught up in the spirit of things, can't help but cheer for the home team, you know. Pastor Hipshot is a good Martian man, God fearing, good teacher of the scriptures, filled with understanding and wisdom."

Sheyouany, who was Martian herself, cut in, "We all feel the pressure to win, we can't let them force us to lose, if they do, then we will regret it."

Archibald said, "The bet with Fredead, is that if they win, he dies, if we win, he lives, but that flies in contrast to the ransom messages, which seem to indicate the opposite, we are suppose to let Demonsword win, if they do, Hipshot will be freed."

Lewanda stated, "But you can't know this! It might all be a trick to simply make us feel weaker, leach our spirit away, weaken our faith temporarily."

Prettyfield smiled, "I want all of you to play your hearts out! Win this thing if you can."

Archibald smiled, "We'll all do our best," and the children went on in the big doors.

The aircar streaked across the Martian landscape, beneath them, in the distance in front of them was an old settlement, looked like it had been there since the old days of colonization. In the old settlements, use of environmental suits was needed, they didn't have the advanced dome technology, which allowed people to be able to walk about out in the open, protected from the harsh Martian atmospheric-lackness. As they approached the small village, signs that some people stilled lived there became obvious, then suddenly, something hit the outside of the aircar, shaking it violently.

Amy yelled in fear, "What was that?"

Andrew fought to try and control the vehicle, "I'm not sure what it was, but it sure is big. It must have hit our aircar doing top speed."

Amy pointed in horror, "Look, that thing, it is turning around, it's coming back at us!"

The dark and ugly figure was indeed turning around, as it zoomed through the Martian atmosphere, it didn't move like a vehicle, it had a more organic nature about it. Then, a voice came over their radio.

The voice on the radio said, "Hey, you out there, we just got a sighting, you in the aircar headed for us, you'd better take cover!"

Andrew had his hands full, trying to dodge the thing that was biting the aircar, he motioned to Amy to get the radio, he said, "Amy, talk to whoever is on the other end, find out what the hell is going on."

Amy nodded, in fear, but none the less reacted, "Hello, hello, who are you? What is that thing that is attacking us?"

The radio voice said, "You are being attacked by a Martian Reaper."

Amy uttered, "A what, what is that?"

The voice paused for a moment, "You are not from around these parts, are you?"

Amy replied, "No, we are tourist, we thought that we'd rent an aircar and see the real Mars."

There was a slight laugh coming from the radio voice, "Well, welcome to the real Mars. What you have here is a nightmare come true, the creature that is attacking your aircar is a creation of some of the weird machines that were found deep in caves, beneath the Martian surface. This creature was one of them, there are others, just as ugly, just as dangerous. The Martian Wilderness isn't a place for tourist, why do you think that the tour guides don't take people out this way? Too dangerous, scare all the business away. Who'd want to come to Mars if they thought they were going to be eaten by a Martian Reaper or maybe a Red Fire Dragon, or some of the other things that live out here in the wilderness of Mars."

Andrew said, "Ask him if we can land at the settlement."

Amy asked, "Can we land where you are at, we are not that far from you?"

The voice on the radio said, "Hell no! We don't want that stinking piece of demonic trash hanging around our settlement. It takes too long to hunt it down and kill it, if it can be killed. Most people who hunt them say they just go away after awhile, back into the Caves of Triquarius. Those caves link hundreds of other caves, linked throughout this area, some think that even bigger caves across one part of Mars to the other. Hmm, go figure . . ."

Andrew was having a hard time dodging the monster, he finally yelled at the radio, "Are you going to give us a safe place to land or not!"

Another voice came over the radio, a woman's voice, "Oh, George, you'd better let them land, hi, I'm Wilma and this is George, you'd better get on in here quick!"

The soccer field was all lit up as the players from the two very different teams were scattered about, chasing after the ball. Fredead from Demonsword came in contact with the ball and kicked it high into the air. The ball arched in the air and then came down to the ground, the fans in the audience reacted as Sheyouany got the ball and kicked it straight on, leading to the Demonsword side. Gothatina found the ball and then began to try and defend her side, all this while Lewanda scrambled over and got hold of a piece of it and then kicked it on.

A team mate on Angelcross side got the ball and began to kick it over and about, then came Fredead and got the ball, kicking it hard. The ball arced and Sheyouany was able to jump kick the ball away from a player on Demonsword's side, now rolled the ball and a fight came on as two players of opposite side struggled for the ball. They ran it across the field, with occasional attempts by others to help their team mates, but then it was kicked out of bounds by the Demonsword team.

The ball was then thrown back in action then someone on Angelcross' side got the ball and gave it a great kick, sending it right on, the ball sailing in the air and then landing right in the heart of Demonsword side. The battle was on then, one player and then another were fighting for the ball, it was one kick and then another—the ball being beaten about, then flying greatly into the air. The fans braced as the ball came close to the Demonsword side, two players of opposite side kick battled the ball, running like the wind, they knocked the ball about, then in a sudden moment, one of the other players got the ball and gave it a rather straight on kick. The soccer ball went soaring towards the Demonsword goal, the fans began to cheer as the ball got closer.

Right there, on the ground, the ball landed and a battle between Sheyouany and Gothatina began, the two girls knocked the ball about, one hitting it and then another, the ball first going out of control and then being saved and going back into play. The fans were going nuts as the two girls, seen as long time rivals and stars of their respective teams battled on, the ball zig zagging about, the girls making remarkable moves, then suddenly, out of no where, Fredead came into the play, he kicked the ball and in a few head butts it was now in the Angelcross side. The tide had turned, the score was one to one, time was all but running out, this was a tight game. Last minute bets were bantering about off field and the sports news cameras were now on the fierce fight that was going on, the ball being beaten as it was kicked and head butted and rolled all over the Angelcross side.

Then things got really bad for Angelcross as Fredead and others got there, the ball landing near Fredead, while Fredead was one of his teams star scorers. The fans were now in a frenzy, yelling and screaming, you could almost feel the tension in the air, this was going to be it, if Demonsword won the game, it would set the pace, after that, it would be Angelcross who had to struggle to play catch up, and that was hard to do with a team like Demonsword. Now the ball was rolling, one player got it, kicked it back, though it didn't seem like the act was intentional, then came Gothatina and got the ball, kicking it hard and straight.

Now the pressure was on as Fredead got the ball and was in battle with Lewanda who was desperately trying to keep the ball away from the goal where Archibald was moving about, ready for any attempt at the other side gaining a point against them. The ball was in the air, Archibald watched for a split second and then ran in anticipation, the fans were on their feet, the ball blasting about, then it finds Fredead's head as he bounces it off and sends it towards the goal, Archibald leaps into the air, turning in what seems an incredible motion, as the ball rips through the air, headed

for the goal, but Archibald's hands finds the ball, and in a split second, deflects the ball away from the goal. The fans cheer as the Angelcross and Demonsword goes into over time.

Outside in the cold distance, a robotic wildcat did growl, two riders were approaching, and the Martian Wilderness winds began to howl. The Martian Reaper was flying up high, circling the area of the old settlement. Amy and Andrew found there way to the entrance, they were wearing environmental suits, they had to, the harsh Martian environment was hostile, cold, and dangerous, outside of a modern city dome, where anyone could walk about with just their normal clothes on.

The old intercom cracked just a bit as the voice from the other end came on, "I see that you made it, found the aircar parking lot, I see. Better get on in, that Martian Reaper is still flying up above, hunting."

There was a buzzing sound and the airlock door came open, Amy and Andrew walked on in, the door closing behind them. Fresh air, or what passed for fresh as quickly filled the locked room and they were able to remove there environmental suits. The other door opened, and there stood an old couple with big grins on their faces, like they hadn't seen others in a while.

Wilma looked at George, then back at Amy and Andrew, she motioned at them, "Well, don't just stand out there, come on in, it's good to have you, that old Martian Reaper can be quite a pain in the posterior, if you know what I mean."

Andrew smiled as he and Amy accepted and went on in, "Hi, I'm Andrew and this is Amy, we are tourist, thought we'd see the real Mars, not the one that the tourism business wants us to see."

George said, "Well I don't know about that, you might have been better off sticking with the group, Mars can be a dangerous place, still."

Wilma nodded, "Believe us when we tell you, those fancy cities they've built serves two purposes, to house the rich and the wealthy, and to keep out the unwanted. And there is plenty of unwanted on Mars."

They all went to a table, Wilma got up quickly and began to work in the kitchen, George said, "The real settlers, those back in the day, lived like this, small isolated groups, connected by over land tunnels, that way, once you were inside, you could move about, without having to constantly put on and off those EV-suits."

Amy uttered, "Well, we thank you for the warning about the Martian Reaper, and thanks for allowing us to take shelter."

Wilma, who was busy programming an old food-synthesizer, making something for them to eat, uttered, "We are glad to have you, don't get much company these days, our kids are all grown, some live in the big city, others are off world, making a name for themselves."

Amy asked, "Isn't it kind of dangerous for you two to be living out here all alone, I mean, just look at that thing flying about?"

George laughed as he fired up a pipe of synthetic tobacco, non-cancerous, "Me and the misses have been out here for so long, we don't feel comfortable living in the big city. Too many people, strangers, aliens, the original Martians, have you ever met one?"

Andrew answered, "No, I can't say that I have."

George continued, puffing on his pipe, he was a jolly looking old man, and his wife was fat and jolly looking too, they were nice people, just outcasts of another time, a time when settlers like them were needed, basically loners, who would survive for long periods of time, without the need

for other human company, and run the mines, and process the ore. But those days were gone, big companies replaced the mom and pop operations with multi organizational influences, which over a period of time, left hundreds if not thousands of families, on the brinks.

The lights were on, the fans at the edge of their seats, five players from Angelcross were lined up against the goalie from Demonsword. It was a match of matches folks, a classic example of guts and courage, with both sides battling it out, the score told the whole story, one to one. The floating robot cameras whizzed by, just over the heads of the players, jockeying for a better view in which to keep the billions of off world fans informed. The bets were coming in like rain on a hot Spring night. This was it, amateur sports at its best, with money changing hands, and no big time pro-players tantrums like in the old days. These kids were playing for the glory, not the money, though each team playing the finals was sure to get all sorts of prizes, scholarships, clothes, high-tech gadgets, vacations, trips, fame, you name it, these kids were already there.

But that was all from an adult point of view, this was about winning, good versus evil, Angelcross versus Demonsword. Bragging rights for a whole year, this was the time to prove whose school team was the best. All the lights were on the line up, one girl from Angelcross kicked the ball, the crowd reacted but then it flew over the net. Too high! Then another team mate, a boy kicked the ball, it looked good, but Demonsword's goalie was able to deflect it. What a let down but then came another kid, he kicked it hard! The ball sailed into the air, just touching the tip of the net, then went flying off into the night. Another boy got a shot at it, kicked the ball but it was way over the net off to the side, not a chance of scoring, the crowd was starting to react, and not in a good way, as Sheyouany's turn came up. Talk about pressure, she looked the goalie in the eyes, some strange looking alien kid, she got her balance just right, then she took her articulated tail, because all Martians have articulated tails, and she wrapped it around her right leg, using it as an extra spring like motion, she raised her leg back and then came forward, whacking the living daylights out of the ball, it rocketed towards the net, the other team's goalie just tipped it, but it wasn't enough. Score! Score! Score! The big screens flashed big time!

Now it was Angelcross' time to face the music! Poor Archibald was busy scrambling back and forth, doing his best to keep the rival team from matching up the game, as it stood, it was two to one, with Angelcross leading by only one point. The rival team had it's big kickers lined up, and each one was a serious challenge, Archibald managed to keep the other side from scoring, but it was Fredead's turn, the final attempt. Fredead was good, some thought the best player on his team, at Demonsword he was a hero, a superstar when it came to Quad Soccer. He studied Archibald's moves, he noticed a weakness off to the left, Archibald was weak there, if he could send a rocket right between the net and Archibald's hands, the game would be even, forcing another kick off. The crowd suddenly fell very quiet, on both sides, all bets were off, this was it, and Archibald heard God's voice speak to him in a still small voice, telling him to close it in, the other boy knew his weakness. Archibald did not argue with the Holy Spirit, it was there to help, but the ball was off, Fredead kicking the heck out of it! Suddenly, Archibald's life went into slow motion, the ball sailing towards the weakness, the crowd suddenly starting to react, the players standing off, starting to see what Fredead was aiming at, and then Archibald's body flying into the air, his heart pounding, like it was going to fly out of his chest. This was it ladies and gentlemen, this was it. Just then, at the right time and at the right moment, Archibald's face came in contact with the screaming ball, wham! The ball was deflected by Archibald's face, it went flying over the



net, people on Angelcross' side were out of control, while the contrast was true for the fans of Demonsword. In all the commotion, Archibald went flopping to the ground, knocked out cold. Sheyouany and Lewanda were running towards there fallen friend.

## CHAPTER 5

“So I lay, and wondered why light came not, and watched the twilight” W.M. Thackeray

The room was spinning when Archibald finally decided to open his eyes, he was no longer on the soccer field, he was in the school infirmary, a doctor had just gotten through examining him and as his vision became clear, and he began to realize that he had the mother of all headaches, he recognized Sheyouany and Lewanda. The two best friends any one could have in the entire world, one sat on one side and the other on the other side. They smiled as he began looking at them, he smiled back.

Archibald wanted to sit up, but was pushed back down by the girls, he uttered, “Did I get it? Did I stop the ball?”

Sheyouany smiled as she glanced at Lewanda and then back at Archibald, “Yeah, I should say, you got it okay, the bloody ball smashed into your face with a vengeance.”

Archibald frowned, “My face, he kicked the ball into my face?”

Lewanda began to giggle, “No, silly, you put your face in the way of the ball, doesn’t matter though, you were able to deflect it away from the net, we won!”

Oh Archibald felt good then, it didn’t matter that his head felt like a rock under water, or that he didn’t remember anything after the ball smashed into his face, what mattered, was that God didn’t have him go through all of that in vain. Pastor Lighthouse came in and looked in on him, the big smile wasn’t because they had won the first of four matches, the last three would be played by progressively upper classes, until the final game, which would be played by the college level students. Quad Soccer was a coed sport, so the whole school got into it, some were players, some as cheerers, others just liked the attention and the vibe.

Sheyouany and Lewanda stayed with him a little while longer, then they all left, leaving Archibald to rest. He had closed his eyes, opened them again to see a lone figure standing in the doorway, closed them, opened them again to find a beautiful girl looking down on him. It wasn’t that Sheyouany and Lewanda weren’t good looking, they were very pretty, two of the prettiest girls in the seminary school, but Gothatina was beautiful. She smelled like strawberries, her big eyes had genuine concern in them. She bent over and kissed him gently on the lips.

Gothatina uttered, “You gave me quite a scare, glad to see, nothing can crack that hard head of yours . . .” They both started to laugh, though it hurt him some what to do so.

Archibald voiced, “Are you suppose to be here? Won’t you get in trouble with your team mates?”

Gothatina shrugged, “I love you, Archibald Gardener . . .”

Well, that wasn’t what a young lad wanted to hear, too mushy, Sheyouany and Lewanda had told him the same thing before, he might have told it to them, but it was still too mushy.

Archibald said, “Your brother . . .”

Gothatina voiced, “I am so sorry for what he did, he wanted to win so badly . . .”

Archibald agreed, “As did we all.”

Just then both coaches from opposite teams came into the room, for Archibald it was an embarrassing moment, compounded by the fact that Gothatina kissed him again before she left, sneaking a small triangle box into his hand, she spoke, “Well, looks like they found us, better go, I’ll be leaving tonight, after the ceremonial supper. Bye for now . . .” And she gracefully exited

the room, she had secretly passed something to him, was it a clue about Pastor Hipshot?

George took Amy and Andrew on a tour of the old settlement, they looked at what was left of what was once a thriving village, they moved through the access tunnels, which connected one part of the settlement to another. The access tunnels were dug into the Martian surface, and then covered with a transparent ceramic-metal top, that allowed light to come in, and kept the harsh Martian environment out. The same transparent ceramic-metal would later be used in the more advanced domes, which covered the huge Martian cities, like Namgoy.

George uttered, "Mining operations and the discovery of the subterranean caves and corridors which lead to ancient Martian mysteries, is one of the things that keep some of us old timers still living in these old settlements."

Amy uttered, "It was in deep caves that the blueprints for building a transdoor was first discovered . . ."

Andrew voiced, "Well, the mathematic equations for translaser technology."

George said, "I'm not much up on all those discoveries, I do know that every now and then, some of us old timers, see strange figures lurking in the shadows, off worlders I suppose, still searching out and discovering new findings. Those first ancient Martians, they had just come from their home world, Atlantis . . ."

Andrew uttered, "The ancient records are vague and a lot of the history of the original people from Atlantis, the planet that was once between Jupiter and Mars, before it exploded . . ."

Amy said, "Or once between Earth and Mars before the great solar anomaly, depending on how you interpret the ancient writings . . ."

George said, "The truth of the matter is that evil people have been messing with the original time line, going back in time and changing stuff, the Martian history records accurately, both events of their people's origin, which led them to Mars. The misses and I have seen strange things in these caves and subterranean tunnels. Personally, I think the ancient Martians went under ground after their atmosphere started to leave."

Andrew added, "They were a very adapt race of beings, very technologically advanced, but they had great political struggles, and while the average Martian revered the ecology of Mars, there were fools within their government that saw only another opportunity to exploit a virgin world."

George said, "Sounds a lot like humans . . ."

Amy uttered, "Martian history tells of a settlement of Martians, who decided to go to Earth, and settle on the planet. While the rest of them, left the solar system all together."

Andrew voiced, "One history, in many, those strangers that George was talking about, they keep changing things to suit their own political agenda, in the future."

George stated, "Can't change the future!"

Amy was puzzled, "You mean, you can't change the past."

George stopped and looked back at them, "No, the future is set, God Almighty has fought and won the battle of Armageddon already. Evil has been defeated. What we are experiencing is the effects that happen when advanced beings, aliens, fallen angels, in a desperate attempt, a last ditch effort to save themselves from the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, the ultimate torment, the second death, those Fallens as they are called by the ancient Martians, have gone back in time in an attempt to avoid their fate."

Amy questioned, "They are trying to hide in the past, so why would the Fallens do that, why not try and change the future?"

Andrew told, "Because time is an illusion, we are moving backwards not forward in time."

Archibald and Sheyouany and Lewanda moved through the caverns of the Martian Wilderness, they crossed over ancient bridges, built long before mankind inhabited the Red Planet, bridges that at some ancient time hung over flowing water. There were markings high up on some of the walls, Martian pictographs that told stories of ancient events, strange events that seemed almost dream-like in their description.

Lewanda said, "We are going to be in so much trouble when we get back."

Archibald uttered, "Do you want to save Pastor Hipshot or not?"

Sheyouany voiced, "You know that we do, that is why we are here, but you should probably still be in bed, that was a nasty shot to the head, you got defending our goal."

Archibald shrugged, "Think of it this way, our part in the Quad Soccer Events are over, we won our match, all the focus will now switch to the other teams, no one will notice us missing, because of all the excitement."

Lewanda said, "That is so not true, Archibald. The head pastors know that we are obsessed with finding Hipshot, more over, so does whoever took him. We could be in real danger by leaving the safety of the Seminary."

They got to a large opening, massive actually, there was running water beneath them, and they could hear a loud distant noise, and there was something flying towards them.

Lewanda asked, "What in creation is that?"

Archibald answered, "Oh don't worry about it, these caverns have been abandoned for countless thousands of years."

Sheyouany countered, "Actually, it was just the ancient Martians that left Mars, most of the creatures that inhabited the planet, the ones that could adapt, went underground, that sound, that thing flying towards us, is a Martian Vampire Dragon!"

The three of them froze in fear for a brief moment, as the thing flew closer, screeching its loud cry, filling the deep and vast cavern. Light in the cavern was supplied by luminous organic creatures, attached to the high places of the vast cavern.

Sheyouany snapped out of it first, "Run!"

They all began to run across the bridge in an almost blind panic. The big alien Vampire Dragon swooped down, and bellowed out fire and smoke. The bridge caught fire, but was made out of a material that wouldn't stay burning, so the flames were just on top. The three children managed to get to the other side and find a small cave to hide in.

Archibald asked, "Why didn't you tell us that Mars has dragons?"

Sheyouany said, "I thought everyone knew about the strange creatures and going ons inside the Martian Caverns. I mean, get real, my ancestors came from Mars, and before that, what was the fifth planet from the sun, Atlantis, before it blew up."

Archibald uttered, "Okay, but what about that fire breathing dragon?"

Sheyouany continued, "There is more to Heaven and Earth, and in this case Mars, than what meets the eye."

Lewanda said, "I think we will be safe in here, for now."

The small cave went back a bit, but there was something moving in the cave, the three children huddled together in obvious fear, the thing came forward, it was a Martian Pink Fairy.

Archibald uttered, "What the . . ."

Sheyouany said, "It's a Martian Pink Fairy, I heard about them, stories told me when I was

little, but I thought they all died when the atmosphere was stripped away from Mars.”

Lewanda voiced, “Looks like they managed to survive, just like all the other creatures.”

Wilma was doing some chores when, Amy joined her, “Don’t you miss the big city, the people, things to do, entertainment?”

Wilma gazed up, “To be honest, I never liked any of those things. Too many people, and if the people don’t get to you, there are those awful androids, just like people, always griping and demanding civil rights.”

Amy said, “I once had a landlord whom he and his wife were ex-cops, they’d try and use Hysterical Police Syndrome, in order to justify illegally entering my rented house, coming up with all sorts of irrational scenarios, about me being sick or in trouble, just because when they’d knock on the door, when I was late paying the rent, I wouldn’t answer the door. I mean, get real, if I don’t have the money, using HPS isn’t going to help the situation.”

Wilma uttered, “I didn’t get the impression that you were poor.”

Amy laughed slightly, “I’m not, now, but there was a time.”

Wilma voiced, “Then you must understand why George and I don’t like living in the big city, there was a time when things were wonderful, out here, in the Martian wilderness. We had robots that followed orders, mining paid the bills, there were no tourist, just people from Earth and else places, coming to find a new life, make a clean start of things.”

Amy questioned, “And all of that changed with time?”

Wilma told, “The funny thing, is that you never see it coming . . .”

Amy asked, “See what coming?”

Wilma uttered, “Your end, the time when there will be no more of you. When the Great Maker, Jesus Christ calls you to his bosom, and gives you peace from this world.”

Amy voiced, “You mean Mars?”

Wilma shook her head, “I mean the world, the world isn’t a single planet, like they used to think long time ago. In the Holy Bible, the world is the universe, all creation is the world, so when God references the world, he is not limiting himself to just Earth Prime, he is talking about all the inhabited planets, in the Good Book, he himself said, I have other sheep, other flocks. Jesus Christ is the God of all creation, the Son of God is as Almighty as the Heavenly Father.”

Amy leaned on a post, “You and George are Faithers, you came to Mars, way back then, to escape persecution by the false gods of Technoligion. You’ve stayed ever since.”

Wilma looked up, “There was no reason to go back, the evil which infested Earth Prime, which God Almighty had managed to contain in Hell, deep within the core of Earth Prime, managed to evolve its way out, and mingle with the hearts of men. First taking on lower forms of life, animal life forms, then thanks to the serpent in Eden, entering into the hearts of people.”

Amy said, “My friend is a Faither . . .”

Wilma voiced, “I know, George and I spotted him immediately, he’s a Fixer.”

Amy asked, “What do you mean by that?”

Wilma spoke, “The evil forces which threaten to over through our world, couldn’t do it from the end, so they went back in time, by tricking mankind into doing the demon’s dirty work, convincing people that there was scientific knowledge to be gained, by learning to travel back in time. But the only way to travel back in time, is to travel forward, all the way to the end, then take the leap of faith, and cross the great divide, the abyss, separating the end of time

from the beginning of time. Then evil could be there at the beginning, to alter what once was, the ultimate task being, to change the future.”

Amy said, “I don’t understand.”

They had made there way deep inside the cave, coming out unto another opening, a vast cavern, but this one did not have the dreaded Vampire Dragons, there were strange subterranean trees, which grew to the high tops of the cavern, like the other caverns, there were strange organic organisms, which were attached to the top, giving off glowing light, from a biological and chemical interaction with the other subterranean life-forms.

The pink fairy took them to a small village, “You may rest here, I will have food brought to you.”

Sheyouany said, “Wait, what is your name?”

The pink fairy uttered, “I am called Leah. Please wait here, others will bring you something to eat and drink.”

They all sat back in the small hut, but it was very comfortable, Archibald was observing out a window, at the activities of the inhabitants, “They are different colors, some of them are green, I see purple, red . . .”

Lewanda uttered, “The colors of the rainbow, these are the legendary Rainbow Fairies of Mars.”

Archibald glanced back for a moment, “I thought that was just a myth.”

Sheyouany shook her head, “No, the things you are seeing are real, they are the creatures my people left behind, when the great Martian Exodus took place. It took forty years for us to reach our current world, but as you know, no matter how long a space trip might take, once you get to where you are going, the expedition builds a transdoor, and immediately connects the past to the future.”

Lewanda asked, “So what happened in this case?”

Sheyouany went on, “In this case, the vast majority of the population wasn’t taken on the original trip, they waited until the transdoor was opened to the New Mars settlement. But conditions here began to deteriorate. About time the rest of the settlement on New Mars had gotten to the new planet and built a transdoor, most of them, the population left behind-had migrated to what is now called Earth Prime, the remaining population dwindled.”

Archibald voiced, “And that is why so many of these creatures inhabit the hidden caverns of Mars. Undetected and protected from what goes on the surface.”

Sheyouany murmured, “It was a dark time in my people’s history.”

Lewanda said, “I would have thought, trying to turn your original planet, Atlantis’ core into a stable quantum singularity, which caused your original planet to explode, thus the asteroid belt between Jupiter and what is now Mars.”

Sheyouany uttered, “It is because of that experiment, that Pluto came into being, it is a small reminder, of what was once a great planet in this solar system.”

Archibald expounded, “It is because we are with you, that so many of the hidden creatures of Mars are showing themselves, human explores have tried to discover what is in these caves and caverns, but the creatures have hidden themselves. They must sense that you are one of them.”

Sheyouany spoke sadly, “Descendant of them . . .”

Leah was in the doorway, “Yes, we sensed your kindred, Princess Sheyouany . . .”

Lewanda questioned, “How do you know?”

Sheyouany raised a hand, "Some of the creatures that live in the vast array of Martian Caverns, are telepathic, to some degree."

Archibald uttered, "We need to find one of our teachers, a Martian, Pastor Hipshot."

Leah said, "Evil forces have captured him and brought him underground."

The awful looking things were crawling all over the place, Amy and Andrew, George and Wilma were trapped in a section of the Caves of Triquarius, the two meters high creatures kept on advancing, the group of four fired particle beam weapons at the giant Martian Cock-Roaches. The creatures would get hit by the beams and be split in half, or burst, spreading all sorts of nasty bug juice.

Amy took a shot at one, "Why didn't you tell us about the really big insect problem you have?"

George aimed a particle beam rifle and shot one, "To be honest, we didn't want to scare the two of you away."

Wilma fired her weapon and hit one, "You have to understand, some times these darn things don't even come out, specially when there is plenty of raw sewage for them to eat off of."

Andrew said, "The sewers from Namgoy run under this settlement?"

George said, "They don't run under us, they dump out into caverns, Mars has countless underground caves and caverns. I guess it was easier, when the government was building Namgoy to just take advantage of that fact, and have their raw sewage and other toxic crap dumped into the caverns."

Wilma told, "The problem with that, was that long time ago, when Mars was just being settled, some scientist thought it might be important to do experiments on insects taken from Earth Prime, well, they didn't take into account that, when you take an organism out of its natural environment, and put it into an alien environment, unpredictable things can happen."

Amy voiced, "Like breeding cockroaches the size of men! That was stupid! What could have possibly motivated them to do so?"

George murmured, "Terra-forming! They thought that since the average cockroach had survived for so long on Earth Prime, then maybe it, and some other nasty little critters, could make it and thrive on Mars."

Wilma spoke, "They were right, insects can adapt quicker and are more resilient than other forms of complex life. In fact they began to evolve and adapt, going underground, where conditions were very different, than what they were on the surface."

Amy said, "Why don't we hear about these things, in the news, before people book vacations to Mars?"

Andrew interjected, "For one thing, giant cockroaches on Mars isn't news, and the officials do tell tourist to keep to the planned and official tour groups. In fact, the Martian Wilderness is banned from any type of tourism, unless you go off on your own."

George blasted a few more of them, "Yeah, dag-gummit, me and the misses have been doing battle with the creatures of the Martian Wilderness, ever since we first came here. Learn to live with most of them, they respect us and our power blasters, and we respect them and their ugly cousins."

Wilma added, "When food runs low, because you don't have any organic mass to synthesize, catching a cockroach or other insect, converts quite nicely, you can synthesize just

out any thing that you want.”

Amy and Andrew gazed at one another for a moment, then she questioned, “Please don’t tell me that we have been eating cockroach, synthesized to taste like chicken?”

George smiled, “Good for you, high in protein, food’s food, once you’ve lived out here in the Martian Wilderness long enough, you learn to do what the nasty little critters did, you adapt.”

Amy leaned over, “I think I’m going to be sick!”

The kids and Leah walked through the village, it was like looking at a dream land, all the stories that a child had been told, seemed to come true down under the surface of Mars. Sheyouany said, “When my people left Mars, to colonize on another planet in a different solar system, we must not have realized all the wonderful things we were leaving behind.”

Leah smiled, “Your people did what they thought was right.”

Sheyouany shook her pretty head, “No, we did what was convenient, for us. Leaving behind creatures and beings that we felt we could do without. And all these long centuries, there has been life going on, under the surface of Mars. Adapting, evolving, surviving.”

Leah stopped for a moment and looked stoically at them, “Now that Mars has new surface dwellers, they are killing the life beneath the surface, by pouring toxic waste down into the underground caves, that once was home to so many different life-forms. In fact, some of them have started to fight back, because they have no choice. And then there are the abominations that the surface dwellers have created, by introducing creatures from their home world into our Martian ecology. Some of these creatures have bred so profusely, that they are a bigger threat to our survival than the surface dwellers, themselves.”

Archibald took a deep breath, from within his environmental suit, the three were wearing light and very agile environmental suits, so that they could survive outside the city dome which protected everyone from the harsh Martian conditions, he uttered, “I realize that mankind has ruined your eco-system, but if these caverns go as deep as I think, and are linked throughout the entire planet, then, there must be all sorts of weird life-forms that have not been discovered.”

Leah walked on, “There are, Mars has always been a mysterious planet, and it remains that way today. Your scientist once postulated about life on other planets, and when evidence was discovered that pointed to life once being on Mars, it changed the whole perception of mankind.”

Lewanda looked about, there environmental suits, had clear transparent ceramic bubbles on top, this type of helmet afforded an unobstructed view, she voiced, “You would think that people would learn, that destroying the environment leads to the death of all things on the planet. They did it when they used to do atmospheric testing of nuclear bombs centuries ago on Earth Prime, then the government covered it up by saying it was cars and spray cans that destroyed the upper atmosphere, when in fact, the government didn’t want to get sued by the people, because the government was the real culprit, I mean, just stop and think about it, setting off nuclear bombs in the atmosphere caused the ozone to start to collapse.”

Archibald uttered, “Once the foolish scientist and greedy politicians had realized what high atmospheric testing had done to the delicate balance and disrupted the magnetic fields of the Earth, by underground nuclear testing, it is a small wonder that Earth Prime still has any life left on it at all.”

Leah voiced, “Then you see why the beings and creatures of the Underworld of Mars, are so upset and concerned about current events, happening again, after the original Martians have left, we



have a right to live, just like you.”

Archibald said, “We will see what can be done, but for now, Pastor Hipshot is our concern. Is he with the Rainbow Fairies of Mars?”

Leah stopped, as though the tour was over, “We do not have him, others do, but he was given to the creatures of the Martian Underworld, by off-worlders. Those are the ones who are really responsible for your pastor’s disappearance.”

Sheyouany postulated, “There is more going on here than simply the kidnaping of Pastor Hipshot, the pastor must have become aware of something that others, evil people, wanted to hide.”

Back in the relative safety of their home, George and Wilma got to making provisions for their guest, Wilma voiced, “The two of you are going to have to be careful, the ones that you are running from, they represent a small branch of our government, Technoligion, that wants all Faithers, Christians dead, or worse, converted to the pagan religion that has managed to sweep the entire civilized galaxy.”

George looked up, “You said that this guy, Wayclose was it, that he is trying to kill you, Amy, while hunting down Andrew, because he is a Fixer, they have robots, all over the place, they can use them to spy on everyone, that is why you are finding it so hard to lay low, every time you pass by a robot, doing a chore, or whatever, there is the possibility, that Technoligion is watching, don’t forget, long time ago, demons used to try and possess humans and animals, in their attempt to evolve from hell. Well, those times have changed, the evil spirits no longer have to possess a living thing in order to get around, we have robots and androids, ambulatory human like machines, that are far easier to possess.”

Amy uttered, “What you are saying is that, all this time, when people thought they were becoming more advanced, by creating super sophisticated machines, that could do the things that people could do, what we really were doing, was providing perfect vessels for demons to inhabit, vessels without souls.”

Andrew voiced, “It is the way of the world, to turn its back on God Jesus Christ’s Holy Perfection, and go a whoring after the ways of darkness, by evolution, the fallen angels have managed to exercise influence over the living. But I sense something is very wrong with the mission I’ve been sent on, I believe that Wayclose wants to kill not just Amy, but both of us, his problem is that our deaths have to come at the right time, in order to change the future, for Technoligion’s own sinister purpose.”

Amy said, “Then he has been toying with us thus far, trying to get us in the right place and at the right time, in order to assassinate the two of us, but why didn’t he kill me when he had the chance, or capture me?”

George uttered, “Not the right time or place, if he acts before the right time, he changes things in a way that the governing machines, the ones that control all of the civilized colonies and planets, don’t want. Remember, ever since the beginning, the devil has been lying to mankind, and mankind has been listening and believing those lies, it is sleight of hand, tell Eve that she is not going to surely die, when in fact, there are many types of death, all of them leading to the Lake of Fire and Brimstone!”

Wilma said, “Or lie and get Christians all confused, saying that the Lord’s Prayer isn’t the prayer that Jesus Christ, himself used, when in fact, the Lord never gave us anything that he, himself wouldn’t do. If the Lord’s Prayer was given to us from Jesus Christ himself, then it is the Lord’s Prayer. But the evil spirits try to use the old trick of divide and conquer, to introduce enmity

amongst the ranks of the Saved. Praying the Lord's Prayer is the perfect prayer, and should be prayed often for outstanding answering of prayers by God, who gave it to his Son, who gave it to us."

Amy voiced, "I see, the evil spirits want to get us to question our faith by casting unholy doubt at the Word of God, but it won't work!"

Andrew uttered, "You are right, it won't work, because just like their evil lies and ways evolve, so can our faith in Jesus Christ grow and become strong in the Holy Spirit. Wayclose is like a vulture of demonic death, waiting to strike, but God's Holy angels fight the invisible battle that has been raging on since Eden, Armageddon has been going on since the beginning, God wins!"

Archibald and Sheyouany and Lewanda were flying on top of Martian Dragonflies, high up in the vast caverns, beneath them and all about them were fantastic sights and views, the Martian Caverns were like wonderful and fantastic dream worlds come true.

Lewanda was having a little trouble keeping her Martian dragonfly on course, the dragonflies were the size of horses, "It was nice of Leah to lend us these Martian Dragonflies."

Sheyouany said, "It sure beats having to cross more bridges, with those dreadful Martian Vampire Dragons roaming about."

Archibald uttered, "The thing that really bothers me is that if Pastor Hipshot saw something, I'm almost sure that he wouldn't have made trouble for those people, whoever they are that kidnaped him."

Sheyouany announced, "You are assuming that they didn't want to take him in the first place."

Lewanda asked, "What do you mean by that?"

Sheyouany went on, "Well, just think about it for a moment, the more we learn, the more it looks like Pastor Hipshot was running from something or some one."

Archibald voiced, "She has a point, before, we thought this all had to do with the Quad Soccer Event. And some of the clues led us down dead ends, why is that?"

Lewanda said, "Because the real crooks, the ones that have control of Pastor Hipshot, wanted to throw us off track, when it became obvious that a third party was trying to contact us and tell us something, about Pastor Hipshot's condition, when we all thought he had been killed."

Sheyouany voiced, "But he hadn't been killed, the crooks just wanted the authorities to believe that, while they went about doing whatever they were really up to."

Archibald questioned, "So the real question becomes, what did Pastor Hipshot find out?"

Sheyouany muttered, "He's a material witness in a crime, if gambling is a coverup, then the real crime must be far greater, Pastor Hipshot was always a curious sort, looking into things, getting involved with all sorts of causes, it is how he is."

Archibald announced, "That said, how do the Demonsword students fit in, I mean, Gothatina did give me a clue, how is it that they know anything about this?"

Lewanda said, "I wish you'd stay away from that girl, she's trouble and bad news, she hangs around with the wrong crowd."

Sheyouany nodded, "Lewanda has a point, maybe you should distance yourself from her, at least until we figure out what part her fellow classmates might play in this."

Archibald voiced, "Looks like the two of you are jealous . . ."

Lewanda shouted, "Oh, please!"

Sheyouany uttered, "Just think about it, Archibald, if people from one of the Dark Planets are

involved in this conspiracy, hanging around with her might put you at risk, or even worse, those who kidnaped Pastor Hipshot, might find it convenient to try and do the same to you.”

Archibald answered, “But we all are different, we are students, our parents are kings and queens of our respected worlds, doing that to one of us would mean an act of war.”

And then it hit all three of them, Lewanda said, “What if, that is what they are going for in the first place, to try and stir up some mess, to get our planets fighting?”

Archibald voiced, “The crooks couldn’t be members of the League of Worlds, because the League is not divided amongst itself, it would have to be outside forces, working subtly, in direct control by still, other sinister forces.”

## CHAPTER 6

“Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified, his loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal” Milton

The sword flashed back and forth, Archibald's opponent was very competent, indeed, more skilled than himself, but he had determination, a God given skill that had seen him through a lot of situations, even at his young age. It was Spring Break, the children at the Seminary had all gone, either home or to other points unknown, but were due back in two weeks. Because Angelcross had students from K-12 and the college and university level students, it was possible for a child to start at Angelcross and get an excellent Christian, now called, Faither education, and receive advanced degrees in religion or theology, religious counseling, and the obvious pastorships. Archibald was fencing with his older sister, Esther, who was a freshman in college, at Angelcross, having attended Angelcross all her life. She was majoring to become a pastor, this was in conflict with her royal duties, as one day she and Archibald would be king or queen of Riner, their home world.

A few royal servants stood about, cheering the two of them on, some for her and some for her brother, just to make things interesting for them. Royalty on Riner was, that the king and queen were equals, politically acting as the official voice for the Parliamentary Government. The people voted in the members of Parliament, but instead of a Prime Minister, the voice of Parliament was the King and Queen of Riner, putting a face on the decisions made by the government. Because Riner was part of the League of Worlds and the League of Planets and one of the original twelve founder planets, the United Planets, decisions coming from Riner weighted heavy on the hundreds of other worlds in the League. The Technoligion governing machines, which ruled the founding twelve planets, was relegated to a fifty percent vote, while Parliament had the other fifty percent. In the event of a tie, the King or Queen could cast a vote, rendering a decision. All of the original twelve planets of the United Planets had similar governments, but some had presidents instead of kings and queens, or prime ministers.

Esther fenced on, “You are getting rusty, I taught you better than this!”

Archibald evaded her sword, “You are too confident, sister, your obvious weakness!”

The match ended on a draw, the royal servants commending them both on excellent sportsmanship. The two siblings walked onto refreshments.

Esther removed her protective mask, to reveal a stunningly beautiful dark skinned young woman, a beauty in which legends were made, she took after her mother, the queen, “What's this I hear about you searching through the Martian Caverns? If mom and dad think that you are going to get in trouble, or worse, hurt, they are going to put a tighter link on you.”

Archibald sipped a cool glass of Riner water, nothing in the galaxy tasted as good as water from Riner, “Please, sister, you have to talk to them, you must . . .”

Esther looked lovingly at her younger brother, she gently touched his face, “I love you too much to simply help you try and get out of this, this isn't like when we were younger, playing in the Royal Palace, Mars is a dangerous place, if you are disobedient.”

Archibald pleaded, “Sheyouany and Lewanda will vouch for me, we are on the trail to solve the clues of Pastor Hipshot's kidnapping.”

Esther laughed slightly, “Archibald, we've all warned you about hanging around with those two girls, their imagination rivals your own!”

Archibald leaned back on a support, "Please, Esther, you're my big sister, be on my side . . ."

Hot laser fire flashed from all sides, Amy and Andrew jumped for cover, it was the case that no sooner than they had decided to return to, what they thought was the relative safety of Namgoy, then they were caught up in an ambush, Wayclose had been busy. From all around them, from within the mall area, robots that were under Wayclose's control, seemed to be dropping out of nowhere, from off on high, firing hot bore lasers, plasma weapons, blasters, you name it, it was being shot at them.

Amy, along with Andrew found cover, she voiced, "This was a mistake, we should have stayed out, in the Martian Wilderness, with the old couple!"

Andrew fired his plasma weapon at a few robots advancing, "We didn't have any choice, the wilderness was too dangerous, besides, would you really wanted to have Wayclose, send this kind of trouble, on those poor settlers door step?"

Amy blasted away, hitting as many as she could, "You are right, I was being selfish, those old folks were nice to us, the last thing they needed, was for us to bring our troubles to them."

Andrew blasted several as hot bore laser fire scorched pass his face, "Gees, this is getting to be too much, they are every where, Wayclose must be getting desperate, to stage a battle like this, right out in the open, where any and everybody can witness it."

Amy ducked back for cover as hot bore laser fire scorched across, "I'm going to die, aren't I, and the future will be changed, just that much more, I'll be another part in the equation of the Dark Powers, trying to under mind God Almighty's Authority."

Andrew took a break, it didn't matter, they were hopelessly surrounded, out numbered, the authority to have them killed, came from a branch of Technoligion itself, he took a deep breath, "When I started this mission, I knew it was going to be tough, I'd have to travel through time, chasing after one mad man after another, if it wasn't Wayclose, it would be someone else, it didn't matter, they were all the same, evil, working for the False Prophet, that old devil. Hell, they managed to trick poor innocent Eve into committing suicide, and killing her husband, along with the entire human race . . ."

It was at that moment, that Amy saw Andrew for the human being that he was, he was just a guy, given an impossible burden, protect God's children who had been marked for death by the Beast. She knew then that she loved Andrew, he would never stop trying, his faith in God was so strong, that even in defeat, he'd keep on trying, they would die together, if need be, but she loved him so much.

Amy reached over and kissed him on the lips, "Don't say anything, I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate your sacrifice, you didn't have to do this, those Faithers, the Fixers as you are called, you are very brave men and women."

Hot laser fire raged pass them, Andrew voiced, "We are not doomed yet, it is exactly, when men and women of God seem at their weakest, when God Jesus Christ is at his strongest, remember what St. Paul taught us. Let's pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that he will deliver us from our troubles."

So, in the heat of the battle, Amy and Andrew prayed to God to deliver them, from the obvious death that they were facing, then they exercised their faith and kept on fighting back, not giving up. Then Andrew noticed a small passage way, it had once been blocked, but the killer robots had repositioned themselves, at Wayclose's orders, it was Amy and Andrew's way out!

Amy looked, and saw, and understood, "God does answer prayer!"

The two of them ducked low, letting off a few blasts to keep the killer robots confused, as they made their way to the escape way that the Good Lord had provided for them.

The Royal Library was sparsely filled, not because people and normal folks could not come in and enjoy the awesome repository of knowledge, because the Royal Library was open to all, even though it was on the palace grounds, the information in there was free to the masses. It was not uncommon to be reading a book or looking at an article and glance up and see a member of the Royal Family, today it was Sheyouany who was garnering some attention, though in truth, she just loved to read, and spent her days on Spring Break, improving her mind.

May-ga was a Royal Servant that was close friends with Princess Sheyouany, "Tell me about all your adventures at Angelcross Seminary. We were all so happy when we heard that your team had beaten those awful Demonsword team!"

The two girls held automatic books in their hands, Sheyouany smiled with an obvious feeling of triumph, "Did you all really watch the game?"

May-ga looked surprised, "Princess, the whole planet of New Mars was pulling for you! We are all very well pleased. But tell me, that cute boy, the one who got his face smashed in by the ball, but saved the game for Angelcross, is he really that cute in person, I mean, when he is not being smashed in the face with the ball?"

Sheyouany kind of blushed, "May-ga, stop it, gossip like that can start rumors."

May-ga said, "Oh, but they have already started, we all saw you and another girl immediately run to his aid, after the ball smashing incident."

Sheyouany looked up from her book, "You saw that too, did you?"

May-ga was obviously excited, "Oh yes, the papers were instantly speculating about a possible, boy friend connection? I mean, you did look terribly concerned for him."

Sheyouany took a dreamy breath, "He's Prince Archibald Gardener," then she came to her senses, "we are just friends."

May-ga looked at her life long friend, "Just friends?"

Sheyouany had to go further, for obvious reasons, "More than friends, best friends."

May-ga nodded, "I thought so, so tell me, what adventures have you had. You are so lucky, you get to go to school on Mars Prime, where our ancient ancestors once walked. It must be fantastic."

Sheyouany voiced, "Well, it's not the same as it once was, all green and covered with water and trees, but the new settlers have managed to build beautiful domed cities, and in them are the hints of a past glory now gone."

May-ga became mooded, "It makes me sad to think of what Mars Prime once was, or for that matter, what our original planet of origin, Atlantis was once like, before the solar anomaly destroyed our home world. Who would have thought, that those primitive sheep herders on Earth Prime would have ever amounted to anything."

Sheyouany said, "They might not have, if it weren't for the fact that the Son of God was born on their world."

May-ga nodded, "Yeah, that changed everything, all the civilized universe became interested in that tiny planet, after the birth of Christ Jesus on planet Earth."

Sheyouany took a deep breath, "To this day, I don't think they fully realize the grand significance of God's choice to have his son born on their planet. They take it all for granted . . ."

May-ga uttered, "What else could they do, the whole event, Christ's birth, the almighty

miracles he did, the teachings, the blessings and understanding, what Earth doesn't fully realize is that many cultures on many planets had prophets who wrote prophecy about the coming of God Jesus Christ, and would have given anything to have him born on their world."

Amy and Andrew managed to get themselves away from the killing robots, in a crowd they found a relative anonymity, but their sense of pending danger still persisted. The streets were moderately filled with shoppers, tourist, and locals trying to take advantage of everyone else. But for some reason, Amy seemed to notice robots, were there more of them now, do people really send their machine servants out to do their shopping, cleaning, paying of debts. My goodness, one in ten it seemed, or was it just her, "They are here . . ."

Andrew tried to see what she was talking about, "Whose here?"

Amy held his hand too tight, "The killer robots, they are everywhere, look at them, spying on us, watching our every move, they might strike at any moment."

Andrew voiced, "These are domestic robots, not the high-powered killing machines that the Lord Jesus just got through delivering us from. These are common people's servants."

Then Amy's mind wandered for a moment, "Lovers . . ."

Andrew stopped and looked at her, "What?"

Amy announced, "I used to do the same thing back on Earth Prime, I'd send my android lover to take care of chores I didn't want to do, I would sleep with it, but that seems wrong now. Now that I let myself be found by Jesus Christ, the whole culture seems wrong, they have us worshipping idols, in the form of Technoligion."

Andrew saw where this was going, "You can't start hating yourself, it is a trick that the evil spirits try to use on people that are going through the repenting process. The oldest trick in the books, divide and conquer, get you fighting against the Holy Spirit which is trying to marshal you back into the flock."

Amy said, "Andrew, I'm a sinner . . ."

Andrew voiced, "We all are sinners, that's the whole point, there isn't any good sinner or bad sinner, we are all in the same boat together, there are only those who enjoy their lives as sinners, and those who hate their lives as sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ taught us, that unless you come to him, hating those things about us, that enslave us, to sin, then, that we could not be saved. You have to not like your life in order to be converted unto Christ. Face it, if you are happy with the way things are, and no Christian, no Faither is going to like the world the way that it is, why . . ."

Amy moved into his arms, "I don't know . . ."

Andrew explained, "Because God Almighty has shown us a better way, a Kingdom Come, in which our faith has allowed us to see what we can not see, understand what we can not understand, hear what we can not hear, and become what we still must become. So long as we are of the flesh, we are still in the process of transition, Christian Faithers are a work in progress."

Andrew pulled her off the street into a fairly nice hotel, as they moved through the lobby, Amy became concerned.

Amy questioned, "If we get a room here, won't Wayclose be able to find us, track us through the credit transaction?"

Andrew smiled at her as he approached the main desk, "I've already rotated my Beast Number, it changes every time I use it. It is never the same number twice."

Amy whispered, "But how?"

Andrew replied, "I'm from the future, remember," then he turned his attention towards

getting them a room and off the streets.

In the elevator, there was a hotel robot in there with them, every once and awhile, Amy would look at it critically, it got so bad that the machine became uncomfortable.

The robot asked, "Is there anything I can do for you, your luggage perhaps?"

The arrows flew wildly, servant robots were looking up and quickly taking cover, Princess Lewanda loved archery, it was a shame, that she wasn't very good at it. One of the Royal Servants stood next to Lewanda, assisting her with her archery lessons.

Sazont uttered, "Er, Princess Lewanda, you are suppose to hit the target, not send the palace robots, who are doing you and no one else any harm, running for cover."

But it was too late, Lewanda was enjoying her Spring Break on her home world of the planet Seaeath, the arrow went soaring into the sky, and then hit one of the robots in the hind area, this caused the robot, who though it was a machine, did have artificial feelings, running wildly, while Royal Servants and other robots ran after it, trying to help the poor thing.

Sazont voiced, "Perhaps the princess has had enough arrow shooting for one day?"

Lewanda gave up her arrows and long bow, but the expression on her face, said that she could have shot up a few more robots, so long as real people didn't get hurt, "Well, if you really think so, gee, I was having so much fun, too."

Sazont walked with the princess, "You have been missed, here on your home world of Seaeath. And we all have seen your victory over the evil Demonsword, in the Quad Soccer Event. You brought much pride to your family and Royal House."

Lewanda uttered, "Pride goethe before the fall, and it wasn't just me, it was a team effort. Besides, the final out come won't be determined, until all four matches have been played, ours was just the first, there are three more, two of them have to be played on Demonsword's home world."

Sazont nodded, "The evil planet Digon-tryk, Demonsword's home world, it is a dreadful place, filled with all sorts of outlawed technology, abominations of idolatry, it is only right that they be defeated."

Lewanda stopped, to let the robot whom she shot with the arrow pass by, running still in pain and yelling, while members of the Royal Court Yard tried to help it, "Hmm, perhaps I do need more lessons . . ."

Sazont agreed, "Er, yes, princess, more lessons."

Lewanda went on, "There are many mysteries on Mars, where Angelcross is, what do you know about the Ancient Ruins of Mars?"

Sazont shrugged, "Only what I have read in books, they are considered one of Mars' greatest natural resources, along with the other things, mining precious stones and minerals. It is not without reason, that the settlers from Earth Prime chose Mars as their first planet to totally colonize, or why so many other people from other planets still like to go there, for business and pleasure."

Lewanda nodded, "Yes, it has secrets that are not widely known, not even to Mars' own government, at least, it appears that way."

Sazont did not understand, "What do you mean?"

Lewanda said, "What if I told you that there was a secret world of ancient mythical creatures living under Mars' surface, deep within the great underground Caverns of Mars, what would you think?"

Sazont voiced, "Hmm, Mars has been colonized for hundreds of years, why haven't the



authorities discovered these, creatures?”

Lewanda announced, “Because you have to know where to look, there are countless caverns, deep under the surface of Mars, some of them known, because settlers make use of them, both as places to live and places to dump all sorts of toxic waste, killing some of the mystic creatures, forcing others to find new caverns to live in. It’s just not right.”

Amy came out of the shower, wrapping herself in a hotel robe, there was something going on at the door, she came around the corner to see Andrew, holding his particle weapon behind himself, so that the hotel robot, who seemed to be delivering food, could not see it.

Andrew glanced back at her, “Did you order food?”

Amy suddenly realized her mistake, she forgot to tell him, “Yes, I did, I was hungry, I figured that we both could use something to eat.”

The hotel robot looked at her, there was something disturbing about the gaze, “Your meal is here, the things you asked for,” the machine, made kind of in man’s image, not an android, they looked just like humans, this was a robot, cheaper to buy, because of the less cosmetics.

Andrew noticed the uncomfortable stare the two of them were sharing, the robot and Amy, so he said, “Thanks, this looks like it will do just fine.”

When the machine left, the two of them looked over the food quickly, said grace, and then began to eat.

Amy looked up, “Sorry, I forgot to tell you . . .”

Andrew was indeed hungry, “No problem, next time tell me before you act, that way I won’t go and blow off some poor robot’s head with my particle weapon.”

Amy said, “Your Parwea,” she referred to his weapon, “do you think the robot saw it?”

Andrew had a mouth full of eggs and bacon, toast in hand, he looked like a little kid eating, “I’m not so concerned with that as I am that the two of you seemed to have a hate thing going. Did you sense something that I missed?”

Amy was hungry but tried to be the better half, “No, no, it was just something, something about it, but I can’t put my finger on it right now. There was just something familiar about the damn thing. I’m actually starting to hate robots . . .”

Andrew sat back, stuffed too much food, needed to slow down a bit, “Wow, and this coming from a woman who used to sleep with her android servant. I’d say you’ve made some serious progress. But you can’t hate all robots, don’t forget, they only do what their masters tell them to do. So, they are not evil, in and of themselves.”

Amy pouted, “No evil robot conspiracy?”

Andrew smiled, “No, just evil human manipulation of machines, to make it look like the machines have total autonomy.”

Amy said, “What about the governing machines, they think and are even considered to be a form of life, synthetic life-forms they are called.”

Andrew replied, “These hotel robots are not that sophisticated, they don’t have to be in order to carry out their functions. Even police and domestic robots are controlled by remote control, a centralized super-thinker computer controls them. Just like your android servant had a super-thinker computer at your home, even though it could go out into the real world and do all sorts of things, it was still linked remotely to your home super-thinker computer at your house.”

Amy voiced, “I never really gave it that much thought, I knew there was two parts to my domestic android, but the other part just looked like a small piece of furniture, I put it off in a

corner some place and forgot about it.”

Andrew uttered, “That was your android’s brain, and the most expensive part of the system, they keep it separated from the body, in case something happens to the robot body, it is easily replaced, but the super-thinker isn’t.”

Amy put some more food in her mouth, “Wayclose was monitoring the assassination attempt, because those killer robots were being run remotely.”

Archibald walked through the great hall of the palace, “Tell me about the unrest that I hear rumors about?”

Esther gracefully walked with him, her beautiful dark skin shone with the beauty of the ages, she was like every African-ancestor princess, heavenly to behold, “Dad and mom are really worried.”

Archibald carried himself like his father, the King, with dignity and nobility, “Surely things are not that bad, I mean, there is the League of Planets and the League of Worlds all tied together and united by the United Planets. Nothing has been able to threaten the Dynasty in a thousand years.”

Esther looked cautious, “Our parents didn’t want you to know about this, because they thought it would distract you from your studies, but, there is talk of war. Not within the Dynasty, but there is a feudal system, called the Jemm. They are the beings that live in the darkness that exist between the galaxies, they seek to bring an end to all light in the galaxy.”

Archibald looked puzzled at his sister, “How can one planet or government destroy all the light in the galaxy?”

Esther said, “The Jemm are not one planet, they are Legion of Jemm. All the blackness that exist between galaxies, in the entire known universe, that is their domain. They are ancient, claiming to have existed before the beginning of time itself, horrible creatures, that exist in the shadows, like living nightmares.”

Archibald felt a chill run up his back, “Surely the League can fight them? I mean, there are hundreds of member planets and countless thousands more that want to join and have some type of treaty status with the League. I can’t believe that there is a form of government bigger than the Dynasty, or more collectively powerful.”

Esther took a deep breath, “God’s Kingdom is the only force known to man that can defeat them. Our wisest counselors have looked at every possible way, the Legion of Jemm is old and hungry, they are like fire, that eats and destroys yet still can never be filled.”

Archibald voiced, “Then maybe I should come home to stay, both of us, our planet, Riner needs us, while we go off and learn and play, trouble creeps our way of life.”

Esther was cautious, “This is why you were not to be told, because your education is of the utmost importance, what can you do if you are not educated? If you don’t know how to reason and to think, what good are any of us, if we are not at our best? God Almighty commands us to know Him, to seek out his Almighty Wisdom, what good are we if we don’t?”

Archibald muttered, “We can fight!”

Esther shook her beautiful head, “Dear, brother, you can’t fight what you don’t understand, and you can’t defeat what you don’t know.”

Archibald spoke, “So, that is what you learn as you advance at Angelcross, they teach you to become wise, but not in the world, but in the things that have to do with God Almighty. Perhaps when the pastors are teaching, I will effort to pay greater attention. But this news, still, greatly

troubles me. What is the King planning to do?"

Esther uttered, "On matters like that, even I am out of the loop, we are not of age to be made known the true plans of the Palace. But I have heard, that representatives from the various planets in the Dynasty were going to gather, to start to deal with this growing problem."

Archibald said, "It was exactly because of threats like this that the United Planets was formed, and a thousand years later, the Dynasty."

Esther voiced, "You are talking a thousand years according to the Reckoning."

The android moved back as Andrew fired his Parwea at it, the hot blasts rushing pass the hall, just then an old couple emerged from the elevator, the evil killer robot grabbed the old woman and used her as a human shield.

Amy yelled, "Andrew, he has a hostage!"

Panic on the one-hundredth sixteenth floor was quickly setting in, Andrew moved around the corner for cover, pulling Amy, who seemed frozen because of the danger the old woman was now in, Andrew voiced, "There is no way out of here, throw down your gun and I won't blast your tin can ass all over the walls."

But the voice coming from the killer robot shocked Amy and Andrew both, as the robot uttered, "It is only a matter of time, Andrew and I'm disappointed in you Amy, I thought we had a deal. You were suppose to draw Andrew out into the open where we could capture him."

Andrew had been hit on the arm, it wasn't bad but it hurt him like hell, but that wasn't the pain that he was feeling at the moment, it was the true horror and heart-sinking feeling of betrayal, the type that our Lord and Savior must have surely felt when Judas betrayed him, "What the hell is Wayclose talking about?"

Amy uttered, "His voice is coming from that killer robot, how?"

Andrew said, "That is because Wayclose is monitoring the robot, from some remote location, so that he won't get his hands dirty, when he kills us, or should I say, kills me?"

Amy closed her eyes for a moment, "I don't know what to say to you, I didn't want you to find out this way. You have to believe me when I tell you that I love you, Andrew, I'd never do anything to harm you."

Andrew placed his head back against the wall, "Love is, it never betrays, it never sets you up, tells you lies that gets you hurt, love never wants you at the bottom or abandons you in the middle of something important! Do you even know what love is?"

The killer robot voiced, "Oh, how nice, she's in love with you, but do you know how I found you, take a guess, she's sitting right next to you . . ."

Amy had tears in her eyes, "You said it yourself, the government can monitor anyone they want, all they have to do is jack into a nearby robot's live feed. That's how he did it, look at me, look at me, Andrew, I never betrayed you. I believe in the things you've been teaching me about God and his son Jesus Christ. I'm a Christian Faither, like you . . ."

The robot muttered, "Who can you trust, Andrew, your long time enemy, who as hunted you and you have hunted me, or some slut who can't love anything other than androids, lifeless, not real, no soul! Think about it, Andrew, if she is telling you the truth, then would I really be here, getting ready to kill you?"

Andrew fired a few blasts at the killer robot, "Shut the hell up, Wayclose!"

The killer robot spoke, "Oh, you missed me, target practice 101, never fire a loaded weapon in anger, you might miss and kill an innocent bystander. In this case, this old lady!"

Amy yelled, "You'll never get away with this, Wayclose, I know all about you, how you are from the past and the future, traveling throughout time, changing little events, that go almost unnoticed, until the totality of the changes alters a critical event."

The killer robot fired a few blasts back at them, "Oh, so you really have been educated. Will I'm only helping along the natural science of the world, helping it to evolve, to overcome a blinding light!"

Andrew voiced, "Science is nothing more than witchcraft, the name has changed, but the dark arts are still the same, you serve the Beast, Wayclose, nothing is going to change that!"

Archibald and his older sister Esther sat in a small boat in the middle of a beautiful lake, it was the last days of their Spring Break, they'd have to be getting back to Angelcross, Archibald uttered, "It seems like my place is here, on Riner, now that trouble is coming."

Esther shook her head, "We both need to get back to Angelcross and to continue our education."

Archibald asked, "So, these Legion of Jemm, who are they?"

Esther voiced, "They are part of a greater evil called the Nicolaitanes, an ancient evil beyond the grave, they control the Nebat Warriors."

Archibald said, "I heard about the Nebats, in Pastor Hipshot's class, I wish I'd been paying more attention."

Esther uttered, "I want you to stop looking for him, he's dead, I know that you think there is something else going on, but you have to let this thing go. You don't know what you are getting yourself into, just stay away from it. Remember what the Holy Bible says, run from evil."

Archibald cupped his hand in the water and then flicked at little of it on his sister, "I still remember a time when we were running around, playing in the palace, having fun, now, here we are, going off to another world, learning things that blow our minds, the truth is ever enlightening."

Esther agreed, "We are growing up, times are changing, God Almighty has plans for us, and destiny rest not for the weary hearted."

Archibald said, "Some times I grow so tired, I mean, I feel like I'm going to fall, spiritually I'm talking about."

Esther went on, "It happens to the best of us, Archibald, the Holy Bible teaches us that it is inevitable that people will fall, that is because the evil spirits of the world place stumbling blocks before us, to make us fall. They set traps for the Children of Light, they hunt the saints like they were sheep for the slaughter, but God Jesus is a wonderful God, a mighty God, caring about his people, not just in the Kingdom Come, but right here and now. Remember, that with great suffering come great reward, just read the Book of Job, so that though while he suffered, mind boggling torment, God in the end, made his last days greater than his first."

Archibald mused, "Then our time must be the times of all times, we live in the post-last days, that is why the Great Reckoning has happened, because God foretold that a time would come, when the Beast would think to have changed time and times of times. Maybe that is why translaser and transdoor technology had to come into existence. Because when the first transdoor was opened, it changed time as we once knew it, and the Great Reckoning had to be engaged, in order to impose order on a seemingly order-less process."

Esther said, "Even though by God's word, the Beast will only rule for a short time, a space of two and a half years, because of transdoor technology, those two and a half years can be bent, twisted, distorted, stretched and expanded, a day can be like a century and a century like a day."

The Legion of Jemm is behind the Beast, I've heard mom and dad talking. All of our advanced technology has been influenced by the perverse needs of the Nicolaitanes."

Archibald uttered, "Then, maybe there is no hope for us, we are all born into the Children of the Damned . . ."

Esther's eyes were filled with the Holy Spirit, "Not so, little brother, for the things that men deem impossible are but child's play for God Jesus Christ, for the Word of God makes fools of the knowledge of the universe, the thoughts of men. God Almighty can do anything, there is none that can even lift their heads from the ground, unless he so commands it. Have faith, for the Holy Scriptures are Truth and do not lie, for Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"

## CHAPTER 7

“An arrow from my bow had pierced their chief” John Home

The classroom was filled with eager children, to be educated and taught both in the practical matters of Ancient Christian matters, but in the applications of Christian Mysticism, miracles, prayers, divine healing through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Pastor Azimuth’s class was buzzing with the sounds of children learning the precious word of God and the everyday applications of such awesome power.

A child raised her hand and asked, “Why should we still believe in miracles, when there are hospitals and doctors, physicians that can heal us of almost every kind of disease?”

Azimuth smiled slightly, “Do you think that physicians are a new thing?”

Lewanda raised her hand and uttered, “They do have all sorts of technology that they can use to heal people.”

Azimuth uttered, “Hmm, technology to heal?”

Sheyouany voiced, “Maybe we are not seeing the whole picture.”

Azimuth voiced, “People thousands of years ago did what people today did, when they got sick, they went to physicians to heal them. The Holy Bible teaches us that one woman who was rich and spent all her wealth on physicians, before she decided to go to God Jesus Christ for help.”

Archibald said, “But that was in the old times, times have changed, things are more modern. We can go to other planets, solar systems, our technology is so advanced, it seems like magic.”

Azimuth raised an eyebrow, “Magic, really, and where do you suppose that magic, which is a synthetic imitation of God Almighty’s Holy Power, comes from, or better, what do you really think magic is?”

Sheyouany told, “It is trickery, usually with a base that is unseen or unknown to those that are tricked by it or fooled by the trick.”

Azimuth taught, “So then, we know that God does things through his Almighty Will and his Holy Word. And that evil spirits, copy the ways of God, but are not able to use God Almighty’s powers, so they invent machines that mimic the ways of God Almighty.”

Lewanda asked, “What about those people who use magic? Some of them seem like nice people willing to help?”

Azimuth laughed slightly, “Help you to do what?”

Lewanda said, “I don’t know, get out of trouble I guess.”

Azimuth taught, “It was the devil who got us all into trouble in the first place! Never forget that, you can not use evil to fight evil! You must learn to trust God Almighty and his holy ways, that is the only way to get out of trouble.”

Archibald said, “Then, what you are saying is that we should pray, worship God Jesus Christ, and that God will deliver us from our troubles.”

Azimuth was happy, “Exactly, pray first to God Jesus Christ, then show your faith by getting out in the world, if you can, and doing something about it. Remember, faith without acts of faith, are made to no use, you must first call on the name of God Almighty, then do something to demonstrate your faith in him, and God who sees all, will use his power, miracles big and small, depending on what is needed, to save you.”

Lewanda voiced, “So, those who put their faith in technology, are really putting their faith

in devils and magic, which is really trickery, cleaver devices designed to mimic what God does.”

Amy sat across from Andrew in a quiet café, “Maybe I should just give myself up, go to the police and tell them everything that has happened to me, to us, maybe they can protect us both?”

Andrew was eating, “You don’t really believe that do you, after what you’ve seen, what you’ve been through. Wayclose is the police, well, he works for a branch of the government, Federal Police. All you’d end up doing is setting yourself up, he wouldn’t have to go looking for you, and you’d be all locked up, just waiting for him to come or send one of his killer robots to finish you off.”

Amy voiced, “But if he wanted to kill me, why didn’t he do it when he had the chance, I was right there, alone with him, why not kill me right then?”

Andrew uttered, “Time and place, he has to kill you at the right time and place, if any of those things are off, then the effect that the Dark Powers are looking for, won’t happen. Remember what I told you, it is rare that they actually kill anyone, because killing a person, involves countless variables, think of all the people you come in contact everyday, now imagine that you are dead before your time, all those souls that you now, don’t interact with, their lives change because you were not there, changing the future on a scale that is virtually unpredictable.”

Amy said, “And they act like a surgical team, changing only small things in the past, so that the cumulative effects over a long period of time, makes grand changes in the future.”

Andrew resumed eating his breakfast, “The rule is simple, small changes in the past equal big changes in the future, while the converse is true, big changes in the past, equal small and often no changes in the future at all, because the Cosmic Flux resets itself, if too much change occurs, because destiny must be fulfilled!”

Amy iterated, “So, the only way not to trigger the Cosmic Reset, is to Cosmic Engineer small changes.”

Andrew said, “If Wayclose messes this up, it could mean the undoing of hundreds if not thousands of years of tampering with time, for them, they’d have to go back, to the beginning of the world, and start all over.”

Amy questioned, “Have they ever had to do that, go back and start over?”

Andrew spoke, “It has happened before, sometimes, if one side can’t win, or a mistake happens, people get killed that were not suppose to die that year, the future changes too much, or the Cosmic Reset kicks in, bring everything back into balance with God’s original plan, because destiny is the hardest thing to change. You see, if God said it, then it can’t be changed, God’s word is our destiny!”

Amy voiced, “Then the only thing that can be changed is the implied word, the events leading up to an event that God Almighty has destined to be.”

Andrew uttered, “I’m going to take you out of the cold.”

Amy asked, “What?”

Andrew went on, “There are safe houses all over the place, on different planets, different worlds, even different realities. I’m going to take you to a safe house, that way I can have some experts talk to you, try and find out what’s going on, find out what it is that Wayclose really wants, what it is that he is trying to change.”

Amy uttered, “I don’t understand, I thought he just wanted to kill us?”

Andrew said, “It goes way beyond that, he might be trying to force a Cosmic Reset, because he’s messed up, some place else in time and space, and the outcome isn’t what the Dark Powers

want.”

Amy voiced, “So, that’s how it is done, both sides in a power struggle for the future!”

Pastor Prettyfield taught, “When is a good time to pray?”

Lewanda raised her hand, “In the morning, because it gets your day off to a good start.”

Prettyfield uttered, “I see, so getting ones day off to a good start is very important, can anyone tell me why?”

Archibald said, “Well, for some people, it is drinking coffee, or for others, taking a nip of booze, and for others, illegal drugs, those things get them going in the morning, and then there is gambling or some other vice.”

Prettyfield could feel the energy in the classroom, to learn, “What are all these things that you just mentioned, Archibald?”

Archibald shrugged, “Bad things . . .”

Prettyfield nodded, “In most cases they are, but by themselves, done in moderation and under the right circumstances, God has taught us that there is nothing evil in and of itself, it is the guilt that is generated from within, the beating back of the conscience, the defiance of God’s Almighty will, that is when these things become bad for you. But there is something else . . .”

Sheyouany said, “They are tokens of false gods.”

Prettyfield uttered, “Very good, now can you tell me why?”

Lewanda voiced, “Because they take away from God’s message, that we are suppose to be sober, of good deeds, charitable.”

A child in the class questioned, “I don’t get it, if we are not suppose to do these things, then what’s the point of being a Christian Faither, all the fun in life is gone. God doesn’t want us to have any fun?”

Prettyfield surveyed her students, “God is Love. There is no greater joy, fun, than God’s love for us and our love for him. Why do you think that some heathens, secular people might think that our loving and caring God Almighty, doesn’t want us to enjoy ourselves?”

Sheyouany inserted, “Because what the infidels are saying, isn’t true. If you worship Jesus Christ and believe that he is the true Son of God, then you know a joy that goes far beyond mere worldly lusts and carnal passions.”

Prettyfield smiled, “I can see that you’ve been reading your texts, very good answer. You see, the evil spirits want people to believe that there is something wrong with being obedient to Jesus Christ, they wage a campaign of lies, against our Holy Savior Jesus Christ. It is because people, people all over the civilized universe, have fallen from perfection, that is why God Almighty’s Holy Word seems strange and alien to the secular minds of the atheist and the agnostics, and all those who exist in the middle of the road, claiming that their way is the way to salvation. When in truth, they are victims of doctrines of devils. There is only one God Almighty, only one Jesus Christ, only one Holy Spirit, doing the will of God.”

Archibald asked, “What about those who put down the Holy Trinity or say that the Lord’s Prayer, was never prayed by Jesus Christ, therefore it is not the Lord’s Prayer.”

Prettyfield answered, “Everything that Jesus Christ did, his entire life on Earth Prime, what was it about? It was about teaching, God Jesus is the Ultimate Teacher, everything he taught us, he himself did, God Jesus never gave us something that he himself wasn’t subject to himself, even unto the death on the cross. Jesus Christ taught us how to live, and he taught us how to die. And he taught us how to be reborn and to be resurrected. God Jesus Christ taught by example! Make no



doubt about it, the Lord's Prayer is the most powerful prayer known to mankind! The Holy Trinity is God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Ghost! Believe and be free from all evil!"

Archibald understood, "Then false prophets are trying to trick us by naysaying."

The woman sat across from Amy, it was making Amy nervous and the other woman, a psychiatrist kept glancing up and then making notations on her electronic pad. The room was kind of dark, but there was a window, outside was a playground. A few children were playing in it, she could hear the happy voices, the laughter, singing in the distance. What were they singing, she'd heard the song before, but not sung exactly this way, must be the way Martian children sang it.

Dr. Phrazier finally uttered, "So, why do you think that this man, the one that you say is after you, why do you think he is chasing you?"

Amy took a quiet deep breath, "I already told you, I'm not sure. At first I thought he was the good guy and that Andrew was some monster, Wayclose told me that Andrew was a criminal against the government of Technoligion. Well, being a good citizen, I wanted to do what I could to help rid our society of Faithers."

Phrazier questioned, "It is only against the law to be a Faither in six of the planets that form the United Planets. In most of the League of Planets and the League of Worlds, Faithers hold considerable political power, howbeit, that power is constantly under challenge."

Amy went on, "Some worlds tolerate religions that are not the mainstream, however, Technoligion is the only officially sanctioned religion of all the Dynasty. In most cases, if you are suspected of being a Faither, you can be killed as a traitor."

Phrazier asked, "Is that what you see, do you feel that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, and refuses to worship the Beast, Technoligion, is a traitor?"

Amy shook her head, she seemed confused, yet, she seemed to have an inner resolve also, "I didn't say that, what I meant was that long ago, just at the start of serious space colonization, when the Governing Machines, were taking control, everyone did, but we were wrong, Jesus Christ is God. I am here to say that I believe in God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ, Amen!"

If I were a doorkeeper I'd let you in  
 I'd never change the locks to my heart  
 I'd never hide my face when I saw you  
 If I were a doorkeeper you'd be my friend  
 If I were a doorkeeper there'd be no pain  
 The shadows which cross the grass in silence  
 Would never cast their gloom of chalice  
 If I were a doorkeeper there'd be only rain  
 If I were a doorkeeper the world is yours  
 And there would be time for all and no time  
 For the sorrows of our thoughts of reason  
 If I were a doorkeeper I'd unburden chores  
 If I were a doorkeeper as wise as a mouse  
 There would be saints and angels calling  
 You to a new and precious elucidation

## BEYOND THE RIVERS OF ETHIOPIA

“To the marble limbs so perfect in their passionless repose” Anonymous

Alex said, “I just don’t know, every time I look around, there seems to be more and more sickness. Little children dying and starving of all sorts of disease. All the while those so-called charity organizations, who collect millions by the way, are pocketing the charity donations, for so called administrative reasons . . .”

Chubimora nodded, “I agree, while these poor people die. I saw on the public broadcasting station, some guy who was suppose to be part of the World Charity Organization, showing pictures of women and children, sick, starving, and dying. He was asking the rich to donate to the charity relief. All the while he was obviously fat and overweight, there was obviously no hunger problem in his family, but those poor people he was suppose to be representing, my God . . .”

Alex was scrubbing his hands before taking care of another patient, “I’ve spent every dime I hand, once I got here, trying to improve the quality of life for the people in the villages that we serve.”

Chubimora said, “I understand, so did I. I think it is a natural instinct to try and help, especially when one first comes over here and witnesses first hand, the vast and enormous amount of poverty these men, women and children are suffering.”

Alex spoke, “It’s all political you know.”

Chubimora uttered, “I know, the warlords in the hills, fighting amongst each other. They steal medical supplies and food and then sell it on the black market.”

Alex went on, “No, I mean yes, that is happening, but I’m talking about things on a bigger picture. This whole continent of Africa needs to get it’s act together! I mean, just think of it, Japan and Germany and Italy were defeated back in the Twentieth Century. But look how they were able to rebuild and rise to a position of importance in the global world.”

Chubimora asked, “So, what the hell is happening here? If occupied and defeated nations can rise up and overcome their occupation and become free and contribute to the global world, why in the hell can’t Africa find its place?”

Alex said, “That’s a good question. I think those other nations had someone going for them that African can’t seem to get it together.”

Chubimora asked, “What is it, what made those other nations, who were obviously defeated at one point in time, able to reinvent themselves into super-powers?”

Alex took in a deep breath, “I think the answer lies in the fact that those nations, no matter how beaten and oppressed they were, they were also unified. They all had one localized political government and were able to capitalize on that fact. Here in Africa, you have tiny, insignificant, so called presidents of overly impoverished nations. They all fight amongst themselves. The so-called presidents care only about themselves, not their people, the quality of their lives. They maybe educated in some ways, but none of them have learned the basic and fundamental lesson, a king or president is only as powerful as the people. If the people are poor, then the country is poor, it doesn’t matter how rich the so-called president of that country is.”

Chubimora voiced, “I’ll assist you in surgery, doctor . . .”

The fat and disgusting warlord Somtop belched loudly, totally no manners at all, “You need to tell me something, doctor . . .”

Alex was uncomfortable, the room was filled with men with guns, obviously supplied by insurgents, "Look, me and my hospital try to stay out of your way, Somtop. All the doctors and nurses want to do is help the people."

Somtop glanced over at someone in back of Alex, grinned and nodded then turned his attention to him, "While I totally agree and understand the need to help the locals. There are limits to which I can protect you from the rebel factions."

Chubimora had held her peace up to that point, "Oh, let's cut the crap, Somtop, you are the rebel forces and the insurgents are taking orders and delivering guns, because of you."

Somtop studied the nurse for a moment, "I can see why women are not allowed in such meetings, yet you insisted that you would not come alone, had I known you were going to bring this woman, I would have rejected the meeting."

Chubimora said, "Why, what's wrong, Somtop, you not used of women speaking up to you?"

Some of the guards wrestled but Somtop motioned them to stand down, "You have a big mouth for such a small woman! And yes, if things were different, I'd take your skinny ass into the other room and teach you how to be a proper woman!"

Alex signed, "Look, all this is getting us no where. It's obvious that none of us really like one another, and the pain and death inflicted on the villagers, is totally unacceptable! The killing has to stop! There is disease and famine and all sorts of other things that is ravaging this land, why add your assassins to that list, Somtop? My God, these are your people, all you are the president are doing is getting fat, by channeling the relief aid, while countless souls are starving and dying of sickness and disease. But look at yourself, you are fat and doing well . . ."

Somtop kind of laughed, "Yes, I and my followers are indeed doing very well, and it doesn't have to be that way with the locals, all they have to do is follow me and reject President Boohotu. It's as simple as that!"

Chubimora stated, "And all the while, it is the locals who are the victims, suffering and dying. This is insane, my God, the whole continent of African has forever lost it's mind! Instead of fighting amongst yourselves, letting outside forces play the divide and conquer game with you and your people, hell, man, you were educated at an Ivy League school in the States, what the hell is all this about?"

Somtop suddenly became very agitated, "What!? You want to know what this is all about? It's about power, those who have it can rule and those who don't will die!"

Chubimora yelled back, "Well that is just stupid! African is the laughing stock of the entire world, good grief, countries back in the Twentieth Century have fallen and risen, while Africa seems to be stuck in some kind of miserable time-warp, she can't seem to get her footing. And you know, that is really ashamed, because this is a beautiful continent, with all sorts of things to offer the world, but so long as stupid warring factions, like yourselves keep killing and stealing from your own people, you will never be anything to reckon with! A nation, a country, a continent is only as strong as its people."

Somtop was obviously pissed off, "Don't you come over here and try and lecture to us, Africans, how to do things, just look at your own country, look at the way things were after the flood. I didn't see white faces suffering, the whole world saw black faces, being left to die!"

It must have been the heat of the night, the longing for something that made sense, because one touch lead to another and suddenly Alex and Chubimora found themselves in bed, making love. Their passions seemed to engulf them in an almost spiritual expression of the words that they could

not find, they had often shared a glance and a key word, but neither acted on it, maybe out of professional courtesy, perhaps because both of them were afraid of what they might find.

The night was well spent and Chubimora woke to find Alex not sleeping beside her, she put on some loose fitting clothes and began to look for him. She found him by the barn talking on what she first thought was a phone. Then she remembered that they couldn't get reception out this far.

Chubimora approached him. "Hey, you, I woke and you were gone, is everything alright?"

Alex quickly put his phone away, trying his best to conceal it, "What, yeah, yes, everything is fine. I was, I was . . ."

Chubimora cut in, "You were just talking on a phone that isn't suppose to work out this far, what do you have, a sat-link?"

Alex studied the situation for a long moment, he looked in her eyes, good grief, he'd just got through making love to the woman, if he lied now, "No, regular phones don't work out here, mine is very special."

Chubimora said, "Oh, and here I thought you were ordering out for pizza," she tried to joke about it.

Alex chuckled slightly, "I was ordering a fresh supply of medicine."

Chubimora asked, "I wanted to talk to you about that, the medicine that you've been treating the villagers with, I've never seen results like that before. I mean, nothing short of a miracle in most cases . . ."

Alex approached her gently, "Yeah, I guess you could say that they are miracle drugs."

Chubimora went on, "But Somtop and his thugs have managed to intercept mostly all the shipments of medicine that we need for the sick, and has been selling it on the black market. How did you manage to get supplies in without him interfering?"

Alex took a deep breath, "What I'm about to tell you, well, you are not suppose to know . . ."

Chubimora smiled jokingly, "What, you are some type of a spy or something?"

Alex didn't laugh with her, "Something like that, actually, I'm a doctor from the future. I've come back in time to finish my training, training in ancient medical practices."

Chubimora started to laugh, and she did so quite hardily, but through her tears of laughter, she managed to notice the expression on her lover's face, "My God! You are serious!"

Alex nodded and then pulled out the device he had been talking on, it kind of looked like a cell phone, but there was another aspect about it, the technology was too advanced, she wasn't sure how she knew this, but she could tell. She voiced, "You know, little green men and all that future stuff isn't a good way to get me back in bed with you . . ."

Alex laughed, feeling some of the tension subsiding, "I'm not suppose to tell anyone. Altering the past and all that quantum nonsense. But I've been told that I have to leave . . ."

Chubimora suddenly wasn't feeling so secure, "Why? Is your training up?"

Alex said, "No, I've been recalled because Somtop is going to raid the village. Everyone dies in the slaughter, I have to get the people to safety, I'm going to need your help."

The noise that the men in the trucks made was frightening, it was late at night when the soldiers, no, thugs of Somtop raided the village. Without warning or cause, for what reason could there be, they began to burn what little the village had to offer. But it became obvious after awhile, that there was no one home.

With all the villagers in tow, leading them to some place safe, was Alex and

Chubimora, when some of them glanced back, they could see the smoke and fire rising from what was once their homes.

Someone said, "Surely Somtop will find us . . ."

Another said, "You have to have faith, the Good Lord will deliver us . . ."

Chubimora asked, "The people are starting to murmur, they are frightened, as am I. Where are we going?"

Alex seemed preoccupied, "Hmm, some where safe," was his reply.

Chubimora went on, "I understand that you think that you are from the future, and frankly, the device I saw you with, well, I've been living out here, in this remote location for years, trying to help these people. It's possible that the device is just something new, that I've never seen, the latest cell phone."

Alex looked at her strangely, "You really don't trust me or believe me. No, I guess if I were in your shoes, I'd doubt me too. But all you have to do is hold on to your faith for just a little bit longer, you'll see."

Someone said, "Perhaps our faith isn't enough, when Somtop realizes that there is no one in the village, he will send his men, in trucks with guns and machetes to kill us all."

Alex tried to keep everyone calm, "Believe me, I know how impossible this all seems, but believe me when I tell you, the alternative is very unfavorable! Do you want to stay, because of your fear, and face Somtop with his gang of killers? Or, do you chose to live, and try and muster up the courage to believe that God can do something about all this . . ."

A voice echoed, "God, perhaps, but you, what can you do, you are just a doctor?"

Chubimora voiced, "Yes, he is a doctor, but the medicines that he was using to treat and heal your sicknesses, the medicines don't come from our time, believe me I know. There is something different about him, he's not just another doctor . . ."

Then suddenly they all could hear the sound of trucks coming up the road, and then random gun shots, Somtop's people were shooting at the hapless villagers. Someone uttered, "They have found us!"

It was about then that Alex motioned everyone to be still, "It doesn't matter anymore, we have arrived at our destination!"

Alex took out his device and began to press key buttons, and then suddenly the area lit up with light in front of them and a huge doorway, a transtimeuet, appeared, "The gateway to Heaven . . ."

Everyone stood in wonder, could this stranger, this doctor who had so lovingly treated their sicknesses have come from someplace beyond their time and space? Some were glad and relieved and others were frightened and skeptical.

Alex held up his hands and said, "Today, your salvation has come, for God Jesus Christ has heard your prayers, come with me, and live, come with me to Paradise . . ."

When Somtop's men got there, they found only rags and castaway items, the people's footprints went just so far and then simply disappeared, for they could only be found in Paradise.

“Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie, bring pasties of the doe” Sir Walter Scott

Fascal and Odura sat high on the outside of a building spying down on an enemy, they both had their high-tech smart weapons shouldered, they spied through smart binoculars, the subject was a one, Vrevor Pigmoney.

Fascal uttered, “Just look at him, it’s hard to believe that he has caused such a mess, now his friends want him dead . . .”

Odura shifted position, “Correction, his so-called friends, real friends would hardly want you dead.”

Fascal nodded, “The truth of the matter is that in politics, as in business, one has no real friends, just opponents that seek to out advantage you, if they get the opportunity.”

Odura glanced at the man next to her, “So then, I suppose that our friendship should be placed into question after that last statement, or shall I consider it a revelation?”

Fascal frowned but he didn’t move, “I was talking about Vrevor, not us.”

Odura leaned back, “I don’t know, people seem to say what is really on their minds when they are the least guarded.”

Fascal said, “I didn’t mean it that way.”

Odura countered, “So, if things were to change, you and I would face off and try and kill one another, because according to you, there are no friends in business or politics.”

Fascal leaned back with her, “I’m your friend, Odura.”

Odura uttered, “Hmm, I suppose all of that awaits to be seen. So you and I sleep with one another when we are not on missions, but, if I ever got in your way, you’d kill me in a second.”

Fascal went back to his observation, “There are many things that I am capable of, but that is not one of them.”

Odura said, “Really, if you had to choose between earning a living and killing me, you are saying that you would not kill me?”

Fascal grinned, “I would not kill you.”

Odura went on, “But you kill for a living and I’ve witnessed you take out all sorts of people, never even blinking an eye. Now how can someone so cold and calculated as that, not think of the day when he’s had to kill his lover?”

Fascal voiced, “Okay, let’s turn this whole thing around, would you kill me if I got in the way of business? There, how do you like that one?”

Odura smiled as she gazed through her binoculars, “Well, let me see, money verses a good lay in bed, I suppose that good sex weighs in heavily on not killing you and you can be quite affectionate when you are not killing someone . . .”

Fascal spoke, “You are not being direct, cut to the chase, would you or wouldn’t you?”

Odura let things lapse for a long moment before responding, “Yes . . .”

Fascal leaned back, “What? You are just saying that to rattle my cage. You and I both know that you wouldn’t do that.”

Odura voiced, “I think it is more of a matter that I now know what you would do . . .”

These times were precipitous and the notions behind them were equally as dangerous, off world was a storm of political unrest, things at times seemed to be spiraling towards war within the

League of Worlds. And at other times it seemed to be the only thing keeping things from plummeting into total political chaos. Perhaps it was a time for realistic reflection and for internal qualification, on one planet there seemed to be need for compromise and yet on another, given those same political facts, a very different conclusion could be formed.

Without the League of Worlds, was chaos as alien and distant human colonized planets seem to be ever closer to war within our own galaxy. Long ago, seemingly centuries, when Earth Prime was innocent to the real dangers of space exploration, the real dangers being that there was in fact other civilizations in other star systems. Some of whom had been advanced for a millennium while others had parallel technical evolutions. None of it really mattered until the planets and civilizations on the fringes came in contact with the League of Worlds, an ever expanding Dynasty, ruled by a Parliament of men and women and governing machines. This political infrastructure meant that those who were in the inside were more privileged than those who were on the outside.

This caused serious tension between the haves and the have-nots, and in deed, wasn't that what all the fight was about? Serious negotiations to allow more outskirt worlds to join in the League seem to be pushing to a slow crawl. What was it, the need to control more planets or the nature of mankind to find greed and selfishness in every venture that he endeavored? Perhaps it was foolish for people centuries ago to have decided to make colonization a top priority of the Earth population. Looking back in hindsight, the then growing population was unsustainable. But those who make policy usually make it not with the best interest of the people's hearts, but with the sound and register of money. Special interest groups seemed to be ever influencing all sorts of government ways.

Did the idea of colonizing worlds make sense, yes, it made more sense than fighting wars amongst one self, it seems a miracle that mankind ever got it together enough to solve the serious problems of space transportation. The problems with gravity, or rather the lack of it, while ships with rotating habitation sections seemed the obvious solution, it was with the invention of air-draft technology that allowed crafts to have a simulated gravity environment. The inventive technique was simple when one looked back on it, taking into account the obvious need for air. Air circulated evenly throughout the spacecraft, came from the ceiling at every point, and then being sucked down by intakes in the floor of the craft. This gravity-draft technology was what finally allowed people taking long space flights to be able to walk about their artificial ecosystem, as if they were on Earth. By venting air from on top and the machines sucking the air through and on down, having it cycled over again, the ship's life-support system included artificial gravity. Because in space everything is weightless, the laminar flow of air, with the entry point being from above everything, and the action taken from the floor, with holes in the floor that allowed the air to be evenly vacuumed down with the right amount of force and pressure, equaling the downward pull of Earth's gravity, eliminated slingshot like apparatus and concepts, spacecrafts could be made according to design specifications more natural to the human eco-physiology.

With every feeling of vacuum suction equally, the laminar flow became unnoticeable, and life-support computers monitored and regulated the down laminar flow, keeping the vacuum suction equal throughout the ship. So, gravity laminar vacuum technology solved the age old problem of being weightless, thus solving the problems of bone loss and a whole mirid of other gravity and space related medical problems. This along with the discovery of black gravity and lightning propulsion engines, using artificial lightning, which already travels at the speed of light, to propel spacecraft at the speed of light. And then there were the Mars discoveries, the blueprints for

building a transdoor and a translaser.

Nascotel barked, "You two are suppose to be keeping an eye on Vrevor, we can't catch him doing anything illegal, but we all know that he is dirty."

Odura answered, "I wish it was as simple as that, to just sit and wait for him to be caught doing something illegal, but he's too smart for that."

Fascal countered, "Some times I wish we could just up and kill the son-of-a-bitch! I mean, he's obviously been linked informally to at least twelve ritual killings, that we know of. He's had people killed off world as well, but his organization is so complicated, no one can put a finger on him."

Nascotel nodded, "We have been thinking along those lines, but more aggressive . . ."

Odura cut in, "You finally want us to just up and assassinate the creep?"

Fascal interjected, "If that is what you want us to do, you have to realize that after Vrevor is gone, they will just put someone else in his place. The organization is like an octopus, remove one limb and another one will grow back, and it is as far reaching as the stars."

Nascotel agreed, "Basically, Vrevor is a dictator, ruling his empire by force with an iron hand. He's killed people while broadcasting it on the audiovision, so that everyone in the League can see what type of power he has. The tiny planet that he rules, Isar, is a critical planet, even though it is small. The planet has an abundance of cosmicoim, the fuel that is used to power spaceships and warm houses and aircars, hell, the whole society. While Isar is not the only planet by far to have the natural resource it is convenient for the League, and the tiny planet has so much of it and it is relatively easy to mine."

Odura said, "Okay, tell the High Council all of this and lets just get something done."

Fascal spoke, "You can't kill him."

Odura voiced, "Oh, why the hell not? Nobody really likes the guy, he's a dictator!"

Fascal announced, "He's a dictator, whom up until a few years ago, was the League's little sweetheart. He was invited to all the grand balls, the lecture circuit, guest appearances on news shows, lets face it, we liked the guy some years back."

Odura leaned back in her chair, "So, what happened, what happens to take a guy who was doing all the things that he was doing, is doing right now, and turn him into public enemy number one?"

Nascotel answered, "He stopped talking orders."

Odura questioned, "What?"

Nascotel went on, "We all knew about his killings and his illegal trafficking of illegal items. The truth, if the truth could be told, we might have helped him, for sure we looked the other way . . ."

Odura went, "Why, why did we do those things?"

Fascal fielded that one, "Because it served our purpose to let him do what he was doing, so long as we got the cosmicoim, nothing else mattered in that region. Isar is in a part of space that the League really doesn't care about. Face it, the neighboring planets are equally unappealing, except for the fact that they have varying degrees of cosmicoim."

Odura asked, "So the government let Vrevor murder and oppress, so long as it suited our needs, then something happened?"

Nascotel voiced, "Be began to make trouble with his neighboring planets, Vrevor felt that he could just go over there, and take the planets over, because he wanted to increase his domain,



increase his control of cosmicoim.”

Odura frowned, “Okay, so he figured if he had more of what we wanted, we would offer him more of what he wanted, so what was wrong with that?”

Nascotel answered, “We were secretly negotiating with neighboring planets for cosmicoim. You see, we wanted to have a backup of cosmicoim reserves, that we controlled unilaterally.”

## HERODIAN

In loving memory of Nathaniel Harrison Jr, he was like a big brother to me.

“The Spirit of God rested on us all, the boat which once tossed by the tempest was now calm, and we all gave God the glory” Reverend Joseph Zimzumens

There is a mist that goes out from the sea onto the shore. In and out of the mist we can see structures, they seem ancient but modern at the same time. People are mingled about the area, some look like dignitaries, others look like soldiers, and others like politicians. The whole scene takes place in a future not far from now, only a few moments into an alternate reality. We now see and hear flying machines as they pass overhead, they look like armored personnel carriers. A man walks out from one of them that has landed. He is tall and stately looking. Along side him a tall and beautiful woman, they are talking amongst themselves. Finally they reach a small gathering, a man hails them.

Dirodious said, “Well, well, well! We’d all began to think that you and your lovely wife were not going to make it. But then, with all the strange matters going on in the counsel floor these days, it would have seemed strange if you did, so, how strange is this?”

Dr.Space uttered, “These are troubling times indeed, my friend, look all, see how our friend Dirodious greets us! We have not been allowed to set eyes on any of you in seasons. And as you know the king is very upset with the way things are going with the war.”

Aproica said, “All, farewell, things are indeed looking bleak, for those who hoped that the war would be over in months, behold, it has taken years, and who could have predicted in modern times a hundred-year war? But alas, predictions were made to be predictable and war is never predictable.”

Dirodious spoke, “And there were those who foretold that a century long war was good for the economy. And would bring wealth to the planet, and look, wealth has come, for I do not see a poor soul among any of us. We are indeed the benefactors of the military industry. Some have made their mark in weapons. Others in intelligence. Yet others in software and cyber-industries.”

Aproica said, “It is a cold day when so many can gain from so many a loss. For lives are loss when war erupts, what charge is there for love or freedom, when death comes a knocking at everyone’s door? We give up our young and destroy the future, who can live when our young die? They are the future, and we brainwash them into a service that no one can win.”

Saopazah expounded, “Do we not use machines to fight our wars? Are your young put in any danger anymore, now that we’ve learned to fight our battles remotely? We no longer send our young into harm’s way, we have created machines of destruction to do our bidding. Horrible machines, with faces of men and wings of dragons and claws of steel. So, where is the harm of it all, it is good for business.”

Viconus said, “I have news that might spark the ear.”

Dirodious responded, “Indeed. Please let us hear of the news that you bring, perhaps it might brighten our thoughts or maybe lighten our spirits.”

Viconus uttered, “Would if I could bring such new, Dirodious. However it all concerns the war. That war between planets. Ever since mankind set forth in true earnestness to explore the stars, not the foolishness for the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries, where mankind seemed to be going backwards. Missing were the evolutionary steps of design. Once there were the simple capsules, then came the shuttles, and then came the fall of the programs, all leading back to the capsules, or other simple devices.”

Dr.Space spoke, “Yes, those were the Dark Ages of space exploration, at the time the general public did not know or understand why progress moved so slowly. It was only after the Revelations of Wogrodin that light was shed upon the issue. Then it was discovered that Earth had been the subject of alien influence.

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The Herodians we all learned they were called, a violent and warlike race of beings from the distance star

system called Herodia. “

Aproica said, “Yes, they had made contact with the leaders of Earth at that time, it was a time in Earth’s history when many countries each strived for dominance. Wars and rumors of wars were everywhere. It was a time before Herodian made known their plans for our tiny planet. “

Viconus said, “Ah, and that was when they offered to save us from ourselves by allowing us to join their League of Worlds. In turn, poverty and hunger and sickness and disease would be eradicated. And it was, the Earth entered into a New Age, where science and technology seemed to hold the answers to all of our sins.”

Aproica responded, “But there was a price to pay, a very terrible price to pay. For when we became part of the Herodian Kingdom we also became part of their conflicts. They had many enemies that hated them to death. And they were engaged in a war that had been going on for centuries. Now that war is our war. Now we are part of the blessing and the curse. For what will have we when we have sold our souls for the fleeting moments of physical perfection.”

Dr.Space spoke, “There really is no such thing as physical perfection. There is only the illusion of what is culturally considered beauty and correctness. What one culture on one planet calls perfection is in another’s eyes, abomination! Thus is our meeting put forth and thus is why we speak in secret places for the governing machines that Herodian put over us, to teach us and guide us, we have become slaves, slaves to the horror of the perfection. Yes, we all have delicate lives, while machines do our killing, yet the call for the young to control the machines and offer up abominable transformations into war machines and creatures of war, it takes its toll on us all. For who are we now, are we free men and women? No, I think not, for we have sold our freedom for perfection. Alas, has Eden gone searching for her children, are we not all the children of her womb? And now, look upon us, yes, look you all, for what manner is this that we speak of? What charms?”

We can see a room, it is well groomed and it is obvious wealthy people live in the house. There is a great desk with works in progress along with pictures of family and whatnot. There is a great window just off to one side, out the window it seems to be some type of celebration going on. We can hear faint voices of happy people and occasional fireworks. Dr. Space comes in with a woman who seems to be a foreign dignitary from a planet. She is shown a seat while Dr. Space proceeds to pour them both a drink from his bar off to the side.

Fandanga said, “I am very impressed with your proposal to the council floor asking for advancement of my planet into the League of Worlds. It is quite an honor to even be chosen. It normally takes decades if not longer to even be considered for membership. I was told that your own planet, Earth, it took a century before the offer was made to join the League.”

Dr.Space uttered while he hands her the drink and finds himself a seat behind his desk. “You are well informed, it did take a long time to finally join. But surely this information is listed in the Chronicles of Herodian. When we first met, I sensed that you had something more pressing on your mind . . .”

Fandanga said, “Perhaps, maybe you are right . . .”

Dr.Space spoke, “Is my observation off, perhaps I read something else into your expression, if I did I am sorry.”

Fandanga said, “No! No, you saw what I wanted you to see, it was hard to talk with all of those other dignitaries around us. There seems to be such a grand celebration of the success of the war.”

Dr.Space said, “Yes, it would seem that one of our generals had commanded a major victory. Taking several key positions, planets that were greatly viewed upon by the king.”

Fandanga uttered, “You have a lovely wife.”

Dr. Space went on, “Huh? Oh, yes she is quite beautiful, if I can say so myself. Without seeming proud.”

Fandanga stated, “Nothing wrong with pride, it is the stuff that dreams are made of.”

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Dr.Space said, “Pride goeth before the fall . . .”

Fandanga responded, “I think you already know why I’m really here, don’t you, Dr. Space? I

mean, I've managed to have a little conversation with your lovely and beautiful wife, Aprocia. She didn't tell me very much about the total process, but she did manage to inform me about the ambassador position, it's something that I am interested in."

Dr.Space announced, "If you did speak with my wife then you know that I'm not in a position to pick and choose which person gets which position. And when it comes to something like the ambassador of your planet to the Herodian Kingdom, well, let's just say, I think your own planet's dignitaries might have something to say about that."

Fandanga retorted, "Oh, my dear doctor, you sound like someone who doesn't have any real power around here. And we both know that you've been a politician for decades. You have quite the political will, when you want to use it. I happen to know that you have friends in the right places, positions of influence, all I'm asking is that you put in a good word for me. I'll do the rest."

Dr.Space answered, "I'm already recommending that your planet be fast tracked to the head of the queue, when it comes to being considered for inclusion in the League of Worlds. What more could you possibly think that I can do? I mean, just look at the tremendous amount of effort I had to go through just to get the right people in the right places, to accept the application, out of step. Do you have any idea of the damage that could be done if I went and overextended my hospitality, there could be serious complications."

Fandanga stated, "Oh, doctor, I'm sure that with all of your expertise, something like that would never happen. Besides, like you said, this is way beyond just me, my entire planet is expecting to hear good news when it comes to being accepted into the League of Worlds. What I'm asking for is simply a small formality, a formality that will not go unrewarded."

Dr.Space said as he gets up and goes to the window, stares out the window for a moment. "I'm not that type of person, I'm not that type of politician. While it is true that I have been at this business for a long time, I'm not prone to bribery, I do things because I believe in them, I speak from the heart when I am in council, it is my way. That is why you have come to me, because I have a reputation that is well grounded in the truth."

Fandanga uttered, "Dear Dr. Space, what is the truth?"

Dr.Space uttered, "There is only one truth, and that is that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Fandanga stated, "The Herodians do not believe in your God, Dr. Space, and my planet is concerned that by accepting your help that we might be pushed into announcing that we believe in gods that we do not recognize."

Dr.Space announced, "Hmm, I can see where that might be a problem. It would be a problem if I were pushing my own personal beliefs upon your race of people. But I am not, my God, the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't want people who don't believe in him. In fact, he has stated it more than once that if a person is to be saved, that they must come to him, as if they were a child, believing on him."

Fandanga blurted out, "Oh, my, so what must the Herodians think of you, I mean, you have been around them for so long, and they obviously don't follow your line of thought. Is it possible to deceive the Herodians into thinking that you are with them when in fact you are no? How is it that you manage to keep your faith in this man-God you call Jesus Christ, haven't there been people who have come forth and claimed to be God in your society?"

Dr.Space said, "Yes, there are many documented and undocumented events where someone has made a claim to such a thing, but that was foretold many thousands of years ago, in fact, the Lord Jesus spoke on the subject, saying not to believe them when they come and say that he is here in the secret

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chamber, or come and see, he is in the wilderness. God told us not to believe them."

Fandanga said, "Yet, the king of the Herodians claims to be a god. I have heard that he is one of the direct decedents of the gods themselves. He came to Earth and offered the masses peace when there

was nothing but wars, and there were nations rising up against nations. Sickness and disease was consuming the populations. I have heard that he was able to perform miracles in the sight of the nations, healing them and causing fire to rain down from the sky when they tried to fight back. Finally, the people of Earth gave in and discovered that life was good under the Herodian Kingdom. People live long lives now, where they once lived for less than a century if they were lucky, they now live for centuries, in perfect health, free from sickness.”

Dr.Space spoke, “I once asked the question to a class I was lecturing in my youth, I asked, what if God didn’t exist? It was an argumentative question designed to force the listeners to think and question their own beliefs. God is Almighty, we can’t do anything to hurt him, and God teaches us to think and reason, we are not mindless robots, programmed to do and say and whatnot, we were created to fulfil the tasks that had been abandoned, when one third of Heaven fell in a political attempt to overthrow the existing government. You see, Heaven is a Kingdom, is a place and a form of government, where the Creator of all things, rules and governs. And like, some governments we see on different planets, there were those who were discontent with the way that things were done. So, one of them, their leader, decided that he would try and overthrow everything.”

We can see a long corridor and within it all sorts of abominable creations, these are the devices of the Herodians, they are war machines. Out further from the corridor of horror is a laboratory which is filled with partial experiments. We can see a few people dressed in special clothing, maybe protective, as they enter certain chambers and do experiments. Closer to us is a man and a woman dress in lab coats, they seem to be in charge, Dr. Space walks in and is shown to the people in charge.

Marcus announced, “Well, we finally get to meet you, the ministry told us that you would be making a routine visit to see where all the kingdom’s money is going to. This is my assistant, Professor Caliber, she’s been with me throughout the whole process.”

Caliber answered as she smiles at Space. “I think you’ll find that we have managed to prefect several concepts of the aliens that we are engaged in war with. And also, at your request, we are making great progress in taking the human factor out of the equation and coming up with better and better robot fighting machines, they still need periodic monitoring from specially trained soldiers. But the units that do this are far away from the actual combat.”

Dr.Space said, “I’m very impressed with what I’ve seen, and as you’ve been informed, the Herodians want as many human and allied forces to fight and win the wars, that is why they reach out to alien civilizations, it isn’t because they are so beneficial. No, quite on the contrary, they want to subdue an enemy that they have been fighting since the beginning of time.”

Marcus said, “Yes, that is puzzling. I know that in the military, we are only told what we need to know in order to get the job do, but on an intellectual level, my assistant and I have been pondering the full effect of the projects that we are working on. Just how is it that the Herodians come to us as a race of beings existing before time? Scientifically it makes no sense.”

Caliber expressed, “You see, good doctor, everything in the universe had to be made at the beginning of time, everything that is known to us originated in its most elemental form at the beginning of the process of the creation of the universe. So, where did the Herodians come from, how could they have a society that is so old, and who are they fighting? I mean, we all know the propaganda, but that is just the government, telling us fables, an enemy capable of bring fear into the hearts of the Herodians, must be very terrible.”

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Dr.Space stated, “Let’s just say off the record, that the big question is, what would a race of beings, having been around for so long, have need of more primitive beings, and why share their technology, why be our benefactors in all of this? The question is, who stands to gain?”

General Galong said while entering with others that seem important. “Ah, there you are, Dr.

Space, I was beginning to think that one of our many war machines had gotten hold of you and you were no longer with the living. I see that you have met doctors Caliber and Marcus, they are heading our research on human and nonhuman integration. See here, this is an example of the projects that the Herodians are directing us to focus on. Granted, I'd rather have a totally robotic military, flesh and blood are so easily overcome, but when you have fierce killing machines attacking, well, no nerve gas or biological agents can stop them. And when you couple that with superior fire power, well, you get the picture." The general pushes a few buttons and uncovers abominations of creation.

Dr.Space uttered as he reacts to the abominations. "Good Lord, what in the hell is this!"

Marcus answered, "This is what the Herodians want us to build, it is of the most highest priority. They call them Abomitons. What they are is the most aggressive and ferocious killing creatures ever made. They are a combination of DNA from various sources, not all from the same species or from the same kind, we have taken bits and pieces from every known living thing and using recombinatoric-genetic manipulation, we have created these."

Caliber said, "Of course, these are just the prototypes, they still need more work. However, they can kill quite efficiently."

Dr.Space uttered, "They look like they have human DNA in them, look here, at this one, it has a face of a man, but the claws of a lion and the tail of a scorpion. What in God's Creation is this thing?"

General Galong said, "Progress, son, progress! The military has a near unlimited budget, oh hell, we don't have a budget when it comes to creating the ultimate killing machines. I can tell you, once the enemies of the Herodians get a hold of these little beauties, well, let's just say, all of our jobs are well secured. You know, our society doesn't work as well when we are not at war, but fighting amongst ourselves is crazy, the Herodians showed us that and taught us that killing just like everything else has its place and time."

Dr.Space voiced, "This whole thing is highly immoral!"

Marcus said, "Doctor, I'm sure you of all people can understand our position. Before the Herodians came and made themselves known to the general public, before that, all every country did, was fight amongst themselves. Earth was a disaster, the truth be known, we might have had only a few decades left."

They all leave Dr. Space and appear to be doing other things. Then comes in a tall woman who looks very important but non-imposing.

Amanda spoke, "Doctor, I was hoping to find you here. You seemed to have gotten lost from the other dignitaries who are inspecting the facility. How did you manage to get so far down into this part of the facility? I mean, it's okay that you did, you have security clearance, but this stuff is so boring. There is going to be a party tonight after all of this, are you coming?"

Dr.Space answered, "I'm not sure, there seems to be a lot on the table here, I was thinking about sticking around and inspecting some more of the facility. There have been some unexpected events unfold, things that I hadn't expected to discover."

Amanda said, "Really? Like what?"

Dr.Space referenced, "Well, there is the advanced weapons projects, they are doing things that are, well, un-Godly! I have enough sense to understand that everything here has been sanctioned

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by the Herodians, but what I'm discovering is nothing less than an abomination to the moral senses of any reasonable man or woman."

Amanda said, "Well, you know that we are all at war with the enemies of the Herodians, and

with that comes a great burden on each and every society that is a member of the League of Worlds. I guess, it is the price to pay for allowing them to come to our world and solve our major problems, no matter how big or small, the price we all pay is total loyalty. It has to be unquestionable loyalty to the Herodians. Once upon a time on my planet, we were all dying of sickness and famine, then the Herodians came and offered to cure our diseases and show us how to feed the masses. Do you think that at that time, any of us would have told them no? Of course not, because desperate people will seek out desperate measures in order to be fed and cured, and we did.”

Dr.Space uttered, “It is the same with me and my people on my planet, but the enemy of the Herodians, they might be reasoned with. Anything is better than we all having our unique genetic material exploited like this! I mean, I of all people understand the circumstances of war, but Good Lord, death at what price? Have we all become like our benefactor? Have we gained at the suffering of other beings that we know not? If we are part of a civilized society, shouldn’t what we are becoming and doing, bother us? Or have we sold our souls for the delicacies of wealth and physical perfection, we’ve become machines. Organic nano-machines course through our veins, fixing and reorganizing, making us immortal. But immortality without conscience is death! And perfection without the spirit is darkness. No, I’m convinced that there must be a way to put an end to these wars, there must be peace.”

Then entered Adam and joined them.

Adam spoke, “I’m sure that you both have been having a wonderful time. I know that I have, the food on the second level is simply divine. And did you get a look at the equipment and gadgets on the seventh level? What the wrong people would do to get their hands on those things.”

Dr.Space said while he studies the man for a moment. “And you are?”

Amanda said, “Why, he’s my assistant! We’ve been doing a great deal of work together in recent days. Most of it has to do with getting everything ready for the dignitaries, of course. People like yourself, doctor. Everyone here at the facility wants the outcome to be a great success.”

Adam uttered, “Why, of course, we all want the project to continue and all of this is for the Herodians. I mean, they are the ones who are footing the bill, though if you really think about it, we are the ones, because it is our resources that are being used, all they are doing is calling the shots. Amanda, have you really given any of this any thought?”

Amanda spoke, “Not to worry, I’m sure that our Dr. Space will put in a good word for us all here at the facility. After all, like the saying goes, the enemies of the Herodians are our enemies. And for the good things that they have done for us, joining their cause seems to be a small price to pay. I mean, they really haven’t asked us for anything near what they have done for us, have they?”

Adam said, “I’m of the mind to have to agree, I mean, to think otherwise might be considered an act of treason. And no one wants to go down that road. Why, I heard that the last person to be changed with that, why, the Herodians themselves, took the poor bastard, and put him in some God awful secret DNA-changer and unzipped his DNA, while he was still alive!”

Dr.Space voiced, “Seems quite a price to pay, specially when human beings are so used to thinking for themselves. It seems almost oppressive, I mean, we are all still free, right?”

Amanda expounded, “Oh yes, the Herodians have never said or done anything to enslave any culture or planet, best to my knowledge, they have never asked for anything in return. And the small

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price we pay to be siding with them in times of war, well, isn’t that what treaties are all about? You can’t have progress without leaving behind a few things that are not so important. Besides, I’m sure Dr. Space agrees.”

We see a wonderful place, it is someone's apartment and there are people gathered in it. The atmosphere is jovial, there is obviously a very cool party going on. We can hear music in the background, New Age music or something popular. As we examine the crowd we see that they are a group of young people, college students and young professionals. Occasionally we can see what looks like a few college professors mingling but mostly they stay within their own group. This is not a wild party, this is very pleasant. Our attention is now on a small group sitting on and around the center couch. They are having a good time.

Jerry uttered as he is taking a swig from a bottle of beer. "Like I was saying, this was one critical test, if I had failed it I'd be in big trouble with my financial aid and stuff, hell, I probably wouldn't even be here."

Malinda said, "I thought you came here on a full scholarship?"

Larry uttered, "All the more reason to do well, it's only a free ride so long as your grades stay up."

Susan announced, "I'm glad I don't have to worry about any of that stuff."

Malinda voiced, "Ah, the voice of the upper class, so rich, all they have to do is bribe their daughter's way into what most of us struggle to get into."

Jerry stated, "Oh, come on, Malinda, that wasn't fair. We are all suppose to be friends and we are suppose to have each other's back, not be at each other's backs. Besides, she can't help her situation anymore than any of us can help ours, you are born to the parents you are born to."

Susan said, "Not unless you are adopted, taken out of the poverty that fate birthed you into and suddenly, your eyes are opened and you realize that there is a whole other world out there. When I was young, I used to wonder, how is it that those people could cling to this world so vividly, well only the rich have thanks to this world, because they get to have everything. While others, like me, like I was before I was adopted, while others seem to be given the dirt of the earth."

Jerry carried on, "Wow, looks like someone has had just a little too much to drink." There is a ring at the front door, he gets up and gets it. We can see that it is a special delivery, he takes the package.

As the party goes on and everyone is having a good time, we see that Jerry is curious about the package that he received. He finally decides to open it even though it probably isn't addressed to him. As he opens it, we see a small box that is ornamented with strange mystic symbols. He opens the box after examining it and now we see a strange transformation take place. The party seems to fade away in the background and appearing to him is a tall and beautiful woman. She is nude or scantily clad, she focuses on him.

Herodia uttered, "Who has released me from my thousand years of sleep?"

Jerry was shocked, "Er, what the hell? What's going on here, one second I'm at my party and the next I'm standing here with you, who are you and where the hell am I?"

Herodia went on as she studies the man for a moment and then comes to some realization. "What planet is this?"

Jerry answered, "Planet? Yeah right . . ."

Herodia stated while becoming increasingly annoyed with the man. "My patience for fools is short if not limited. Either tell me what I wish to know or I'll see to it that you never speak again!"

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Jerry said, "Okay, okay! Whatever, you're on the planet Earth."

Herodia voiced, "Earth, yes, yes, now it all makes sense. Yes then, you are the human that freed me so I will grant you one wish, anything that you want."



Jerry spoke, "Wow, someone must have slipped me something in my drink . . ."

Herodia uttered, "Is that what you wish?"

Jerry uttered, "What? Oh hell naw! Whether this is some kind of trip or not, I'm not going down some bad trip by not following the rules of the dream. One wish, huh?"

Herodia stated, "Whatever your heart desires, it can be great wealth or power, most men seek power. Health that will never fail, you can wish to live forever, anything . . ."

Jerry voiced as he seems to think on it for a long moment then . . . "Okay, I want you to marry me and love me forever, I want you to be my wife and to be in love with me forever!"

Herodia voiced as she seriously studies the man. "You can only have one wish."

Jerry said, "I just asked for it. You will marry me and love me forever!"

Herodia expounded, "That is more than one wish."

Jerry said, "Actually, it isn't. My wish might contain multiple inferences, but it is still all part of the same wish. You marrying me and loving me forever is all part of the same wish."

Herodia uttered, "You can't ask for something that involves me."

Jerry said, "Actually I can. You see, I figure that is how you got into the situation you were in just before I opened the box. You are a genie, right?"

Herodia answered as she laughs, making him feel kind of stupid. "I'm no genie, actually I'm a princess, daughter of the king of Herodian."

Jerry uttered, "What's that?"

Herodia explained, "It hasn't happened yet, but my people will one day reveal themselves to your people. They will passively enslave your race, by offering to cure all their ailments, solve their political problems, bring them into the League of Worlds."

Jerry said, "But none of this has happened yet, why?"

Herodia expounded, "Because I've been sent back into the past to groom the right person who will be instrumental in the fall of the human race."

Jerry said, "By deception, my planet will fall because people will believe what?"

Herodia went on, "Your people are looking for a savior. We will become that savior to your people."

Jerry said, "Good Lord! Are you talking about the anti-Christ?"

Herodia voiced, "We have studied your world for countless centuries, since the beginning of human civilization. The Kingdom of Herodian has an enemy, a very powerful enemy. We are at war, we will offer your planet salvation at the cost, that you form a league with us to fight our common enemy. It is a small price to pay for the benefits that we offer you."

Jerry spoke, "So, you are from outer space? Some other planet?"

Herodia uttered, "Yes and no."

Jerry said, "Well, which one is it? Either you are or you are not."

Herodia uttered, "I'm from a place just outside of your realm of existence. Yet I am from another world also."

Jerry put forth, "I've heard about that kind of thing in my physics class, your from a paradoxical-realm. You exist in my world as one form but in another dimension next to mine, in yet another form."

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Herodia said, "Very impressive, the powers were right to send me to you, you might not seem like much, but you catch on quickly. Not many humans would have understood and accepted the truth so readily. You will become the catalyst, which will involve the means to the joining

together of your world and that of the Herodian.”

We see that the party is over, it is the next day. A few of Jerry’s friends have come by to help him clean up. However, for the most part, Jerry is still kind of out of it, laying on the couch in the middle of the room. Herodia comes in carrying some groceries. She seems to make herself at home putting away things, smiling at the others as if she’s known them for years. Finally Susan and Larry come over to Jerry.

Susan spoke, “Okay, we all give up, who is she?”

Jerry was confused, “What, what are you talking about?”

Larry said, “Who is the hot chick putting away all your groceries?”

Jerry uttered as he looks up and sees Herodia. He reacts to his feet. “Good Lord! I thought it was all a dream! A bad trip or something. I thought you guys put something mean in my drink and that I was tripping the whole time.”

Herodia said while smiling and being very nice. “Hey there sleepy head, I was going to wake you this morning but decided to let you sleep it off. So, I went to the store and got some things. Hi, Larry. Hi, Susan.”

Larry questioned, “Hi, you know my name?”

Susan asked, “And you are?”

Herodia responded as she winks at Jerry and smiles back at them. “I’m Herodia, Jerry’s new wife.”

They drag Jerry off to one side, shock and confusion on their faces.

Susan asked, “Do you have something you want to tell us?”

Larry went on, “When did you get married?”

Herodia said while going about her business and duties pleasantly. “We were married last night!”

They all look over at her.

Larry said, “God, she is so hot! You dog! I knew you had it in you, but wow, you scored big time!”

Susan uttered, “I don’t understand, how could you go out and just get married without telling any of your friends? In fact, when did you have the time to do all of this? You were at the party the whole time!”

Herodia answered, “We got married after the party. When everyone went home, well not everyone, I stayed.”

Susan said, “What about Malinda? She’s going to be devastated!”

Jerry voiced, “Malinda, oh wow . . .”

Herodia uttered as she comes to them offering beers. “Who is Malinda, dear? You didn’t tell me about her, was she someone special?”

Jerry was taken aback as he finds the couch again, they all follow. “What the hell have I done?”

Susan uttered, “Look! If this is some kind of mistake, you can have the marriage annulled, there’d be no big deal!”

Herodia said while becoming angry. “Are you saying I’m not good enough for him, are you trying to break us up, because that would be a mistake, you see, I’m married to Jerry and I love him, forever!”

Larry stated, “Okay. That’s nice.” Then motions for Susan to join him over to the side, they

talk in whispers but we can tell that they are both concerned and confused.

Jerry spoke, "I thought you were not real."

Herodia answered, "Jerry, my love, you are the future of a fantastic new world. A world where there will be no sickness or disease, no wars, no famines. Poverty will be wiped off the face of the earth."

Jerry said, "Me, I'm going to be responsible for doing all that? That's insane!"

Herodia voiced, "Look, you could have wished for anything, I told you so, but you wanted me and you wanted me to love you forever. So, you have it, we are married and I can't help but be in love with you! However, your destiny is still the same, my mission was to make contact and groom the man who will be the catalyst for change, paving the way for even greater things to come. You are just one person in many who will play a vital role in the creation of a new society. Just imagine, no more sickness or wars."

Jerry went on, "But the war that the Herodian's are fighting, that is war."

Herodia said, "But that war is against an enemy that you can not imagine. You will, your people will stop fighting amongst themselves and learn to embrace a greater threat to their existence."

Jerry said, "I don't know, maybe they are right, maybe I can get this whole thing annulled."

Herodia told him, "You just don't get it do you?"

Jerry answered, "Get what? That I'm married to my nightmare? Look don't get me wrong, you are probably the most beautiful woman that I've ever seen, hell, even Larry can't get over you. So, that is not it, it's just that you are not real, I mean, Good Lord, you came out of a funny little box. Wait a minute, how in the hell did that special delivery guy deliver to me that package in the first place, if someone else had answered the door . . ."

Herodia voiced, "It had to be you, there was never any doubt, what looks like random events to humans are actually signs of corrections, beings more powerful than yourselves, interfering in human events."

Jerry stated, "I'm going to have this thing annulled . . ."

We see a nice park, plenty of green trees and lovely spaces. People are mulling around and having a good time. A child passes by occasionally, running and playing. On a park bench is Jerry and Herodia, they are talking.

Jerry said, "This whole thing was a mistake."

Herodia announced, "Jerry, when you marry a Herodian, you can never undo it."

Jerry uttered, "Never?"

Herodia stated, "It is impossible, we have a process, a process which insures that the right people marry. Yours and my marriage was planned by the gods."

Jerry spoke, "Literally?"

Herodia said as she smiles and holds him tight. "Yes, silly, I'm here to help you, I'm your companion forever. We were not just married here on Earth, we were also married in my world also. The marriage is binding in more ways than you can imagine. Besides, I'm a princess, you lucky bastard! You could have just ended up marrying a commoner, so, how bad can that be?"

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Herodia voiced, "It's just my friends, how can I tell them . . ."

Herodia answered, "Don't tell them anything that they don't already know, besides, they won't believe you anyway. My identity has been sealed. If I'm investigated, I have a past,

everything.”

Jerry said, “Your people think of everything.”

Herodia answered, “No, not everything. We still have a job to do. Did you ever wonder why your space program seems to have stalled, gone no where, when at first, mankind had such hopes and dreams. Did you ever wonder why there is not a wheel within a wheel out there, in space, a space station of substance?”

Jerry put forth, “Now that you bring it up, it does seem a little retarded, that mankind hasn’t done more as far as space exploration is concerned.”

Herodia went on, “That’s because my people have been in contact with certain heads of state on your planet, you were not ready yet. We have nothing against your warlike nature, in fact, it is just because of your inner fighting that we are attracted to you, but you can’t fight amongst yourselves. You need guidance, a sense of purpose, Herodian can give you that, by uniting you with countless other civilizations, to fight an enemy more fierce than any that you have ever known.”

Jerry spoke, “I see, so we are just slaves to you and your people.”

Herodia announced, “Don’t think of it that way . . .”

Jerry said, “Well, that is what you said when I first met you, that we are slaves, made ready to fight an enemy that we have no bone to pick. All so we can have sickness and disease, poverty and famine eliminated.”

Herodia uttered, “And what price would you pay, what price would your people pay, to have those things and more? Just look around you, imagine a perfect world, with a perfect world government. Imagine being friends and allies with a race of beings who share their technology with you, who know and understand your society and how to get the best things out of it.”

Jerry spoke, “We’d rather be free!”

Herodia said, “Freedom is greatly over rated! Without our help, your planet will be dead in a few decades. Do you want that for your people?”

Jerry answered, “They have a right to decide for themselves.”

Herodia muttered, “Damn you are a stubborn race of beings! I’ll never understand why the Herodian Council decided to allow Earth to become a candidate for the League of Worlds. But what is done is done.”

Jerry voiced, “That’s it, what’s done is done? I don’t think so . . .” Starts to leave, she pulls him back down. “What the hell?”

Herodia voiced, “I might have to love you because that was your wish, and I might have to be married to you forever, because that’s what you wanted. But I don’t have to be nice to your friends, your loved ones, or anybody else that you care about!”

Jerry said, “Here it comes! Is that a threat, because there is something you need to know about us Earth folk, we don’t like to be threatened!”

Herodia spoke, “It was more of a reminder, you need to understand, I’m a higher form of being than you are, I just look like a woman to you because that’s the form I take in this world, but me compared to a typical Earth woman, there isn’t any comparison, the form is where it all stops. You have no idea what type of powers I have do you?”

Jerry uttered, “Powers?”

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Herodia said, “Look, you see that man over there. He’s sick, dying, he has three days left, but he don’t know it.” She waves her hands with mystic gestures. The man stands and then falls over dead. A commotion soon incurs.

Jerry uttered as he's shocked and horrified. "You just killed him! You bitch! You just killed an innocent man!"

Herodia uttered, "To make a point. Don't mess with me! I'm duty bound to love and protect and be your wife forever. But I can hurt and kill and destroy anything and everything else here on Earth! But if you do what I tell you to do, we can have fun changing the world." She smiles and kisses him passionately. "Now lets go home and make love."

Jerry said, "My God! You are a demon!"

Herodia uttered, "Well, yeah! What did you think we were? Imaginary beings that were made up by silly old people long ago. No, wait, they were silly old people. Nowadays, we are called aliens from another planet!"

We see a very nice home and there is lots of friends and guest, it is Jerry's parent's home and we can see family members roaming about talking to one another. It is around Christmas time and we can see a well-decorated tree in the background. Some of the younger children are busy messing around with the presents under the tree, but no one is opening anything, it's not time. Jerry and Herodia come in from another part of the house. They roam a bit and are captured by Jerry's sister and his mother.

Sandra said while she's all happy. "I must say it was quite a shock to find out that my little brother had gone off and gotten married while still in college. It's so not like you."

Mrs.Crowder uttered while visibly moved or upset. "You know that your father and I wanted you to wait until you finished college before even considering marriage. I mean, you have your career and all that to establish first. Where did you say the two of you met?"

Jerry spoke, "Er, we met . . ."

Herodia answered, "We met at a party. When I first laid eyes on your son I knew that he was special."

Sandra stated, "Special in the head!"

Mrs.Crowder said, "Sandy! That's not very nice, he is after all family. Besides, when is it that you will settle down and get married?"

Sandra spoke, "Look I did the opposite of you, I finished college and got a good job and then decided that I didn't want to get married. Now, all mom and dad do is rag on me about how I'm throwing the best years of my life away. But I don't see it that way."

Mrs.Crowder uttered, "That's because you are selfish and spoiled!"

Sandra voiced, "Oh wow, coming from the woman who spoiled me. You two want a drink?" She motions to the help who promptly bring over drinks. "Can't have a party if everyone is sober."

Herodia said, "Ah, a party girl after my own heart."

Mrs.Crowder voiced, "Yes, about that, how well did the two of you know each other before you hooked up. What does your family do?"

Herodia answered, "My family?"

Jerry stepped in while panicking. "Er, mom, maybe Herodia doesn't want to expose herself to all of this, after all, this is suppose to be a party."

Herodia went on and kisses Jerry a soft and gentle way. "Oh, honey, that's okay, it's only natural that your mother would have questions. My family is in politics, and diamonds."

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Sandra and Mrs. Crowder are speechless for a moment, then they snap out of it.

Mrs.Crowder asked, "Really? My, that is quite a potent combination. Of course your family isn't involved in those nasty blood diamonds?"

Herodia answered, "I assure you that my family can't stand the horrors of such a thing. No, our employees, right down to the last person, is treated with the utmost of respect and consideration."

Sandra said, "That'll be a first."

Mrs. Crowder uttered, "Sandra Ellen Crowder, behave yourself."

Sandra said, "Oh great, here goes the whole name thing. You know I've done something ill-colored when mom uses my full name."

Herodia uttered, "Mine does the same, so don't sweat it. Hey, you know, I haven't had anything to eat all day, do you think your kitchen help might be able to whip up something for me?"

The two women go off into another part of the house, just talking and giggling, Herodia has handled herself well.

Mrs. Crowder voiced while turning to her son with concern on her face. "She seems like a very nice lady, I think your dad will take a liking to her. He likes the smooth and sophisticated type, specially if they come from old money. So, what's wrong with her?"

Jerry asked, "Mom?"

Mrs. Crowder said, "Son, you didn't even so much as mention her all the time you've been in college. Now, all of a sudden, you show up at the annual family Christmas gathering, with her on your arm and married to boot. You knew that we all wanted you to have a grand wedding, even if you are the boy and her parents are suppose to have the wedding, it was something that we all planned for both you and your sister. Now your sister, God only knows when she will finally settle down."

Jerry said, "There's nothing wrong with Herodia."

Mrs. Crowder spoke, "She's rich, have you met her parents or is she doing to them what you have done to us?"

Jerry answered, "Mom, I'm sorry, I'm sure you and dad would have loved to have been there for the wedding, the marriage, you know what I mean. But the fact of the matter, is that we got caught up in the experience, and the next thing we knew, we were husband and wife, forever . . ."

Mrs. Crowder said, "Forever? Hmm. That sounded strange coming from your mouth."

Jerry answered, "You know what I mean, mom."

Mrs. Crowder went on, "I know that your dad is going to react to her differently than the way that I have, if the girl's got money, that's all your father cares about. Good up bringing and wealth, the right clubs and golf courses. Membership in all the right leagues and private consortiums."

Jerry said while sounding very resigned. "She very powerful . . ."

Mrs. Crowder questioned, "What?"

Jerry stated, "I mean, her family has political pull in the right places. I guess that's a good thing."

Mrs. Crowder said, "Coming from a hippie art major, you are sure trying to convince yourself that she's the right one. How did you get into this mess, Jerry? Is she pregnant or something? Because you know, those kind of things can be fixed."

Jerry resigned, "No! No, she's not that, and it all depends on your moral compass as to whether or not those kind of things can be fixed. It's not that at all, we just met and fell in love, 111

because she really loves me, forever . . ."

Mrs. Crowder said, "There you go again with that forever thing. Now, I'll be the first to admit that the Good Lord Jesus Christ wants us to be sound in our marriages, and God knows that

nowadays, more marriages fail than succeed. But forever is a long time . . .”

Jerry said, “Forever is never, because time has nothing to do with it. Forever means that even after all time has come to an end, and it will one day, Herodia and I will still be married and she’ll still be in love with me. God, what have I done . . .”

Just then Herodia comes back out, Mrs. Crowder reacts.

Herodia says while holding a full plate of fine food, giving some to her husband. “You have to eat too, we both have been so busy that we forgot to eat anything. Mrs. Crowder, you have a lovely kitchen, I think when Jerry and I finally settle down, I’m going to model some of my ideas off of yours.”

Mrs.Crowder smiled, “You seem like a lovely young woman, Herodia, and you always seem to have just the right words to say.” Mrs.Crowder kisses Herodia on the cheek, then goes off. “Now, where is that father of yours?”

Jerry uttered, “They like you.”

Herodia said while she kisses him. “Of course they like me, what’s not to like. I know everything about them.”

We are outside on the driveway. We see Mrs.Crowder as she discovers her husband laying on the ground, he’s had a heart attack. She screams for help and others come out of the house and discover the situation. Someone who knows something about medicine starts administering first-aid, while barking out orders to others standing by. Jerry and Herodia come out of the house along with Sandra. They join Mrs. Crowder who is visibly distraught.

Jerry says while comforting his mother, “Mom, don’t worry, help is on the way, dad’s going to be okay.”

Herodia uttered and pulls him off to the side. “Your father is dying, he won’t make the night.”

Jerry expounds while all torn apart. “Oh my God, we all knew that dad had a bad heart but, but . . .”

Herodia said, “But you all thought that he had more time.”

Jerry said, “Yeah, more time, if only he did . . .”

Herodia told him while taking her husband into her arms. “Darling, do you want me to save him?”

Jerry was shocked and pulls away, he’s both shocked and confused. “You didn’t have anything to do with this did you?”

Herodia shakes her head, “What? No! Why would I do something like this, what would it gain me? No, it’s just his time. But I can save him, if you want me to.”

Jerry uttered and looks at the situation, his mother broken in tears, his sister trying to console their mother. The crowd, the guest, talking and murmuring. We can see a reaction in Jerry’s face. “Okay, can you really do something, I mean, I know that you can kill. Can you heal too?”

Herodia told him as smiles and kisses Jerry passionately. “I’d do anything for you, Jerry, I love you.” She then turns to the fallen father, she goes to him and moves the others out of the way. Then she whispers something that we can’t quite make out. Then she takes hold of the fallen man’s hands. “Mr. Crowder, Mr. Crowder, Mr. Crowder, you’re okay now, get up.” And instantly, he is  
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healed.

Mr. Crowder stands, his wife and daughter run to him, supporting him, but he is standing strongly. The guest are amazed, maybe in shock, some of them, they murmur even more. What is

this? How did that woman do that? Did you see how she just touched him and he's gotten better?

Sandra said as she comes to them off to the side. "I don't know how you did that, Herodia, but thank you, thank you for saving our father's life."

Herodia answered as she Smiles. "He's my father-in-law, he's my father too . . ."

Mrs.Crowder spoke as she's helping him to pass into the house, though we can clearly hear the ambulance coming in the distance. "I don't know how you did this, dear girl, but you are one of us now, there will be no more questions, thank you."

Everyone is going back in now and the emergency team has arrived. They are bringing their gear inside. Lights from the emergency vehicles are flashing and there is all sorts of commotion going on. But Jerry and Herodia are standing off to the side, holding one another close and lovingly, has he finally accepted her?

Jerry uttered, "Thanks for saving my dad."

Herodia said while seeming just a little put off. "No problem, so long as you are happy. I was glad to do it."

Jerry questions, "So, you're not so evil after all?" He kisses her passionately.

Herodia answered, "I never said I was evil, you made a bunch of assumptions, based on ancient folk tales. I told you the truth, I'm from another world, another planet if you will. To me, good and evil don't have any real meaning, like they do to you, or they mean something else, very different to my people than it does to yours, here on Earth."

Someone comes out and calls for the two of them. Apparently Jerry's father is asking for them. The mood has now shifted to that of rejoicing, fitting for Christmas. Jerry and Herodia start in at the other's beaconing.

Jerry uttered, "Don't tell my dad how you did it, it would just freak him out, everybody really."

We are in the bedroom where we see Jerry's father lying in bed all covered and well-taken care of. A doctor is examining him, it seems to be the family doctor. A few close friends are in the room but for the most part, others have been asked to stay out. Jerry and Herodia walk in. Mrs. Crowder lights up when she sees them and so does Sandra, we can tell that the gratitude runs deep. Mr. Crowder motions for them to come over to the bed.

Family Doctor expounds while passing. "I don't know what you did, young lady, but his heart is beating like a twenty-year old's, we are going to have to talk."

Jerry said, "Dad, I'd like you to meet my wife, Herodia, Herodia, my dad."

Mr.Crowder smiles, "I hear this was quite the thing you did for me out there. I didn't know my son had married a doctor?"

Herodia answered, "My mother is a physician, my father is a politician. So I guess that puts me right in the middle, a little bit of good and a little bit of evil."

Mr.Crowder said and laughs at the irony. "Well, we'll have to thank your mother personally for teaching you her medical skills. And I want to welcome you personally into the family. My wife has nothing but praises for you. Even Sandra has nice words to say about you, and that is an accomplishment, believe you me."

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Sandra voiced, "It's going to be good to have a sister I can talk with and stuff, thank you, Herodia."

Herodia uttered, "I'm just glad that Jerry had the good sense to make an honest woman out of



me.” They all laugh.

Jerry finally said, “Dad, are you really alright?”

Mr.Crowder answered, “I really am, the doctor wants me to be checked into the hospital for some test. But I can tell you right now, I feel great. Haven’t felt this well in decades, I feel like a young man again, you’ve got the magic touch, Herodia.”

Herodia smiled, “Oh, I think that love has a lot to do with it, it would have broken Jerry’s heart.”

Sandra said, “I think I can speak for all of us, it would have broken all of our hearts if dad hadn’t made it. It would have been a bitter Christmas. But thank the Good Lord Jesus Christ for sending us you.”

Jerry uttered as he reacts. “Yes, well, maybe we should all let dad get some rest. They’ll be taking him to the hospital in a few moments.”

They all agree and start to filter out after giving Mr. Crowder good wishes, but he gestures for Jerry and Herodia to stay for a moment. Mrs. Crowder sees that and after blowing him a kiss exits too.

Mr. Crowder talks to them, “My wife was worried that I might not like you, Herodia.”

Herodia answered while she has a big warm smile on her face. “Oh I kind of grow on you after awhile. It’s like I just came out of a brand-new box . . .”

Jerry spoke and reacts. “Er, yeah, dad, she is quite the good cook too, you should taste some of her cooking, she could be a professional chef.”

Mr.Crowder said, “I’ll admit, I was worried about you, Jerry. Sending you off to that ivy league school, when you had protested before. Compromising your major, you wanted to be an art major I wanted you to go into the sciences, making you take both. But you’ve done well for yourself, I hear that all your professors think you have real talent when it comes to art. And your science teachers are impressed too. But I think your crowning achievement was getting this pretty young thing to fall in love with you, Herodia, the family is glad to have you.”

Herodia smiled, “You don’t know how much that means to me, Mr. Crowder . . .”

Mr.Crowder said, “Please, call me dad and my wife mom, we’re all family.”

Jerry voiced, “Speaking of family, Herodia has invited me to be with her family on New Years, I know that we usually all celebrate the New Year together, but . . .”

Mr.Crowder told him, “Nonsense! Your mother and I will understand, after all, you have to meet your new side of the family.”

Herodia said, “Would you excuse me for a moment, I have to get some water.” She leaves with grace while Mrs.Crowder walks in.

Mrs.Crowder asked, “What did you boys do? She’s running off?”

Jerry answered, “Everything is okay, mom. Herodia just needed some water.”

Mrs.Crowder said, “Oh, the poor thing, she must be exhausted from all the commotion. Here, dear, the doctor told me to give you these, they are ready to take you to the hospital now.”

A medical emergency team comes in and they take Mr.Crowder away. Mrs.Crowder studies her son for a long moment.

Mrs.Crowder finally says, “Who is she, Jerry? I know you know her better than you are

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putting on, she just touched your father and he recovered, like a miracle.”

Jerry tries to explain while finding a seat on the bed. “More like magic . . .”

Mrs.Crowder uttered while reacting. “I don’t get you . . .”

Jerry answered, "Nothing, mom. It's just good to see you and dad and my sister, even though Sandra can be a pain in the butt."

Mrs.Crowder said, "Darling, the whole family is a big pain in the rear-end, that is what family is all about. But there is something about your new wife that I can't place my finger on. I'm not sure what it is, she's so sweet, maybe too sweet, does she treat you well, does she really and truly love you?"

Jerry answered, "Oh yeah, of that I can honestly tell you, Herodia will love me forever, no matter what."

Mrs.Crowder spoke, "You keep saying funny little things like that, what do you mean by that?"

Jerry said, "Mom, if I told you, you wouldn't believe me."

Mrs.Crowder answered, "Try me . . ."

Jerry voiced and signs. "She came out of a box, mom, mom, she came out of a box."

Mrs.Crowder uttered as she studies her son for a long moment. "I'm not sure what that type of college slang means, dear, but she does seem brand new, if that is what you mean. She's fresh and so full of life. And Good Lord, you couldn't have found a more beautiful woman to have as your wife. Truth be told, us regular woman are feeling just a little bit jealous, we can't find one thing wrong with her, perfect skin, perfect figure, perfect manners, down home and friendly. Usually little debutantes like her have real personality issues but she seems so well adjusted."

Jerry said, "That's because she can read your mind, she's shaping her image to suit your own personal idea of a perfect daughter-in-law."

Mrs.Crowder answered, "Jerry, haven't I told you about reading all that science fiction, how it'll warp your mind. You seem so unhappy to have such a warm and loving woman married to you?"

Jerry spoke, "I'm not unhappy, mom, just all the other stuff, you know, dad and all, I'm worried."

Mrs.Crowder answered while leaving the room. "Now that is the first thing you've said all night that makes any sense. Your sister and I are going to go to the hospital to be with your dad, join us?"

Herodia said as she walks by, passing. "We'll be there, mom." Mrs.Crowder seems surprised at Herodia's last remark as she leaves. Herodia joins Jerry and lavishes him with a warm kiss. "Your family is really quite nice."

Jerry uttered, "Yeah, they are great. Not the kind of people you'd want to hurt or kill."

Herodia answered, "Jerry, listen to me, I'm never going to hurt anyone that you love. I was just saying that, when I did, it was wrong and insensitive, I'm sorry. I love you."

We see a rather large yacht, the interior of it, it is well decorated. There are guest roaming about in the main area. We can see that the people on board look like well to do people, some dignitaries and others lawyers and doctors, academic scholars, politicians, etc. Jerry and Herodia come in, they mingle with the others and finally make their way to a man and a woman who seem to be hosting the event. This is Herodia's parents, or so it would seem.

Mr.Langston uttered, "Well, it is finally good to meet you, Jerry. I've heard nothing but

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praise, and this is my wife. Our little girl here tells me that you are an artist."

Mrs.Langston said, "I hope you are not a starving artist."

Jerry answered while feeling a little out of place but he tries to hide it. "Actually I'm still in

college, this is my last year.”

Herodia cuts in while holding onto her husband. “He is really quite good, dad and mom. You should see some of his work, I find it quite profound.”

Mrs.Langston said, “Profound you say, hmm, I think one of our guest is in the art business. They own several galleries, you know, they might be able to help you. I mean, you just getting ready to graduate and all, stay right here, I’m going to go find them.” She hurries on off.

Jerry spoke as he tries to stop her but she is gone. “No, you don’t have to do that, Mrs. Langston, I’m okay with the way things are.”

Mr.Langston growled, “Hmm, okay with the way things are? Now that is an interesting saying. A man that either lacks ambition or has found his inner peace, which is it, Jerry?”

Herodia barked, “Father! You promised to be nice . . .”

Jerry answered, “That’s okay, Herodia, I’m a man who has found his own inner peace. Life is too short for the games that most people play. I’m not a fool, I know that everyone has to earn a living, well, some of us do.”

Mr.Langston stated ans motions for a few friends to join them. “This is my new son-in-law.” The others greet Jerry warmly. “We were just talking about the importance of earning a buck, but Jerry seems to think that there is more to life than the pursuit of wealth.”

The others make various comments: Life is about having good health. Happiness is the most important. Charity work is most rewarding, etc.

Jerry finally puts forth, “I’m not saying that there isn’t a time and place for everything, because there is. It’s just that in my case, I wasn’t born with a silver spoon, my parents worked hard to put me in the right college. And though my dad wanted me to study the sciences, my heart was in the arts, so I ended up having to compromise.”

Herodia added, “If it wasn’t for that compromise, I might not have ever met Jerry.”

Mr.Langston stated, “Don’t get me wrong, son, you don’t mine if I call you son, after all, you are now part of the family.”

Jerry nodded while feeling a bit better now. “No, no by all means, if I may call you dad and your lovely wife mom?”

Mr.Langston went on, “Family it is!” They all get a good chuckle out of it. “Like I was saying, one has to understand the need for balance. You see, what you do is important, if all there were in the world was business and science, the world would soon dry up. While those disciplines have their place and play a major role in the development of our society, it is the artist and the philosopher that add the spice that make the bland existence, worth living, don’t you think?”

Jerry answered, “That and religion.”

The others seem to react some what strangely at his last words, but they are not rude, in fact, a few more guest have now joined in.

Mr.Langston finally answered, “What do you mean by religion, because there are so many?”

Herodia senses trouble, “Dad, don’t you think you are putting Jerry on the spot?”

Mr.Langston shrugs, “No, not at all, are you put on the spot, Jerry?”

Jerry tried to answer while trying to figure out what is going on. “No, not at all. What I meant was that it takes all sorts of disciplines to create a well-rounded society, and that faith is part of the human psyche.”

Mr.Langston smiles, “He’s right.” Looks at the others and they all seem to agree. “But you, you are someone special, you have a purpose in life, a role to play.”

Jerry confused and feeling kind of spooked. "I'm sorry, I don't understand what you mean. I'm just a regular guy, trying to do the best that I can."

Mr.Langston expounded, "Well, of course you are. But you do have to admit that each and every one of us here, play are major role in the impacting of events, on a small scale of course."

Jerry nodded, "I suppose that we all do, good grief, even the homeless and outcast play a role. I often wish that they didn't have to play those roles, and then there are the starving people in other countries. My heart goes out to them."

Mr.Langston told him while lighting up a cigar, a few others do the same. "Ah, and in that, there rest the real question, are we all doing anything about any of it. You see, I agree, there is too much poverty, wars, unrest. None of it is good for business, you see, the political arena is where I fight my battles, son. It's not enough to just feel bad about a situation, specially the ones that we are talking about. People are dying even as we speak, what do we do about it?"

Herodia tried to cool things down, "We all do what we can."

Jerry said while grateful that Herodia interjected. "Yes, I think that is it. Some of us aren't in the position to affect change like most of you seem to be in, but even having a conscience that cries out for change and justice, that's a start."

Mr.Langston gestured to him, "Yes, yes, starting is a good place to be, so long as one moves beyond that point to doing something about it. Most of the trouble in the world is caused by the wealthy oppressing the poor."

Jerry voiced while shocked to hear that coming from someone who is so obviously wealthy. "You have so much, I'm a little shocked to hear you saying that. It's not for my benefit is it?"

Herodia interjected while getting her and Jerry drinks. "What dad means, Jerry, is that we are all called to play our role, and sometimes, the role is not clearly defined. In fact, sometimes we don't know what that role is, we don't realize it, but everyone plays a role."

Mr.Langston agreed, "We are like characters in a book. Each one has a role and that role is designed to further the course of the book. Life is like a book, Jerry."

Jerry nodded, "With God Jesus Christ being the author!" There is notable silence at his last, but he tries to recover. "What I mean is that God created everything and it all works into a main plot that is centered around the Lord Jesus Christ."

Mr.Langston clears his throat, "Why do you think that is?"

Jerry felt uneasy, "Well, if you continue with the analogy, there has to be a center character. And there has to be a central plot. Life is like a book, if you flip through the pages you can go to the end and return to the beginning. But the ending has already been written."

Mr.Langston blows a few smoke rings while lightening up the mood. "Jerry has hit on the very point! The ending has already been written. So then, what is the point in doing anything at all, if everything has been done?"

Jerry is like a fish out of water, "Wow, I suppose because we still have to be read, the book was made to be read, we still have to act out our parts in order for the book to be finished."

Herodia helped him, "Thus is life so complicated as to unfold even beyond the stars."

Jerry smiled at his wife, "In a book, even a seemingly insignificant character can play a pivotal role in the plot."

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Mr.Langston nodded, "There you go! So there are no insignificant parts, no role that is unimportant."

We are now at the table were everyone is seated. There are a few nice words spoken and then

the meal begins. Jerry and Herodia are seated in a place where they can see Mr. and Mrs. Langston. The conversation now hovers around less generalized things.

Mrs.Langston expressed, "Jerry, I spoke to my friend and they are very interested in viewing some of your artwork."

Jerry answered, "Thank you, I don't quite really know what to say."

Herodia spoke, "In the world where Jerry comes from, chances like this one are rare."

Jerry said to his wife, whispers. "What do you mean by that? You've met my parents, I come from a comfortable family."

Mrs.langston went on, "Oh, Jerry, don't take it so personal, what my daughter means is that, you are being handed an opportunity that most people have to fight and do all sorts of unpleasant things to get it. And it is being handed to you . . ."

Jerry was not sure what to make of that, "Don't get me wrong, because you all seem like very nice people, least the one's I've been able to met and speak with. But why would you want to do something like that for me?"

Some of them laugh politely.

Mrs.Langston is one of them, "Oh, Jerry, isn't it obvious, you are now family. All we had was our little girl, we so much wanted a son, but not all things are meant to be. Now we have a son, in you. We just want you to start getting used to our way of life. You are not on your own anymore, there are others that will be looking out for you, making sure that things go well for you."

Jerry swallowed, "Looking out for me? I'm not sure I understand what you mean?"

Mrs.Langston explained, "Our daughter has impeccable taste, for her to have married you, means that she has seen something in you that is a product of what we have raised her to be. You are more than who you think you are, Jerry. And now, you will quickly begin to realize that."

Herodia stated, "Honey, what my mom and dad have been trying to do, and in the most delicate of way, is tell you that your life changed the moment the two of us were married. You no longer have to worry about the mundane things in life, there are people who will gladly help you along the way."

Jerry still didn't know just how to react, "And what if I stumble and fall, because everyone falls?"

Herodia said plainly, "I'll always be there for you . . ."

Mrs.Langston echoed, "We will all, always be there for you, son, we are family, forever . . ."

Jerry felt a chill overcome him and he's shocked, not at the generosity of Herodia's family, but the phrase that was just put forth. "Forever, that's a long time."

Mrs.Langston smiled, "I think that once you come to know us, and you will, you'll find that we don't count the seconds of the day. Some things are far too important, there are battles that must be fought. Times are changing for this tiny little world that we reside on. The human race has to grow up and face the greater truths out there in the universe."

Jerry expounded, "The universe?"

Herodia tried to bring perspective while she kisses him gently. "This is my family, Jerry, you already know who I am."

Jerry was freaked but holding it together as he reacts, suddenly realizing the possibility. "Are  
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all of you the same?"

Mrs.Langston grinned a wealthy grin, "We are not from here, if that is what you mean."

Jerry was subconsciously frightened, "No, I guess not, with this yacht, you can travel

anywhere in the world.”

Herodia exacted, “It goes much further than that.”

Jerry said while taking a gulp of his drink, studies the faces of the people around the table. “You all knew I was coming, didn’t you?”

They react in a positive way, smiles and nods.

Mrs.Langston showed compassion, “You are special, Jerry, you are a catalyst, and the role that you must play is pivotal in the furthering of the human race. Like you’ve been saying all along, there is poverty, wars, famine, all of these things have to come to an end. For as long a mankind has been able to think, some of them, scientist have wondered if humankind was alone, are there others out there, is it possible that there might be civilizations amongst the stars.”

Herodia added, “The answer is, yes. We are here, among you, we always have been, waiting and planning for the day when your race, the human race would be ready to take that next step. And the time is upon you.”

Jerry announced, “So, all this talk about angels and what not, it is true, but only, you are aliens from another planet, and you happen to look like humans.”

Mrs.Langston corrected him, “I assure you, I only appear to look human, we can disguise ourselves. We have my forms, depending on where in the universe and time and space we are, we are trans-dimensional beings, meaning . . .”

Jerry interjected, “I’ve studied it in physics, you can travel from one dimension to another, much like I can walk from one point in time and space to another. So, time and space don’t pose a problem for you, it makes sense, you wouldn’t be able to travel the vast distances in the universe, if corporal forms were the only way to exist. You are what my people have called for ages, spirits.”

Herodia expounded, “In physical form.”

Jerry said, “That is a contradiction.”

Herodia explained, “You are thinking like a human, think like a spirit. The physical laws of this world don’t always apply to us, we can bend them, manipulate them to suit our needs, evolve through the strings of existence.”

We are now in a much smaller room, we see a few people sitting around, Mr. Langston is at his desk and it is after the meal. A time for fine cigars and brandy. Jerry is seated with his wife.

Mr.Langston ushers in, “I like you, Jerry, you catch on fast and even with what must be a mind-blowing revelation, you are not spooked. I haven’t once sensed fear or rejection in you, you are indeed as my daughter described you to me, special.”

Jerry being humble, “Well, we all have to be something.”

Mrs.Langston said, “We have a lot to teach you, it will change you, things about yourself, you will find have to be re-evaluated.”

Jerry said, “Well, I still have my friends to help keep me grounded.”

Mr.Langston looked off, “Yes, about your friends, how do you see them fitting in with your new found family, how do they fit in with who you must become?”

Jerry was a bit incensed, “I’m never giving up my friends, someone I once knew, got married, tried to save the girl, she kept threatening to commit suicide if he didn’t marry her. So he did, their marriage was rocky, she finally left him after seventeen years, it was devastating, she went

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out and committed adultery for years, while he remained the stable parent and raised three great kids. But her real evil was that she managed to isolate him from his family and friends. So, in the end, when he died, he died alone.”

Herodia was shocked, "Oh, that is so sad. You'll never have to worry about something like that, darling, we are married forever. I told you that, a Herodian marriage is forever."

Jerry was put aside, "Yeah, but I don't live forever."

There is silence in the room at his last words.

Herodia spoke, "We are one spirit, darling. A Herodian marriage is not just about words, it is a blending of spirit and essence. You are going to be going through changes, you are not just human anymore."

Jerry uttered, "What in the hell are you people talking about? I'm human, I know who my parents are, you've met them, Herodia, they are nice people."

Mrs.Langston spoke softly, "I'm sure that are, we can tell by the way that they have raised you. But you are going through a change, oh, it won't be noticeable at first, but a change none the less."

Jerry stated, "How, how did I embark on this transformation?"

Herodia told him as she reaches over and passionately kisses him. "When we first made love, darling, it started then."

Jerry finally uttered, "Sex, you have to be kidding me!"

Herodia was stoic, "You are aware that some diseases can be transmitted during sex."

Jerry cautiously answered, "Yes . . ."

Herodia went on, "Well, some cures can be transmitted also in that same way, cures that are going to change your body and soul. When we made love for that first time, we literally started to become one being, a blending of our essences began, but because I'm from a superior race, my essence dominates your body now. Over time, you will become Herodian. That is why Herodians don't interbreed with other races."

Jerry was beyond shocked, "What are you talking about, look what just happened to me?"

Herodia uttered, "But you are special, you are a catalyst."

Jerry said and quickly studies the others for a moment, then he starts to laugh. "Oh, you guys are good! You are really good, what is this, super rich peoples humor? Man, you people can really tell a tale."

Mrs.Langston still stoic, "Perhaps we have overestimated this one, he seems to be rejecting everything we are trying to tell him. Could it be that our daughter has made a mistake, maybe he is not the catalyst?"

The others also question and murmur but Mr. Langston motions them to silence.

Mr.Langston stated, "No, it's you who are good! You are trying to pretend like you don't believe us, but you are married to my daughter, she can sense things, read minds, as can we all. She knows who you are, Jerry, your destiny awaits. You are not the only one on this planet that has been approached. Others, like you, special humans have been approached, all of you will have a role to play in the coming of Herodian, the great revelation for your planet's history."

Jerry leans back in his chair while sighing. "One would think that this nightmare would soon come to an end, but it won't!"

Mrs.Langston smiles, "That's because you are looking at this whole thing in the wrong way, don't think of this as a nightmare, think of this as a wonderful dream in which all your core needs

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and desires will come true. Oh, not the superficial desires that plague mankind, lust and pleasure, but the life changing events that well define a people and a race of beings. Rejoice, your people are not alone."

Jerry said, "I reserve that rejoicing for my God and Savior the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Mr.Langston admonished, "That is your prerogative. No one here wants to change your core values, you are fine just the way you are, but there is much that you must learn. You have to become the success that the friend you described, could not become. That poor man who tried to help someone, only to find that he was deceived and manipulated, left alone to die. These are the things that we are set to change."

Jerry uttered, "I think I'll have that cigar now. Even if I'm in a coma and all of this is just part of my twisted imagination, in order to compensate for the lack of stimulation, because I'm in a coma, I'll follow the logic of the dream."

Herodia laughed politely then gives him a warm hug. "The true dream is yet to come. We get to spend eternity together, no matter what, neither of us will be alone in that torment."

Jerry questioned, "What torment?"

Mrs.Langston stepped in, "It's an expression, nothing more, Jerry." She gets up and starts out. "Now, who'd like some pie?"

We see a very fancy art gallery. On the walls are some very interesting paintings and on the floor are some very interesting sculptures. A few people are mingling about the gallery, we see that some are interested in buying paintings on the wall. Jerry walks in, he is with his old friends, Malinda, Larry, and Susan. We also see a tall man, we've seen him before, it's Dr. Space. But isn't he from the future?

Larry said, "Dude, you have gone a long way from just wanting to be successful in your career. This is a first class gallery, just look at these works. Man, you are selling your work with the best of them."

Susan added, "Larry, is right, we are all very proud of you, Jerry."

The others wander on off to view the artwork, but Malinda clings to Jerry.

Malinda questioned, "They are right, Jerry, you seem to have done so well. I can't help but think that had we finally gotten together, would you have been this successful?"

Jerry quickly sighs. "Fame and wealth are not everything, Malinda."

Malinda looked at him and reacts. "I don't get it, you have everything, I mean, look at the rest of us, we graduated out of college just like you, but you went on the fast track to all of your dreams, aren't you happy?"

Jerry shakes his head, "The truth?"

Malinda said, "Well, yes, this is me, Malinda, you are talking to, you can tell me anything, you know that."

Jerry spoke, "Some times, I just wish for the old days, before all this started to happen. When things were simple and our dreams seemed pure, we were just people, working hard to learn a skill that would take us somewhere, some place beyond tomorrow."

Malinda answered, "You are the only one among us that has actually managed to do that."

Jerry said, "I guess that is the question, isn't it?"

Malinda frowned, "What do you mean?"

Jerry went on, "Am I making it?"

Malinda was confused, "Why yes, you have wealth and fame, people across the world know

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and seek out your art, I mean, Good Lord, I wish that I was as lucky as you are, hell, I'd take even half of your good fortune."

Jerry suddenly snaps. "Don't say that!"



Malinda doesn't know how to react, "Say what, I was just being honest, let's not pretend that the starving artist thing is any fun, because it isn't and after time, if you get enough rejections, you just end up old and lonely and forgotten. All your precious artwork, folded up in paper bags by your bedside. What type of life is that?"

Jerry answered, "It's what happens to real people. Only ten percent of the people who seek out a career in the arts will succeed. And of that, only one percent will find any real success, on a major scale. For the rest of them, it is just an exercise in self indulgence."

Malinda said, "Damn! Since when did you become so cynical?"

Jerry answered, "Are you happy, Malinda?"

Malinda said, "I suppose so."

Jerry voiced, "Ever wonder what life would be like if things were different, let's not pretend that we didn't have feelings for one another."

Malinda nodded, "I'm not pretending, I still do. And if this is an honest conversation, I hate the fact that you went off and married that, that wealthy woman, without even giving us a chance."

Jerry said, "Believe me, I've come to regret it also."

Malinda questioned, "Really? Then what is keeping you from divorcing her and getting on with your life?"

Jerry shook his head, "Lots of stuff, if you are married, don't seek to be loose from your wife."

Malinda answered, "That is a paraphrase from the Holy Bible. Are you telling me that you'd rather endure unhappiness than to exercise the modern ways of our society. Hell, Jerry, more than fifty percent of all people get divorced. Honestly, I didn't think you were the marrying kind, until you announced it that day, long time ago. I thought you just wanted to be friends and occasionally, lovers."

Jerry sadly said, "We were good together, weren't we?"

Malinda raised her shoulders, "Of course we were."

Jerry spoke, "If I could undo this, I would. I acted on impulse, I was high and had been drinking. In my sober mind, I would have thought things through."

Malinda spoke with caution, "What are you talking about, me or her?"

Jerry stated, "Can I trust you?"

Malinda nodded, "Yes."

Jerry went on, "She's not from this world . . ."

Malinda was disappointed and doesn't get it. "What are you trying to say, that she is so beautiful and good in bed that she is not from this world. I think that is kind of insensitive!"

Jerry shook his head, "No! That is not what I'm saying."

Malinda raising her hands, "Okay, then what?"

Jerry tries to go on, "Herodia is an alien from another planet, actually she is a demon, but we call them aliens nowadays."

Malinda starts to laugh. "Oh, I thought you were serious for a moment, I forgot how irreverent you can be. That's a good one, Jerry."

Dr.Space interjected while joining them. "Well, I must say, we've made another sale of one

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of your paintings, at this rate, I'll have to seriously enlarge the selling prices of the remaining paintings and ask you to go back into the studio and start painting again."

Malinda stated, "Jerry, that is great news, I'm so proud of you!" She goes off to tell the

others.

Jerry uttered, "Yeah, that's wonderful news."

Dr.Space questioned, "For someone who has just earned another hundred thousand, for one painting, you seem kind of sad? Usually, when I announce something like this, it's time to break out the champagne. Or are you one of those urban-neophytes who try and keep it real, I've got some good beer imports if you prefer."

Jerry spoke, "I guess all this glory is going to my head."

Dr.Space stated, "Glory? If you want to see real glory, just look at how the Lord Jesus Christ created everything. Look at the mountains with their breath taking grandeur. Or look at the heavens, see how far above us they all are, yet no hand of ours has even begun to touch their vast secrets and mysteries. No, glory is reserved for someone who really has done something magnificent! You, Jerry, you are just an artist on a fast track to stardom."

Jerry was shocked, "I thought you guys were suppose to kiss ass and all of that stuff, just to keep the selling artist happy? You don't fit the mold."

Dr.Space responded, "Nor do you, in fact, I can honestly say, you wouldn't be here if not for that blindly beautiful wife of yours."

Jerry shrugged, "You know her?"

Dr.Space answered and laughs. "Not all is as it seems, Jerry."

Jerry was intrigued and becoming spooked. "I've heard that before, and when I did, I was sitting on a yacht with a bunch of aliens from another planet. Are you a Herodian?"

Dr.Space answered, "Me? Oh no, I'm as human as you are, Jerry, or at least so it would seem."

Jerry said, "What's that suppose to mean?"

Dr.Space said while making sure that others are out of earshot. "In the distant future, humans can travel back in time. It is what has been called the Golden Age of Revelation. If mistakes are made, someone can fix it, usually it is the government. But there are private business that also have license to time travel."

Jerry said, "Herodia told me that the Herodians were the ones who mastered time travel."

Dr.Space wagged a finger, "Jerry, you've been getting all of your information about the future from a demon, and they can't lie?"

Jerry stepped back, "Point taken. Man, it feels so good to be able to talk to someone that isn't Herodian about all the freaky stuff that has been happening to me ever since I was married to Herodia. So humans are not the passive slaves of the Herodians, in the future?"

Dr.Space spoke, "I never said that!"

Jerry uttered, "What, I don't get it?"

Dr.Space explained, "At first the Herodians made themselves known only to a few choice people on Earth, as they do to other civilizations on other planets. Those choice people, were not all politicians, and higher up people in society. No, they were common people, ever wonder what an invasion from another planet looks like, really?"

Jerry said, "Well, yes, tell me."

Dr.Space proceeded, "It looks like nothing, the same old same old. Massive disruption of a

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civilization would be stupid at its best. The smart thing to do is to introduce subversives into an unsuspecting civilization. Plant seeds of change and acceptance. Slowly start the path of the society in a new direction, oh, this takes time, but an entire planet can be taken over without firing one shot

if it is done right. And even when the time comes, and there is a resistance, which there was, here on Earth, in the future, it can easily be taken down, by means of the planet's own government."

Jerry said, "But how, we are fighting amongst ourselves, wouldn't we turn against some invading power and fight them?"

Dr.Space explained, "One would think? But the truth of the matter is that, the Herodians didn't just come to overtake our planet, they offered cures for all of our diseases. An end to planet-wise warfare. A one world government, with the powers of Herodian at the top of the political chain. They even invented a savior for all of those that were looking for Christ to come, sometime in the future."

Jerry said, "But everyone knows that the Lord Jesus Christ walked thousands of years ago. How could they be so deceived?"

Dr.Space answered, "And they would have thought to have changed times and times of times. The Herodians changed our perception of events and times, they changed the way we kept time. There became six months to equal a year, and thirty six days in a month, and six days in a week."

Jerry voiced, "Using that equation to mark time, the human life span would seem to double without them ever doing anything other than changing how we keep time."

Dr.Space nodded, "Ah, the tricks of magic, but there was real magic being used. They were never so obvious."

Jerry asked, "But to what end?"

Dr.Space went on, "Who do you think the enemy of the Herodian really is? Who are they fighting, that great mystery enemy that is more terrible than any enemy that mankind has ever faced, so fierce that it is the galvanizing factor in the unification of Earth, with its new savior, the Herodian, curing what seems incurable?"

Jerry uttered, "God?"

Dr.Space raised one eyebrow and touches his own nose and nods. "The enemy of my enemy is my friend. Jerry, they've been here since the beginning of time, in fact, they are the reason why time exist in the first place, just think about it. If Adam and Eve were pure and perfect when made, they would have no need for the keeping of time like we do, not in the imperfect sense that we keep time."

Jerry was reacting, "Because they would live forever. So, why count time?"

Dr.Space spoke, "In the Kingdom Come, there will be no time, time would have come to an end in the old world, the old universe."

Jerry said, "So, after the Second Coming, all hell breaks loose, but not the way that we generally think it would. The Herodians change the perceptions of what is good, good becomes bad and bad becomes good. Right becomes wrong and wrong becomes right. Without the gentle influence of a God-conscience, mankind is easily deceived into doing the will of Herodian. They are getting us ready to fight a war that can not be won!"

Dr.Space nodded, "The Herodian's think it can be won. And therein is the real threat, and it is to the human race. They have already fallen, they disguise themselves as angels of light, any wonder that they come and feign to have cures for all that ails the species, think about it, they are the

ones who caused the tragedies in the first place. If you cause the disease, might not you be smart enough to have created the cure right along side?"

Jerry was taken aback, "Damn! Damn! How could I have been so stupid!"

Dr.Space went on, "Hey, easy on yourself, Herodian has deceived the entire planet in the future, even so to have deceived the Elect, except that God Almighty has made provision for such a thing."

Jerry finally said, "Wait a minute, why is it that you are here, and how is it that you are not deceived, if the Herodian's have planned so well and they are fallen angels, aren't they smarter than that? They are not stupid!"

Dr.Space agreed, "I never said that Herodian was."

Jerry asked, "Who are you, really?"

Dr.Space told him, "I'm a simple man from your future, who has been sent here to help you, because, you are one of the chosen, the few, the proud, the catalyst."

Jerry stated, "Here we go again, that is what the Herodian's call me, how is it that you know this, what are you, what is your real name?"

Dr.Space answered him, "Why do you ask me for my real name, seeing that is a secret. We function down here just like one of them, they can not tell one from another, we are undercover, we too can make ourselves appear to be human, amongst other things."

Jerry said, "You are shape shifters, the Herodians and you, your kind."

Dr.Space expounded, "My kind is their kind, the only thing that differs us is that one is damned and the other saved. I'm with the saved."

Jerry voiced, "You are what ancients called angels, you are an angel . . ."

Dr.Space gestured, "Enough spoken about this, the air has ears, and the walls have eyes."

Jerry nodded, "Then I'll stop doing what I'm doing, that'll end the drama with me, then I can go back to my real life."

Dr.Space shook his head, "This is your real life, Jerry, this is who you are and what you have become. The only way out of this is death, and the permanent losing of your immortal soul."

Jerry uttered, "What, you mean I'm damned!"

Dr.Space said, "You have a familiar spirit, and she is called Herodia. They stopped becoming simple things like animals, they have evolved into human form. It has taken them thousands of years to make the change, but evolution throughout the inception of Earth has always been what the Herodians have planned."

Jerry spoke, "So, all those who believe that evolution is real, in a sense they are right, but they are damned, because it is the demons who have been evolving, spiritually through the Creation chain, first in nature, and then as aliens from another world."

Dr.Space said, "All those charming stories about wood nymphs, elves, fairies, trolls, dragons, you get the picture."

Jerry said, "They are all true. My God, how can mankind have been so stupid! We are being manipulated by master manipulators, the inventors of the lie!"

Dr.Space proclaimed, "Wow, you catch on fast, no wonder you are a catalyst."

Jerry shook his head, "There must be some other way out for me and those like me."

Dr.Space voiced, "I only know about you, I'm assigned to keep an eye on you. But I'm not your original guardian angel, they have been kept at bay ever since you married Herodia. There has been a war going on for your soul."

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Jerry asked, "Why, what did I do wrong?"

Dr.Space answered, "Wrong, Jerry, you are married to a demon, can't get much more wrong than that!"

Jerry said, "But she doesn't look like a demon."

Dr.Space answered, "Really, and what does a demon look like?"

Jerry said, "You know, all ugly and crusty and horns and tails and you know."

Dr.Space laughed, "And what does Herodia look like?"

Jerry inhaled, "Well, well, she beautiful . . ."

Dr.Space pointed out, "The best poisons are the ones that go unnoticed!"

Herodia spoke as she was entering, she's been doing some shopping. "Hey, darling, I hear that you've sold some more paintings, that's wonderful, there is a quiet lake house I want you to look at. I think it would be wonderful for us to have. Hmm, you are not the original owner of this art gallery . . ."

Dr.Space responded, "No, I bought it, just recently. I've offered your husband an exclusive contract, he's indicated that he is interested."

Herodia frowns and reacts. "No, we do business with only certain retailers, while we are glad to have done business with you, now that the gallery is in different hands, we'll be seeking another."

Dr.Space gestures while moving on, whispers to Jerry. "Be seeing ya . . ."

Herodia asked, "What did he say to you, for some reason, he gives me the creeps, and I can't read his mind."

Jerry uttered while relaxing. "I made a lot of money today. What say you and me go spend some of it, a nice little house by the lake, did you say?"

We see that we are at a wonderful lake house. We can see sail boats in the distance and trees line the lake. It looks like a very expensive area to live in. Inside the house we see the decor is equally expensive and there is a bed and in it is Jerry and Malinda, they have just finished making love. Malinda gets out of bed she is nude or scantily clad. She gets a drink of water from the joining bathroom and returns to bed with Jerry.

Malinda said, "All this time, we've been wanting each other and now the time has come for the truth to be made known. Now that we've made love, you can tell your wife the truth, that it is me that you want and not her."

Jerry responded, "Well, er, it might prove to be a little more complicated than that."

Malinda stated, "Why? Look at us, we are sleeping together. You and I have had our way with each other. We've been in the throngs of love making and our passions have elevated us to a new height."

Jerry said, "Yes but you don't understand, Herodia is not going to let me just walk away from her. She has big plans for me and her family is nothing to be messed with. Believe me when I say that."

Malinda spoke, "But you are in love with me."

Jerry announced, "Now I realize that more than ever, but what do we do about it? You see, she's not the type of person that takes lightly to people stealing what she believes belongs to her."

Malinda uttered, "I understand."

Jerry was shocked, "You do?"

Malinda nodded, "Yes. She is a very rich and powerful wife, hell, I get it." She gets up and casually paces the room. "I'd be a fool if I really thought that you were going to leave your rich and

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beautiful wife."

Jerry stated, "Malinda, it's not like that."

Malinda said, "No? Then enlighten me as to what it is like, because all this morning, we've

been here, in this bed, making love and not once did she come up. But now, now you are feeling guilty, but I'm not! Because I know in my heart how I feel about you, I've always felt this way, that was why it was so hard to understand, when you announced that day that you had married someone else. I was confused, because I had always felt that we were going to be the ones who got married, of our group of friends."

Jerry said, "I kind of felt that way too, I guess we were both trying to wait until we graduated college, found good jobs, and then would come the settling down."

Malinda stated, "But that bitch beat me to the punch! There's something about her that I still can't put my finger on. Oh, she's obvious, she knows how to use her wealth and influence, she's managed to hook you in and keep you there. She's got a hold on you, that's for sure."

Jerry shook his head, "There are things about her that are hard to explain, in fact, they are better not explained, I've come to know this because of a new business friend."

Malinda went on, "Oh, you mean the owner of the gallery where you sell your paintings. He seems like a together man, kinda mysterious at times, but nice enough."

Jerry put forth, "Yeah, it seems like everybody in my life now, is either mysterious or deadly or something, I don't know anymore. But Herodia wants me to dump him and go with some of her parent's friends that own galleries."

Malinda uttered, "Are you your own man?"

Jerry asked, "What?"

Malinda stated, "Are you in charge of your life?"

Jerry voiced, "There was this cop once, he wanted to come into my house without a search warrant, he was yelling and screaming at the top of his voice, when I'm here, I'm in charge!"

Malinda said, "That's crap! The law is in charge, he's got to obey the law just like everybody else. Oh, they all think that they are mighty, full of power trips, few of them are free from corruption of some sort. They like to use various acts of government, to bend or violate individual citizen's rights. And governmental institutions, like the Army Corps of Engineers, when they let the levies fail and all those poor people got killed, they lie to cover up their sins, but it is their fault!"

Jerry announced, "You are right! The only people who suffered were the poor! The rich got away in there fast planes and helicopters. Hell, you hang around the wealthy long enough, and you start to forget that there are real people out there who can't do better, and all because of the system! A system that thinks that poor people somehow don't have the same sensibilities of the rich, the rich think that disasters translated into vacations for the refugees of terror!"

Malinda stated, "But it is the rich who corrupt the system, they manipulate the findings on civil rights hearings to favor the government and the rich, while trampling on the rights of the poor, by accepting testimony that is obviously corrupted! Old mean Judge Green!"

Jerry spoke, "Or, so as the song goes!"

Malinda went on, "But no matter what, we have each other, oh, I know, Herodia, is the wife that you need in order to succeed. That is why you are where you are today and your future with her and her family looks bright. But it is me that will comfort you in the night, when she is out doing her strange ways, it is my love that you will seek out. We can have that, can't we?"

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Jerry said, "We do have that, Malinda, it's just that I don't want anything to happen to you."

Malinda retorted, "Don't worry about me, because I worry about you. I think sometimes that you are in way over your head, oh, not with your career, no, you worked hard to get there. Hell, we

all went to college together, but the rest of us are struggling in that super competitive economic environment to find the real jobs that we really want. The ones that we all studied and trained for. Seems like more and more foreign people are taking away what once belonged to us.”

Jerry answered, “It wasn’t that way back in our parent’s day. Seemed like the government knew to hold on to the important jobs and keep them here, but now, even the good jobs go to the ones that don’t belong to the system, that weren’t born and brought up in this country!”

Malinda chimed, “Makes you wonder why are we working so hard to get an education that is meaningless, not that knowledge is worthless, but that our schools are really training us for the real world, the foreigners excel in test taking and that is because their whole system of study is centered around taking test. But over here, it’s like our educators are retarded or something! Can’t they see, that when we enter the work force, test taking is how one goes about getting a good job, and those who can pass the test, are the ones who get the good jobs. They need to change their way of thinking, do what the foreigners do, center the education to the final result, taking the test. What good is knowledge, if you can’t demonstrate it in a tangible way or fashion?”

Jerry added, “You are right.”

Malinda said, “But you don’t have to worry about any of that, you married money . . .”

Jerry spoke, “Whoa, that was out of left field! Where is all of that coming from?”

Malinda admitted, “Would you have been so successful if you and I had gotten married?”

Jerry answered, “What? I don’t know, I guess we may never find out, because it didn’t happen like that. Not that I really wanted it to happen like this either. But you said yourself, she is a wife of convenience and I am a husband of manipulation.”

Malinda asked, “Come away with me!”

Jerry countered, “Why, where would we go?”

Malinda said, “I don’t know, I just know that I’d rather be poor and happy with you in my arms and sharing a bed at night, than to be rich and miserable, sleeping with someone I hate, or dislike, I’m not really sure how you feel about her.”

Jerry assured her, “I don’t hate her, she’s complicated. She saved my dad’s life when he was having a heart attack. I guess it was then that I saw some good in her.”

Malinda stated, “So then, you love her more than you love me?”

Jerry answered, “No, I didn’t say that either! I guess I’m confused! I know that you and I are good together, we make love beautifully together.”

Malinda stated, “But you also make love beautifully to your gorgeous and wealthy wife!”

Jerry yelled, “No!”

Malinda countered, “What?”

Jerry answered, “I mean yes!”

Malinda spoke, “Okay, so that is the picture here!”

Jerry shook his head, “No it isn’t. I’m not trying to have it both ways, don’t forget, you are the one who pursued me!”

Malinda said, “And in that, it makes adultery justified? Because we are committing adultery, no matter how we try and disguise it, she is the legitimate spouse! She it is who won your heart and stole you away from me, God I hate that bitch! If I had the wealth and power to compete with her,

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I’d show her another thing!”

Jerry announced, “Is that what this is all about, you trying to get back at Herodia, because you feel she stole something from you, me?”

Malinda said, "You can use logic to try and explain away my actions, but I am beyond logic and training, I'm filled with passion, I can't sit back and watch what should have been my life taken away from me by some bitch with money and fancy toys."

We are still at the lake house that belongs to Jerry and Herodia. His wife is home now and she is as happy as can be, she's been shopping and has bought some new things, she shows them off for her husband. Herodia isn't acting like a killer demon, she's acting like a young woman in love, in love with her husband.

Herodia chimes, "Oh, darling I had the most wonderful time with my friends, you really must meet them sometime, you know, when you are ready. I've don't nothing but tell them good things about you, they can't wait to meet you in person. Do you think we can have them over for dinner, you know, show off our new lake home?"

Jerry feeling guilty and reacting. "Oh sure, that would be great, I'd love to meet some more of your friends . . ."

Herodia sensed something while reacting. "I'm sorry, I guess I've been a selfish little bitch! All this time I've been thinking about myself, how I can make you fit into my crowd, my friends and I haven't even given any consideration as to how you feel, about your friends. I know what, why don't we have some of your friends over along with some of my friends. We can pick and choose the ones that might fit the best, with each other, I mean, I have earthy friends too."

Jerry answered while going to the bar, getting a drink. "Yeah, real earthy . . ."

Herodia she is genuinely concerned. "Are you okay, because you seem distant. Is there anything I can do to make you happy? I know, I can fix your favorite meal . . ."

Jerry yelled, "No!"

Herodia said, "Oh?"

Jerry tried again, "No, I mean sure, that would be nice, I love your cooking, you are like some kind of super chef or something, you've got real talent."

Herodia smiles and hurries and puts her things away. "Okay great, I'll change and get right on it, truth be told, I got so caught up in shopping, I forgot to eat anything myself."

Jerry said, "Yeah, that can happen."

Herodia uttered, "You know, I know we have this understanding that I am not suppose to read your mind or the mind's of some of your close friends, but it would make things easier for both of us if you'd just give in and let me see what's wrong, I can adapt in an instant and make everything better, just like I always do."

Jerry snaps. "No!"

Herodia is confused, she doesn't want to read his mind, out of respect. "Huh?"

Jerry answered, "We have an agreement, I won't give you a hard time about the things that concern Herodian, and you won't use your powers to violate certain things that should not be violated! We have an agreement!"

Herodia smiles. "You are right, we do! Boy, not using my powers, is really hard, but when you love someone like I love you, you'd do anything for that person."

Jerry said, "That's what I don't understand, how can you be so evil and yet, claim to be in love with me?"

Herodia thinks she's getting a handle on things, "I'm not evil, I've told you before, it all has to do with point of view, how you see things. I'm from a race of people that have been historically mislabeled and misunderstood. Back in the ancient times, people didn't understand about science



and things like they do today, but like I said, we understood that, and evolved throughout nature, it is that evolution that has led to where we are today and were we are at the brink of a new tomorrow!”

Jerry went on, “Yes, but is the human race ready for world peace and an end to world hunger? Maybe we like our misery?”

Herodia smiles and she’s managed to change into something very revealing and sexy, but functional. As she goes she brushes up against her husband, in a effort to arouse him. “You know, I can get the meal started and then we could go into the bedroom, and make love, I can think of nothing more I’d rather do right now than to have my husband in bed with me.”

Jerry cringes trying to resist. “I don’t know, maybe after dinner.”

Herodia knows something is really wrong and reacts. “Really, you’d rather eat than make love to me right now?”

Jerry told her, “Well, no . . .”

Herodia studied him then said, “I don’t understand?”

Jerry said, “You are so sexy and, well, hot, maybe you are too much woman for me.”

Herodia shakes her head and goes about making dinner. “You know, some of my more cynical friends, because not all of my friends are Herodian, some of them think you can’t handle me either.”

Jerry laughs while going over to the window, viewing the scene outside. “Well, there you go, I’m not the only one who seems to think that perhaps this is a one sided relationship, specially when it comes to sex. I mean, you are like some super dynamo!”

Herodia spoke, “What I am is your wife! I chose to be with you as much as you did to be with me. When you first set eyes on me, I read your mind, you couldn’t think of anything else, except, how much you wanted to touch my ass. You were out of your mind with lust.”

Jerry admitted, “And lust is a bad thing.”

Herodia countered, “The bed in a marriage is not defiled, and Heaven or hell help the person who comes between a man and a woman, a husband and wife. That’s how I feel, how do you feel, Jerry?”

Jerry was becoming concerned that Herodia has begun to read his mind. “Er, well, I know that I’d be a fool to ever give you up, I see how men look at you when we walk down the street together. They look at me and wonder, how did that little piece of crap get such a gorgeous woman like you to be by his side?”

Herodia giggled, “A little piece of crap like you? Where is all of this coming from, because the last time I checked, I’ve done nothing but try and build up your confidence. I’m not that type of wife, to secretly call her man, that son of a bitch! Or trash you in front of strangers or my friends, in fact, I do just the opposite, I constantly develop a fine opinion of you, because, no matter how they might not like it, you are a very talented and nice guy, a little shy, a little low on the self esteem scale, but what the hell, I’d be lacking too if I were born poor.”

Jerry seized the moment, “It’s not all about wealth, Herodia!”

Herodia studied his all the while coming from around the counter with a kitchen knife in her hand. “No, Jerry, it is not about wealth, it is about a wish I granted you, but I did it wilfully, you and I are married and in love, forever. I will always love you, and we will be married forever, no amount

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of torment can ever separate us.”

Jerry said, “Torment? This is the second time I’ve heard you mention that, what do you mean by that?”

Herodia shrugged then returns to her cooking. "Nothing!"

Jerry expounded, "Now who's holding out? Why torment?"

Herodia said, "It all has to do with the enemy of the Herodians. Our enemy wants to torment us forever. But we can't let that happen, can we, dear?"

Jerry slowly uttered, "Er . . ."

Herodia went on, "I mean, we love one another so much, I love you so much, Jerry, that it makes me cry sometimes, I hurt inside, longing to have you, to make love to you, over and over, I never grow tired of us together. It's all I think about when I'm away from you, and when I'm with you, like right now, the only thing that motivates me to kindness."

Jerry is shocked. "Wow. I didn't realize how much you cared for me, I mean, I know that you need me because I'm suppose to be some kind of catalyst, but I always thought, deep down inside, that was all the relationship was."

Herodia shaking her beautiful head while coming from behind the counter and embracing her husband. "No! No, I love you so deeply that I can't imagine feeling any other way. Because of you, dear husband, the wish that you wanted, may have saved me in some way that I'm not sure of yet. And if not, then we shall have a love that will go on forever, no matter what fate befalls us."

Jerry finally uttered, "Saved you, what do you mean, saved you, you are a demon, you are damned to hell?"

Herodia said with tears in her eyes, "That is what I've been trying to tell you, I'm changing, from what I understand, when a man and a woman marry, they become as one flesh, one being. Even if one of them is sinful, the good one, you, can save the bad one, me. You through your faith in God, can save me as well as yourself, just don't do anything stupid."

Jerry echoed, "Define stupid?"

Herodia frowned, "You know, sinful, keep a pure and clean heart towards your God and Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ forgives sins. Maybe not my transgressions, but yours, and I'm married to you. So, then, I'm forgiven because the two of us are one. So, now do you see why I've been so happy? What started out as an assignment, in order to manipulate you to perform a duty, might have been a way for me to be free of my own damnation."

Jerry said, "And if you are wrong?"

Herodia answered as she kisses him like she wants to make love to him. "Then we burn for all eternity, together, but we love one another to comfort one another from the torment."

Jerry started reacting. "Then, this marriage really has taken on a life of its own, I mean, this is not for show, or because I was drunk and made a stupid wish."

Herodia smiled taking hold of his hands and guiding him towards the bedroom. "No, no, we really are a couple, Jerry. We need each other, for whatever reasons, at least we know that love is stronger than anything. I've always secretly believed it, but now I've experienced it first hand, I can never let go, I'd do anything to keep our love strong and us together. I pity whatever fool would be so stupid as to stand in our way!"

We see a very nice restaurant, ritzy in the ambiance. Those who are seated seem to be of the well to do bunch. At a table we now see Herodia and Malinda, they are dining together, one would think they would be having a good time, but the feeling is that there is more to the meeting.

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Herodia spoke, "I must say, you do seem to be a stronger woman than what I had first thought of you to be."

Malinda asked, "Why, I think I'll accept that as a compliment, and coming from you, I'd

guess that it is rare.”

Herodia said, “Yes, it is, but it was no compliment.”

Malinda said, “Oh?”

Herodia went on, “You haven’t gotten over him have you?”

Malinda realized the meeting, “Over whom?”

Herodia was blunt, “Who? Really, why, my husband of course. You still have feelings for him.”

Malinda said, “Is that what this was all about, and here I thought that we are going to be going through some kind of ritzy bonding thing.”

Herodia stated, “Me, bonding with you?”

Malinda laughed, “Why, does that seem such a stretch?”

Herodia asked her, “Why do you cling to him so?”

Malinda said, “I guess I could say the same about you.”

Herodia expounded, “What do you mean by that?”

Malinda went on, “Well, just look at you, rich, beautiful by any standard, well educated. Just what in the hell do you see in Jerry?”

Herodia retorted, “I beg your pardon?”

Malinda said, “You are way out of his class, your type of people are used to getting what they want, when they want it, and how they want it. In fact, the only people standing in your way, are other rich people, who probably want the same things that you want.”

Herodia uttered, “Hmm, if only Jerry could hear how little you really think of him.”

Malinda said, “Oh, you are not going to turn this around on me, I’m not putting down Jerry, he’s a great guy, but he is just a normal guy, he likes beer, sports, music, having a good time, with his friends.”

Herodia said, “And he can’t have those things with me?”

Malinda stated, “Hell no bitch! You are just using him for something, I’ll admit, I haven’t figured that out yet, but you are up to no good! You and that crowd you travel with.”

Herodia announced, “You don’t even know me or the people I associate with!”

Malinda said, “What’s not to know, you are a bunch of rich phonies!”

Herodia answered, “You hate the rich don’t you?”

Malinda put out, “Oh no, I don’t hate anyone, least of all, the wealthy and powerful who oppress the poor. Your kind keep medical cures from reaching the masses, just because you haven’t figured out how to make a buck off of them yet. Your kind, unilaterally go to war, forcing thousands to lose their lives, for what, oil, gold, riches, political gain, land, whatever, your kind suck! You are always the first to want to start something, but the last time I checked, none of you send your kids into harms way!”

Herodia stated, “Well, I’m a little young, for you to lay claim to all of that, wars happen, I hate them too. In fact, I and my family are dedicated to trying to put an end to the very things that you were talking about, like I said, you don’t know me at all.”

Malinda said, “And why would a butt ugly rich family like yours want to put an end to human suffering?”

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Herodia laughed, “Because it’s not good for business . . .”

Malinda was taken aback, “What?”

Herodia went on, “Oh, so when I lay down the truth, you don’t want to hear it. But, allow

you to live in your holier than thou universe, and you can be Little Miss Self-righteous!”

Malinda voiced, “How dare you! You come over to my part of the world, and just wrench away the one thing that really matters to me . . .”

Herodia smiled, “Jerry?”

Malinda steamed, “We had plans, we were going to finish college together, get good jobs and then settle down and start a family. But you, for reasons that don’t even make any sense, come suddenly into his life and change all of that! And for what, money?”

Herodia said, “He does have money now, his artwork sells for more than a hundred thousand per piece, and he’s not even old, just imagine what he’d be worth when he reaches middle age, just in a time sense of speaking of course.”

Malinda uttered, “You are one of those perverted women who bend the morals of others to suit your own depraved sense of being!”

Herodia stated, “Well, I can see that there is no love loss here! But you are right, I can be the most depraved woman that you can imagine, of that one thing you are very right.”

Malinda said, “Then what more is there to say.”

Herodia uttered, “I choose not to be!”

Malinda asked, “What is that suppose to mean?”

Herodia stated, “Sense I met Jerry, I’ve discovered something about myself, a type of salvation that I had not expected would happen, something wonderful.”

Malinda questioned, “Oh, and what might that be?”

Herodia was silent for a long moment then she simply whispered, “Love.”

Malinda was incensed, “What! It sounds nasty coming out of your mouth! I don’t know who or what you really are, but you don’t love Jerry. I honestly don’t think you have the ability to love him. You might lust for him, you might do what you have to do to manipulate him, for some reason that makes no sense to me. But you don’t know what love is, no not really.”

Herodia commanded, “Then teach me!” Her voice sounded like something from the grave.

Malinda froze for a moment. “Oh, you are a piece of work, is that why you got me out here? You want me to reveal myself to you so that you can better please the man that should be with me? You can go to hell!”

Herodia stated with authority, “Believe me when I say this, I am!”

Malinda asked, “What does that mean?”

Herodia announced, “There are things about me that you just wouldn’t understand, even if I told you the truth.”

Malinda cited, “The truth? Do you even know what that is?”

Herodia answered, “Actually, I’m learning that from Jerry, he has a strong faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I never understood that until I made love to him, became one with him, our bodies and soul mingling together.”

Malinda was filled with contempt as she reacts. “So, that is it, try and piss me off, make me say something or lose my cool, do something stupid. Whatever you think you have with Jerry, you don’t!”

Herodia grinned, “Oh really, and how would you know that?”

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Malinda stated, “Believe me, if you were a real woman, you’d just know!”

Herodia stated, “I’m more woman than you’ll ever be, there is not one inch of me that isn’t perfect!”

Malinda said, "Physically perfect, I'd have to agree. Honestly, I've never seen a woman as set as you are, you even make other women stop and look after you. You seem to extrude a type of carnal sexuality that I've never experienced. It's, it's almost creepy."

Herodia expounded, "Then, maybe you have answered your own question."

Malinda countered, "And what was that?"

Herodia stated, "Why Jerry is with me and not you."

Malinda uttered, "For sex? No, you don't know him like I do, while he does enjoy being with a woman, he's not driven!"

Herodia said to hurt her, "You said yourself, I have a strange affect on people. Maybe it has this same affect on him? After all, I am beautiful and you are not!"

Malinda held it together while she reacts. "While it is true that I am rather plain. In fact, I'm of the spiritual daughters of Leah, but I am the stronger child, in that I work harder and pray harder and try harder. I know that I have a longer mile to travel in order to gain what some gain in inches."

Herodia said, "Then why don't you just give up?"

Malinda explained, "What? It would make it all easier on you, wouldn't it?"

Herodia countered, "Lady, woman, I don't care how easy you think you want to make it for me or not, the truth of the matter is that I can win just by thinking it."

Malinda boasted, "Then why this meeting, this farce of a dinner together?"

Herodia said, "Because it is like trying to be civil with one who is beyond civility."

Malinda put forth, "So, that is how you view me, I'm some third world barbarian?"

Herodia asked, "I don't know, are you?"

Malinda went on, "Are you?"

Herodia stated, "Why, I was raised in the finest of ways, the best schools, the best friends, the right clubs and activities, how were you raised? Home-schooled?"

Malinda was filled with rage, "I was raised to hate phony little bitches like yourself!"

Herodia put it on the line, "Oh, so you do know how to hate when it is justified for your own weak sense of moral values. Why, I'm sensing a weakness that you yourself didn't even know existed. I thought, hate for hate's sake was a sin, in fact, a lot of things that you do are sins, aren't they, Malinda?"

Malinda as confused and reacting. "Er, I'm not sure I quite understand what you are getting at."

Herodia was calm, "Really? You like to steal things, Malinda?"

Malinda felt the thought go through her mind, "Fundamentally, all things belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and because we belong to him, all things belong to us."

Herodia laughed, "Interesting philosophy. But unfortunately none of that applies to our little situation, does it, Malinda?"

Malinda frightened, she knows: "We don't have a situation, look, you won the guy, you are the stronger, the faster, but remember, the race isn't given to the strong nor to the swift, but to he who endures."

Herodia said, "You have to be alive in order to endure, girlfriend!"

Malinda asked, "Look, I don't know you, I don't feel comfortable getting to know you, and

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I'm definitely not your girlfriend, in any sense of the word!"

Herodia nodded, "Right! You are not my friend, you are friends with my husband, in whom I love dearly, and would do anything for, even promise certain things that I know go against my better

judgment, just to make him happy. Things like not seeing through you and discovering that dirty little secret that you are carrying around with you these days.”

Malinda fought her body-language as she reacts. “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

Herodia smiled, “Of course you don’t because if you did, you’d be worried that I know something that I’m not suppose to know. After all, if I were a real woman, as you said, I’d just know!”

Malinda voiced, “I said that in jest, not totally knowing what I was saying, you invite me to this fancy restaurant and then begin to grill into me about things that mostly don’t make any sense to me. If you and Jerry are having a hard time, don’t come blaming all that on me, I’m just his friend.”

Herodia said, “Yes, his friend, just his friend. And you’d know if there was something bothering him, wouldn’t you?”

Malinda sighed recovering a bit. “Yes, yes, I suppose I’d know if something was bothering him, he’d eventually confide in me.”

Herodia asked, “And you’d be there for me, to comfort him, to guide him down the right path, right?”

Malinda nodded feeling a way out. “Of course, like for example, I know that his marriage to you means everything to him.”

Herodia smiled as she reacts. “That is wonderful news to hear. You know what, if he had something important, something that he felt more comfortable telling you about, because the two of you have known each other for so long, you wouldn’t mind being there for him, would you?”

Malinda jumped at it, “No, I wouldn’t mind that at all.”

Herodia nodded, “That’s good to hear.”

Malinda asked, “Is that what this whole thing has been about?”

Herodia smiled looking up from her delicious meal. “You really should eat, my dear, the meal is delicious.”

Malinda confused, “You were concerned about Jerry and you wanted me to help you look out for him?”

Herodia looked up as her eyes glowed with sinister power. “Why, that is what a good wife does, isn’t it, even if she has to cave in and extend herself to her enemies.”

Malinda wasn’t sure what she just saw but shrugged it off finally eating. “We are not enemies, Herodia.”

Herodia tilted her head, “That’s good to hear, because I don’t like my enemies and I’m trying so hard to find something about you that I can like, something that I can hang my hat on, so to speak.”

Malinda said, “Well, I suppose that two intelligent women can find common ground.”

Herodia agreed, “That’s good, because what is really important is Jerry’s happiness, isn’t it. I mean, we can put aside our own foolishness long enough to accomplish a greater good, right?”

Malinda nodded, “Yeah, and I haven’t really been fair to you, because Jerry and I were friends from way back, before college. So, for me to attribute so much upon you, really doesn’t seem fair.”

Herodia answered, “I suppose, but you’d be surprised at the amount of things that I can handle, it’s like, some times, I actually think that I was put here, along with Jerry to affect some cosmic change in the whole world, that will bring about world peace and prosperity.” The two

women look at each other and then laugh.

Malinda uttered, "Oh, that was good, you really had me going for a moment. Jerry told me about you and your family's sense of humor."

Herodia dropped her smile, "Oh did he, and just what did he say about it?"

Malinda answered, "He told me to look out for it, because some times it might seem that they are way off base, you know saying things that don't make any sense, and that would be because they were just pulling my leg, so to speak."

Herodia mused, "And you perceive, that I am just, as you say, pulling your leg?"

Malinda answered, "Why yes, aren't you?"

Herodia started laughing. "Of course I am, what did you think I was doing, reading your mind?"

Malinda stated, "Wouldn't that be awful if people could indeed read each other's minds. Just think of the crap that would be floating around, all those dirty little secrets and all those doubts."

Herodia did just that while reacting. "Of course no one can really read minds, I mean, you'd have to have advanced technology or be like gods or something, mutants, aliens, weird stuff. They both laughed.

Malinda said, "Yeah, you are right. So, I'm starting to see what Jerry sees in you, he was right."

Herodia asked, "Right about what?"

Malinda said, "He told me that you were complicated, and you are, but I guess that is what is to be expected."

Herodia questioned, "Why is it to be expected?"

Malinda said, "Oh, you know, your upbringing, your way of life, you live in a complicated world."

Herodia answered, "So it would seem."

Malinda spoke, "I'm glad that we had this little get together, if you don't mind, next time the treat will be on me."

Herodia nodded, "Are you sure you can afford it?"

Malinda shook her head, "Sure, I'll just save up a month's salary."

Herodia smiled, "Good then, we are friends, and friends don't sleep with other friend's husbands! I want you to put an end to it! You are his friend, don't complicate the situation with anything else, it wouldn't be healthy for you. Oh, Jerry, he's a little confused these days, he has a big role to play in my life as my husband!"

We are in a very large art studio, it belongs to Jerry. We can see all sorts of paintings scattered about the studio. There are large windows that allow lots of sunlight to come in. Some of his work is half finished while others seem ready for the gallery. We now see Jerry hard at work, creating another masterpiece. We can see the painting, it is of his wife and it is rather good and coming along just fine. Larry and Susan come in, they seem upset but are not ready to just blurt out what's wrong.

Jerry was glad to see them. "Hey you two, I was beginning to wonder if you'd ever manage to make it out this way. Now you can see my studio, help yourselves, if you see something that you

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like, just ask and I'll see to it that it is yours."

Susan uttered, "Jerry, that is most generous of you but we couldn't impost on you like that. I mean, these paintings are worth more than I make in a decade."

Larry said, "She's right, buddy, we didn't come here to mooch off of you, though that painting over there, I like that one, real sexy, I'd hang it up in my apartment, right in the middle of the room."

Susan uttered, "And that is what you'd do with an original Crowder? Don't be silly, if anyone, some of the wrong people saw that you had it, they'd break in when you were gone and steal it. Hell, for the amount of money they could get for it on the black market, they might break in while you were sleeping and, well, you get the picture."

Jerry laughed, "Don't worry, I'll get it insured for you. Hey, where is Malinda?"

Susan said, "Wow, we were hoping that you could answer that, we thought that the two of you might be hold up in the studio."

Herodia spoke as she comes in carrying a large charger with refreshments. "And why, pray tell would Malinda be held up here?"

Susan and Larry are both shocked to see Herodia, they react.

Larry spoke, "I, er, we thought that she might have just wanted to drop by . . ."

Susan said, "Yeah, just like we did, unannounced, you know, friendly hello . . ."

Herodia said serving them. "Oh, well yes, after all, we are all friends."

Susan echoed, "Yes, friends."

Larry spoke, "Wow, you can really cook, this is really good. Jerry, dude, if I had a wife that could cook like this, I'd weigh a ton."

Herodia smiled and giggles in a sophisticated manner. "Why, that is very nice of you to say, Larry. You know, Jerry and I were thinking about having a few close friends over, at the lake house, you know, a small party. Kind of like the ones Jerry use to throw before he got married. Just close friends, very casual, in fact what you are wearing would be just fine."

Larry voiced, "I'd love to go!"

Susan was more hesitant. "I, er, well I'm not sure I could get off from work."

Herodia insisted, "Oh, come on, Susan, you two are some of the closes friends that Jerry has on this earth, you can't say no, besides we'd love to have you, and it wouldn't be the same without you."

Jerry uttered, "Come on, Susan, you know I throw a mean party, and Herodia will be cooking the meal, to hell with caterers! Right, honey?"

Herodia smiled and nodded, "Absolutely!"

Jerry motioned to them, "See? So what do you say?"

Susan nodded giving in. "Okay, okay, you guys win, what can a girl do to resist this bunch?" They all find seats. "Your work is really outstanding, I mean, you have always had talent, back in college, everyone knew that. You have this style that is all your own, yet you can move from one form to another, it is amazing, small wonder that you are doing so well."

Herodia showed obvious pride in her husband. "Jerry has been commissioned to do a special painting for the King of Abshan."

Larry said, "No way, dude, you know you have arrived in this day and age, you have oil rich dues wanting your paintings. Man, you should charge then a million for it!"

Herodia stated in a matter of fact way, "Ten million."

Susan was shocked. "What? Are you serious?"

Larry said, "Dude, dude, you have arrived!"



Jerry kind of grinned, "I'm not even sure I'm going to do it, or not."

Susan was confused. "Now that wasn't something I expected to hear. Why not, it will set a precedent, after that, all of your paintings will be worth nothing less than a million. I don't think you can afford to turn down a commission like this one, Jerry."

Jerry uttered, "Yeah, but I don't like the guy."

Susan spoke, "Like the guy. My God, listen to you, you sound just like you did in college, you don't have to like the customer, just treat everybody with courtesy, be nice and friendly, it's called good customer service, and your job is done, what you need is a good public relations person. Someone who is used to dealing with the public and knows you as well."

Herodia said, "Might you know someone?"

Susan frowned and doesn't get it yet. "You know, down where I work, there are some really good reps. I might be able to talk one of them into working for you."

Larry said, "Yeah, that sounds all go and stuff, Susan, but they don't know anything about the Jerry that we know. They'd just be guessing as to what he'd go for and stuff."

Herodia stated, "Larry has a point, Susan. No, I think we all are thinking along the line of someone so qualified for the job, that she'd hit the ground running."

Susan said, "That's okay, I understand, but I'll keep my eyes and ears open for you."

Jerry uttered, "Susan . . ."

Susan asked, "What?"

Jerry stated, "The job is being offered to you, you are the one that we are all talking about."

Susan was shocked. "But, Jerry, I don't have that much experience, I just graduated college just like you and Larry and Malinda. I don't have the skills to handle million dollar contracts."

Herodia stated, "One thing my parents taught me, if you don't believe that you can do something, then it doesn't matter how qualified you are, you'll always find a way to sabotage the opportunity."

Susan said, "Jerry, do you really want me on board?"

Jerry nodded, "I believe in you, Susan, you can do the job and you'll be great at it."

Larry pointed out, "Hey, wait a minute, throw me a bone, dude, we're best buds."

Herodia laughed, "Management, that is what you studied in college, didn't you?"

Larry put two thumb up, "Well yes, Herodia, in fact I did."

Herodia said, "My husband needs someone he can trust to handle the day to day things, make sure that all is well. You'd fit the ticket to a tea."

Everyone is all excited now, something good has just come out of the gathering.

Jerry said, "But what about Malinda?"

Herodia questioned, "Yes, dear, what about her?"

Larry said, "She has super crazy skills too."

Herodia countered, "Oh, I hadn't realized that, well perhaps when we see her at the party, we can ask her a few questions, see if she can fit in." Herodia goes to make drinks for everyone.

Jerry asked, "How has she been, I haven't seen her in awhile, it's like she just dropped off the face of the earth."

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Susan spoke, "You know, that was one of the real reasons that we came over here, we were hoping that you might know where she is, maybe she told you something."

Herodia said while passing out drinks. "Why would Malinda confide in my husband?"

Larry uttered, "Herodia, I don't want to spoil any of this, because it's like the best news that I've heard in a long time, but, Jerry, our bro over here and Malinda, used to be pretty close, if you kind of know what I mean. All before the two of you got married, of course, you know."

Herodia uttered, "I see, I hadn't totally realized how the dynamic of your friendship was."

Jerry said, "I haven't heard from her, like I said, she just stopped calling me, won't return my calls. And, well, I figured it was all because she might have just moved on."

Susan put forth, "Jerry, she can't move on." She looks over at Herodia. "No offense . . ."

Herodia looked feigning concern. "None taken, I guess we all should be a little concerned."

Larry nodded, "Yeah, but you know, I just remembered, you remember that one time, when Malinda thought she was pregnant, and she just dropped out of sight for a long time."

Susan was dismissive, "Larry, this is not the time."

Jerry said, "Yeah, I do remember that, and you are right, she did do the exact same thing. She just disappeared for about a year. Then, without warning, she came back into our lives again."

Herodia asked, "Is it possible that something like that has happened again?"

Jerry quickly reacts. "No!"

Herodia voiced, "Oh?"

Jerry said, "I mean, no, I think she would tell someone, you Susan, remember, she promised not to ever do that again to us, after she realized how much she meant to us all."

Herodia uttered, "That is what I like about you guys, you actually love one another, now me, my so called friends, they might not be so upset, if I just dropped off the face of the earth."

Susan said, "Not to offend, but maybe money and power don't make for the best relationships."

Jerry uttered, "Susan . . ."

Herodia nodded, "No, no, that is alright, she makes a valid point. That's why I've decide to embrace all of you as my own personal friends, because you do have a fresh perspective, that doesn't have anything to do with gain. I've extended my circle of friends to include all of you."

Larry said, "Way cool, so then we'll be meeting some of your ritzy ass friends too, way cool. Now I get to do what I've always wanted to do, hob-knob."

Jerry said, "I think the friends that are going to be at the party are going to be a little more down to earth, Larry. While they will still be rich, I think you'll find beer drinking and sports are on the agenda."

Larry was so happy. "Oh, dude, I am so going to be there!"

Susan spoke, "But, what about Malinda?"

Herodia pointed out, "Well, if no one really knows where the poor dear is, I just don't see . . ."

Jerry said, "I know, I can call her folks, the last time she did something like this, she later told me that if I had wanted to reach her, that her parents knew where she was the whole time."

Herodia spoke, "Smart girl, always let the right people know of your plans, that way, if anything afoul occurs, someone knows where you were suppose to be. You know, too often, in my circle of friends, they just take off to some faraway part of the world, don't say a thing to anyone, if you want them or need them, you have to hunt them down." She notices that her husband has gotten

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on the phone and has stepped off kind of and is talking to Malinda's parents. After a moment, he comes back but something is wrong, he sits down hard, seems dazed. "Honey, did you get hold of Malinda's parents, did you find out where she is, because we can invite her over the phone, to come

to the party.”

Larry uttered, “Dude, you got that look you hand on your face when you saw that shark in the water.”

Susan noticed, “Jerry, what’s the matter, what did they say?”

Jerry uttered as he looks up at them, crying. “Malinda, Malinda, she’s dead . . .” They all react. Each one in a different way.

Susan was shocked, “How did it happen?”

Jerry muttered, “She committed suicide.”

Larry was taken aback, “Oh, man, no, no, not pretty, sweet, Malinda . . .”

Susan was too, visibly shaken up. “I, I, can’t believe this, this can’t be happening.”

Jerry just wept, “Wow, man, this is all my fault! Hell! If I hadn’t been so selfish!”

Susan was in pain but trying to comfort Jerry. “Jerry, this is not your fault, fact of the matter, she and I had a long talk just before she disappeared on us, she was feeling all confused and hyper emotional. Damn, I should have seen the signs! What is wrong with me?”

Jerry now was comforting Susan. “If it’s not my fault, then it surely isn’t yours, I guess she was going through a lot of things, things that she just couldn’t work out. Oh dear God, save her soul, she didn’t know what she was doing.”

Larry said, “She suffered from depression, you know . . .”

Jerry was surprised, “No, I never knew that, how did you find out?”

Larry went on, “One day, I was kinda buzzed, I went snooping through her things, I don’t know why, I wasn’t going to steal anything, I mean, we were friends, you know . . .”

Jerry said, “Larry, I’m sure that Malinda understood, we all liked to party, what happened?”

Larry voiced, “I discovered these pills, you know, you take them for depression. Guys, I would have told you, but she made me swear never to tell you! I’m so sorry, I wish I had told someone.”

Susan said while crying and comforting Larry. “Larry, it’s not your fault. Come on, you know how Malinda, is, was, she had a way of getting what she wanted. And she never liked to talk about her health, you know that, she was very secretive about subjects like that.”

Jerry put forth, “Man, this is the worst! Poor, poor, Malinda, to think she was carrying around all that stuff, and she wouldn’t talk to us, she could have confided in us, about anything, that is why we were friends, to help one another out.”

Susan said, “We are friends, Jerry, just like you brought us on board your success, you are a real friend, you didn’t just leave us dry, Malinda loved you, Jerry. I really don’t think she ever got over you marrying Herodia. Fact of the matter, I think it broke her heart and she just couldn’t recover. You know, some people fall in love, and it is for life, they can’t help it. I think Malinda was one of those people.”

Larry added, “Wow, I got to tell the rest of our friends, man, they are going to be so bummed out! Oh man, wow, I don’t think I can think right now.”

Jerry uttered, “I’ll see to it that you two get a ride home, I’ll have someone take you. I don’t want to risk losing the two of you, that would just kill me.”

Susan said, “Thanks, Jerry, that is so gracious of you. We are lucky to have you as a friend.”

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Jerry spoke while hugging Susan. “It is me, I’m glad to have you, the two of you are close friends. We are going to have to lean on each other, in order to get through this, I don’t think we can ever completely get over it, we’ll just have to learn to live with it. Oh, God, I hope her soul has

found peace!”

Susan was crying even more. “Jerry, it was suicide, she’s Catholic.”

Jerry said, “Yeah, but God in his great wisdom, looks at each death, he knows the reasons behind them, and he is infinitely merciful and forgiving, loving. She’s with God, I just know it.” They all hug, the three of them. Then Jerry notices that Herodia has been on the phone all this time. “Herodia? Is there something?”

Herodia answered, “No, dear, I was just expressing our condolences. I offered to help with the arrangements, her family expressed thanks.”

Jerry nodded but he’s falling apart. “Herodia?”

Herodia runs to him, she cries too. “Oh, dear, I’m so sorry, so sorry, sorry for all of you.” She kisses him appropriately. “Jerry, I’m here for you, I’m not going anywhere, I love you, darling.”

Larry and Susan’s eyes are opened, they actually see for the first time, how much Herodia really does love Jerry.

Susan said, “You know, we all used to talk, and speculate about what you really felt for our friend, we really couldn’t imagine why a rich woman like yourself could find anything in common with him, but we were wrong. I can see now, you just simply love him.”

Herodia smiles, still crying, hugs Susan. “We can get through this, we have to.”

Larry said, “Malinda was the strong one, if she fell, what’s going to happen to us?”

Herodia stated, “We stick together, we lean on one another. That’s what friends do.” Now she smiles appropriately.

Jerry said, “My wife is right, we are not going to be able to make it on our own, we can’t lose touch. Malinda was a beloved member of our extended family, now we have Herodia, but Malinda will always have a special place in our hearts.”

Herodia went hearing the door bell. “Oh, your rides are here, don’t worry about how you got here, my people will get everything back to you.” They all hug, friendly kisses, then Larry and Susan leave.

We see an office with all sorts of strange sculptures, but they all seem to be sensual in nature. A few photos of family and friends and scenes from what looks like special vacations. We see a large desk and tasteful personal items neatly placed across it. Behind the desk we see Herodia, she is working, then walks in, five people, three men and two women. They look like they mean business, dressed very sharply, they quickly find seats without Herodia even glancing up from her work.

Herodia finally acknowledging them. “Well, I was wondering when I’d get a visit, can’t say I’m glad to see any of you, but you are here, so what the hell?”

ManOne said, “We’ve been keeping an eye on you.”

WomanOne uttered, “Is there anything you’d like to convey to the Grand Council when we return?”

Herodia shakes her head, “Really? Like you’d be willing to just send my best wishes to everyone?”

ManTwo said, “It doesn’t have to be like this, Herodia. Everyone knows how difficult an assignment like this is. And we all can understand if you discover that you are not up to the task.”

Herodia uttered, “You can, can you? Well, that is a touch of good news in what seems to be

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making up to a rather gray day. Why are the five of you here?”

ManThree finally said, “Your mother is worried about you, she hasn’t heard from you in a while and has become concerned, you’ve been hanging around with those humans for too long, it’s

not good for you.”

WomanTwo added, “One can quickly lose perspective, they do have a way of wearing one down, with all their petty problems and weaknesses, it can be rather alarming, at best.”

Herodia countered, “So, the powers that be are concerned that I am not getting my job done?”

ManOne stated, “Something like that, but don’t take it personal, it is, after all, one tough assignment, none of us envy you in this thing. Perhaps, you need some assistance, you know, someone that can help keep you on track.”

Herodia asked, “And why would I be needing someone to keep me on track?”

WomanTwo stated, “Because you haven’t reported in, it’s not like you, princess, to just go off and not say a word to any of the elders and even your own peers.”

Herodia was fuming and reacting. “Peers? I have no peers! And don’t any of you little spying pieces of crap ever forget it!”

The five react, slight fear in their ways.

ManThree put forth, “Really, Herodia, this human, the catalyst, he’s been occupying too much of your time. It’s almost like you’ve grown fond of him, and we all know that can’t be the case, because they are all meaningless to us, we are Herodian!”

Herodia stated while quickly composing herself, goes and gets herself a drink. “So, I’m playing with my dog too much and the rest want me to come inside and freshen up?”

ManOne said, “All humans are little more than animals, we all know this, that was why we were able to evolve throughout the essence of creation, in order to escape our captivity. Once we were doomed to just possess those things that we could find, animals and plants and an occasional human. But we have evolved, we now can take total human form.”

WomanOne added, “That was why there were people east of Eden, where Cain could find sanctuary. Because we have managed to reach all the way back to the beginning. Joyfully subverting the Creation, dooming mankind to death and disease and the ultimate, damnation!”

ManThree spoke, “What better way to get back at the enemy of Herodian, than by destroying our enemy’s finest creation, made in his own image.”

Herodia seemed detached, trying to keep it together, do they know that she’s fallen in love with a human? “I’ll do my job!”

WomanOne said, “I don’t think, deep down inside that any of us believe otherwise, princess. It’s just that, there have been reports . . .”

Herodia calmly asked, “Reports? Have you been spying on me? Watching me like some common demon? Who the hell do you think that you are dealing with!”

ManTwo quickly reacting with trepidation. “Please, princess, we know how this must look, and believe me, when I say this, we all tried to find some other way, but the truth of the matter is, you’ve been seen, acting like you almost love this man that you are suppose to subvert.”

Herodia coolly said, “Jerry? His name is Jerry.”

WomanTwo said, “See, that is what we are talking about, that tone in your voice, it’s like there is something there, something that should not be.”

ManThree added, “We understand that you are in deep cover, the enemy is all about, trying to help these humans, and we can’t always be sure who they are, unless they make a mistake.”

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Herodia finally uttered, “I’ll throw you a bone, I think I’ve identified one of them, he claims to be just a business man, but his business extends into the future, like ours.”

WomanOne was getting excited. “I knew we could count on you, Herodia, none of us really

thought that you'd gone soft on us, after all, you are from the royal blood."

ManOne asked, "Who is this angel of God?"

Herodia really hates to give him up. "His name, his name, he calls himself Dr. Space, but I'm sure he's from the future, he's been exposed to Herodian culture, knows how to carry himself, he might just be a human that has access to time travel technology, the Transtimeut."

ManTwo said, "Then he also has access to transdoor technology, humans in the future do."

Herodia went on, "Still, I'm ordering that no one shall lay a hand on this Dr. Space, we don't know enough about him. He might be human, he might be one of God's angels, if he's the latter, touching him will bring the wrath of God, down upon us and our operation, after all, tampering with time, is a crime, any of us caught, directly trying to alter the future by manipulating the past, in order to change the outcome of the final battle, the battle between Good and Evil, the Lord Jesus Christ could cast us into the abyss."

WomanTwo said, "He didn't do it to Legion, why would he do it to us, we are operating under radar?"

ManThree uttered, "Perhaps this mission has been compromised?"

Herodia shrugged while reacting. "I'll decide when and if this mission has been compromised!"

WomanOne spoke, "Yes, princess, we were just sounding out the possibilities, one can never tell, the House of Herodian is not divided!"

Herodia said, "No, it isn't and that is why it makes more sense, that what I am doing is so delicate, that mere observation might be misleading, your conclusions are based on mere physical information, not of the facts known to me and me alone."

ManOne nodded and likes what she said. "This is indeed good news, you have deceived the humans so well, that they are wilfully acting out our plans, without having to be forced into changing the past for the future's sake."

ManTwo agreed, "The only hope Herodian has, is to manipulate the past in such a way, without engaging the cosmic reset, in order to affect an outcome that will favor the damned, we are all prisoners that have been given a death sentence, we are all on death row! We know how much time there is left, as does any prisoner on death row, but our hope is to affect an escape."

WomanTwo uttered, "We can't escape into the past, because at the end, God will declare an end to all time, and then the truth will be revealed, that there is but one day."

ManOne added, "God created seven days, the first six were for making all things. But in the seventh day, God's rest became our time to play!"

ManThree voiced, "The foolish humans, when they fell from grace, entered into the chains of time, that separate events from events, and they through ignorance, perceived each day equated with the physics of time, not realizing that there were no more days."

WomanOne said, "We have been in the seventh day ever since. Time travel isn't about conquering time, it is about suspending time. Once time has been suspended, temporarily, then one can move freely throughout that day, events that were once separated by time, are but mere moments of thought away, one can move instantly from the so called past to the future, in the twinkle of an eye."

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ManOne spoke, "That's why the Lord Jesus Christ told the humans that when he returned, there would be those that would still be alive, and that they would see the coming of the Son of Man in his Glory. Because the past and the future are but an illusion created by the physics of time, which

was imposed upon us, because our sentence draws near.”

Herodia uttered, “That is why what I am doing, and countless others just like me, guiding the catalyst, making sure that it is the humans that affect the changes, less our hands be found to be dirty and God engages a lock-down and the cosmic rest occurs, thus ruining everything, it is imperative, that I be given broad latitude to do the work that must be done, we don’t have the luxury of ignorance, like mankind! We know our time draws near!”

WomanTwo said, “And the burning fire of the Lake of Fire and Brimstone burns brightly for us, even so, the heat sears our souls!”

Herodia put forth, “You go back, and you tell the High Council, that the daughter of the king fares well. I am not ignorant of the reason that I was chosen, or why this man is a catalyst! And while there are many throughout time that have been instrumental in change, our time draws near, indeed, to a close, and once the catalyst are all fully engaged, and only then, might we see darkness as light and light as darkness!”

WomanOne nodded, “I am convinced of Herodia’s loyalty to the throne of Herodian.”

ManOne agreed, “We are sorry to have disturbed you, princess, please accept our most humble of apologies, we will not ever allow any to bring into question, your loyalty again.”

We see and graveyard, it is well kept, one of those places where the very wealthy want as a final resting place, the funeral has been for Malinda. We see that she had a lot of friends, but they are now mostly trickling away. Susan and Larry are near Jerry and Herodia, she has more or less taken Malinda’s place, as the strong one in the circle of friends.

Susan said, “I never wanted to see this day.”

Larry agreed, “Honestly, I thought I’d go first of all of us.”

Jerry uttered, “Don’t say that, this is a time for healing, it’s a time for us to keep that which made Malinda so special to us, alive, here in our hearts.”

Herodia holds onto Jerry tightly. “It’s a time to remember those happier moments, the three of you possess more of those moments than I do, because I knew her only for a short period of time, but still, her heart was sweet.”

Susan said, “I wish she could have gotten to know the real you, Herodia, how nice and kind you really are. She thought that you somehow stole Jerry from her, she never let herself consider the fact that love might have really had something to do with it.”

Larry spoke, “Yeah. She couldn’t let go, I wish I could love like that, but I have that dogology thing going.”

Susan said while holding Larry tightly. “Yeah, well, Im going to have to just work on that, your roaming days are over, mister!”

Jerry said, “Looks like the two of you are going to take things to the next level.”

Herodia added, “Might there be wedding bells in your future?”

Larry voiced, “Oh, dude and dudette, please save me from all this mushiness. A guy can’t even think right now.”

Susan said, “He says this right now, in front of the two of you, but in secret, he talks about settling down.”

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Larry admitted, “Well, if you tell them, then it isn’t a secret anymore, is it, Susan?”

Herodia smiled, “I think Jerry and I could kind of sense, that something special was starting to happen between the two of you. And don’t be afraid, Larry, Susan is a wonderful lady, I don’t

think you could do better.”

Susan nods and reacts. “Oh, Herodia, coming from you, that is one of the nicest things ever said about me.”

Jerry voiced, “Just make sure we are on your list.”

Larry asked, “List?”

Herodia uttered, “You were going to invite us to your wedding?”

Susan chimed, “That was one of the things that I wanted to talk to the two of you about.”

Herodia said, “Oh?”

Susan went on, “Yes, we were wondering, I mean, you do have the pretty lake house, and it would make a really sweet place to have a few close friends over to witness the ceremony.”

Herodia smiled, now she knows that she’s in. “Oh, Susan, that would be wonderful, what do you think, dear?”

Jerry smiles, “Consider it done. You just let us know when, everything is already worked out.”

Susan stated, “Wonderful. The fact of the matter, is that we were not sure if you’d agree. But now, well, thanks.”

Larry uttered, “I always thought that I’d never get married, you know, just go through life free and whatnot . . .”

Susan said while striking him lovingly. “Larry!”

Larry said, “No, babe, I was just saying, you know, with Jerry and Herodia and with the loss of Malinda, the dynamic of everything has changed, I’m looking for more, I guess.”

Jerry said, “Sometimes, that is a good thing, Larry. I think there is a time and place for everything. A time to be born, a time to cry, a time to rejoice, a time to love and a time to die.”

Larry nodded, “Profound, dude.”

Herodia cited, “Proverbs.”

Jerry uttered, “Yeah, Herodia has committed herself to reading the entire Holy Bible, that way, if we ever veer off course from one another, we will have a rock solid common ground, in which to be guided back to the path of love.”

Susan said, “Jerry, that is so beautiful, Larry, we are going to do the same thing.”

Larry spoke, “But, Susan, you know I don’t like to read anymore than I have too.”

Susan countered, “Consider this required reading for our marriage, and for keeping me happy.”

Herodia said, “Sounds like the two of you are setting the right foundation for a long and happy and healthy relationship. It’s not about the little lies that will inevitably creep into your relationship, all couples encounter them. It’s about your ability to find the truth in the love that the two of you share.”

Larry nodded, “Herodia, you must really love and care for Jerry, here!”

Herodia stated, “Larry, before I met Jerry, in fact, before I met any of you, I didn’t know what love was. To me it was a total and complete waste of time. It made no sense why humans spent so much time trying to find it, and when they did, lose it just as suddenly, all but except for a few, those lucky few, that were able to find the right person. A man and a woman that loved each other so  
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deeply, it touched their very souls, a love that could withstand anything, even the most awful torment.”

Susan asked, “Torment? You are talking about the torment of love, if separated?”



Herodia nodded, "Yes, of course, what else is there, because love is so beautiful."

Larry announced, "God is love! So if you are really in love, I mean spiritual love, not that nasty lust thing that I've gotten so good at, if you are in love . . ."

Susan finishes his sentence. "It's like being in the spirit of God Himself!"

Larry smiled, "Right, Susan, way deep, my babe."

Susan uttered, "It's getting late, we better be going."

They all hug and Susan and Larry leave. Malinda's parents come over.

Malinda's Mother said, "It was good to see you, Jerry. I'm sure that Malinda would have wanted you here, she loved you so much."

Malinda's Father said, "Now, dear, not in front of his wife . . ."

Herodia assured them, "No, it's okay, there was no secret about it, I am well aware that your daughter harbored those feelings for Jerry. Malinda was a remarkable young lady, I will miss her greatly."

Malinda's Mother nodded, "Yes. Well, thank you for coming, there is something that you need to know, though . . ."

Jerry asked, "Oh?"

Malinda's Mother told him, "It's about that time when she disappeared for over a year."

Malinda's father said, "Dear, now is not the time."

Malinda's Mother went on, "I don't hold you responsible, Jerry, because she didn't want you to know, but she was carrying your baby."

Jerry goes into shock as he reacts. "What? She told me it was some guy's child, she always held to that!"

Herodia uttered while kissing Jerry, maybe inappropriately. "Honey, that's alright, don't be too upset."

Jerry beside himself, "I'm not upset, I'm shocked, shocked that all this has to come out now, now when nothing can be done about it. Why did she lie to me?"

Malinda's Father spoke, "To protect you, son. She thought long and hard, she wanted to tell you, but she felt that the timing was wrong, the two of you were just in the throw of your college education, she had plans, she wanted the two of you to be stable and ready to have a family."

Jerry muttered, "And so she made this decision on her own?"

Malinda's Mother said, "Believe me, it pushed her into a depression, so deep, I didn't think she'd ever come out of it. And suddenly, just like that, she got better. Decided she wanted to finish college and be with you again. She was happy again, and that was all I really cared about. But, you went off and married this, this woman."

Jerry was profoundly saddened, "Oh wow . . ."

Herodia said, "You are upset, grieving. . ."

We see a lovely hillside covered with lush green grass and off to the side yellow flowers. The sky is an azure and there might be a few puffy clouds about. In the middle of the hillside is a mystic tree, could it be the Tree of Life? It is indeed a lovely day, but something about this causes us to believe that we are not looking at a present day event, no, this spot is trans-dimensional. Now we see Jerry, he's standing near the Tree of Life and he seems somewhat sad. Now an image of a figure

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begins to appear to him, as it takes form we see that it is Malinda, she's been transformed, is she an angel?

Jerry sees her and reacts. "Malinda? Is that really you?"

Malinda takes him in her arms. "Yes, my darling, it really is me."

Jerry is so happy as they kiss lovingly. "I miss you so much, and I was so worried about your soul, you know, after your suicide."

Malinda said, "You have no need to fear, I'm with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Jerry asked, "But I don't understand?"

Malinda explained, "Not all things are as they seem, Jerry."

Jerry said, "Your death, you killed yourself."

Malinda answered, "Did I?"

Jerry was confused, "Why, yes, your mother and father told me so. You were so depressed, you lost the baby, and then, and then the disappointment of us not being together, I'm so sorry I hurt you like that."

Malinda shook her head, "You are fine, Jerry, there's no need for sorrow anymore. I'm with God and all is well. Everything will be okay."

Jerry said, "But Herodia, and her people, they plan on subverting the entire world."

Malinda spoke, "Things that have to come to pass."

Jerry asked, "But why?"

Malinda answered, "Because mankind has turned his back on God Almighty and has gone a whoring after false gods. Gods that they have made up, technology, he worships as a god, science, is now his god, cunning fables, are now his god. The world was created by God, but it knew God not."

Jerry asked, "Why is that? Why not just force the world to acknowledge the Creator?"

Malinda answered, "The universe is two fold in purpose."

Jerry questioned, "I don't understand?"

Malinda expounded, "To you this is given because you are a catalyst."

Jerry asked, "You know about this, but how?"

Malinda said, "I'm no longer of this world, Jerry. God's love and his ability to forgive us of our sins goes to the heart of why we are here. The Fallen Ones are damned! They know it, and the arrogance of their perversion to undermine the Creation, however, God is infinitely smarter than any fallen angel, after all, did he not make them, too?"

Jerry said, "Yes, God created everything, those things seen and unseen."

Malinda said, "Then you know, that the Lord has a plan that reaches far beyond just us, for He has other flocks."

Jerry nodded, "Life isn't just about the people on Earth?"

Malinda spoke, "Long before the universe, there were other Creations, after all, God is Creation itself, his love for all of us goes beyond the here and now."

Jerry uttered, "So, mankind, wrapped up in all his self-interest, can't see the big picture?"

Malinda said, "When God creates, he creates in its entirety. He doesn't create by evolution, but like the Grand Artist that he is, he creates the thing whole, mature, ready to function. So, in this, is the illusion of evolution, the universe was really created in its maturity, with a past and a present and a future."

Jerry said, "So, that is why scientist keep coming up with contradictory evidence, because they are looking into a past that while it is real, existed only in the totality of the manifold Creation."

Malinda spoke, "Think about how God created Adam and Eve, they were full grown, thus in them is the example of the universe, it was full grown, mature in its inception."

Jerry said, "Malinda, I miss you so."

Malinda uttered, "I will always be with you, all you have to do is think upon me, and I'll be there."

Jerry voiced, "But the world is in grave need of help, it is about to go down the path of damnation."

Malinda said, "It always has been."

Jerry asked, "Can't we stop it?"

Malinda told him, "A path is like a way, the way is set before the path can be complete."

Jerry said, "But I can tell them, warn them."

Malinda announced, "They didn't listen to the holy prophets and prophetess, they didn't listen to the Lord Jesus Christ. What did they do to all of them, they killed them, because they were not the vision that the world wanted. They will listen and accept Herodian. The children of darkness know their own creator, they sense their maker's essence."

Jerry said, "So, that is why the world rejects the Living God. Because the damned carries through, the evolution of time?"

Malinda nodded, "Yes. They are set on a certain course, the evil gardener has planted his seed amongst the good seed. They grow and develop together, but God will make use of the good and cast away the bad."

Jerry voiced, "But if they all look alike, how can you tell one from another, they all have grown up together, they have mutated, changed, taken on each other's characteristics."

Malinda said, "Thus, is God's Reckoning."

Jerry asked, "What is the cosmic reset?"

Malinda spoke, "It is a failsafe, if the prisoners were to advance too far, everything goes back to the original plan, the original design, what was once advanced, will become undone."

Jerry reasoned, "Then in order to stop Herodian, one must trigger the cosmic reset?"

Malinda said, "This thing is not in mere human hands, this thing is of God Almighty, no one, no thing can upset what is written. The world has been on a long and dangerous course of deception. Just reason, Jerry: Adam and Eve, lied to at the very beginning, the evil ones were not playing around! They sought to murder not just those two people, but the entire human race!"

Jerry said, "And that is what Herodian really is, murderers of mankind?"

Malinda answered, "Yes, they are trying to escape their time of execution, while on death row. They know their time draws near, indeed, is at hand, but they are intelligent beings that have preyed on the ignorance of mankind for countless millennia."

Jerry stated, "I don't want to be the catalyst."

Malinda told him, "You have no choice, we all have a part to play in life, some seem grander than others, but even the dying woman and child in darkest Africa, is known by the Lord Jesus Christ."

Jerry said, "Then why doesn't God save them?"

Malinda answered, "Why don't you save them, Jerry? Are not we the hands of God? Are not we the instruments of the Lord? You wanted to know how God can tell the good from the bad, you have your answer. Those that do good are good and those that do evil are evil, if you are not for the Lord Jesus Christ, then you are against him."

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Jerry said, "What about the gray area?"

Malinda said, "My dear, Jerry, it is but a illusion. There is no third side, either mankind lives or dies, life everlasting, or total damnation, it is a binary principle."

Jerry nodded, "I understand that, like a computer, on or off, no middle switch, kinda on or kinda off."

Malinda spoke, "Luke warm can not be used by anyone. The battle is spiritual, manifesting itself in a physical manifold of time and space, but time can be suspended, leaving only the raw reality, there is but one day."

Jerry answered, "The seventh day."

Malinda said, "I love you, Jerry, and I always will, but you still have much work to do before moving on." She kisses him sweetly. "Remember me . . ." She vanishes in a wash of heavenly light.

Jerry is now left alone, he is very sad and weeps. But now comes another image, another figure, but this one flies towards him with golden wings shining. As the figure touches the green ground, it begins to transform into what we now see is Herodia. Her wings vanish as she takes on human form. Then she runs to her husband and kisses him passionately.

Herodia utters, "Oh, my darling, I've been looking all over for you. How is it that you are found here?"

Jerry answers, "I don't know, I was in a haze, filled with all sorts of emotions, and then I found myself here, wherever here is."

Herodia looks at the tree. "The Tree of Life. Have you eaten of it?"

Jerry is confused. "What, no, why should I do that?"

Herodia said, "So that you may live forever."

Jerry answered, "You mean, if I eat from this tree, I will become immortal?"

Herodia nodded, "Yes, and you will become like me, your loving wife, we will be married and in love forever, no amount of torment can ever separate us."

Jerry said, "I didn't know."

Herodia voices, "The others, they have started to suspect that I have fallen in love with you."

Jerry voiced, "You mean your mother and father?"

Herodia answered, "Those to whom you speak, are not my real mother and father, I am a princess, my father is the king and my mother the queen."

Jerry said, "So, you are not only rich and perversely beautiful, you are royalty. You have spoken of this before, that you are a princess, I guess it never phased me until now."

Herodia said, "You have had a lot on your mind, other humans, when given the chance to have anything they'd want, choose riches or power or fame, to have their enemies crushed, to live forever, to be forever young. But you chose me!"

Jerry said, "I'm sorry about that, Herodia. I guess I kinda got you in a lot of trouble."

Herodia said, "No, Jerry, you did just the opposite of this, you saved me, for in you I am one."

Jerry stated, "You are a demon!"

Herodia said, "I am a woman, with the will and the ways of any woman. I chose to agree with you, because you casted a spell on me, while I was suppose to be casting a spell on you, you told me that you wanted to marry me and that you wanted me to love you forever."

Jerry uttered, "Sorry."

Herodia said, "Don't be, because God is Love! And in order for me to fulfil your wish, I had

to change! That is what I've been trying to tell you all this time, I'm no longer the demon you first met. In becoming your wife, you have caused me to transcend my own damnation. Jerry, my people have been trying to escape from hell all these countless millennia, while the answer was right before

our eyes, but in seeing we could not see, and in hearing, we could not hear.”

Jerry spoke, “I don’t follow you.”

Herodia explained, “Love is the way out of purgatory!”

Jerry said, “I thought there was no way out of damnation.”

Herodia said, “I thought so too, but apparently, if I can love you as deeply and purely as I do, and believe me, sweetheart, when I tell you that I do, then there must be something that even we, the Herodians don’t know.”

Jerry uttered, “Well, no one knows God’s mind, he is above all of us, his thoughts belong to no man or woman, God is so awesome, that no amount of reasoning can understand his immanence.”

Herodia uttered, “God is love.”

Jerry said, “Yes, he is.”

Herodia went on, “We will have to be very cautious, because, the others must never know for sure, how I really feel about you. If they were ever to have hard evidence, because this world is about the similitude of something far grander in reality than what is before us, they would kill you.”

Jerry said, “What about you?”

Herodia spoke, “Whether I be and angel of God or an angel of damnation, I can not be killed in the conventional sense. I am immortal, and if damned, will be damned forever. But if brought into the brightness of God’s light, will be washed and cleansed, no longer filthy with corruption, but made like you, forgiven.”

Jerry said, “And I’m suppose to believe you?”

Herodia answered, “Why would you not?”

Jerry put forth, “Because you are a demon, you invented lying!”

Herodia said, “But, my husband, why would I lie to you, when I have everything to gain by telling you the truth?”

Jerry uttered, “A priest once told me that evil spirits can’t tell the truth, they don’t know how!”

Herodia countered, “Then I submit to you that I am no longer evil, because I am telling you the truth.”

Jerry said, “And you don’t want me to do the duty of Herodian anymore?”

Herodia answered, “I don’t care about my mission, Jerry. Something wonderful has come over me, something impossible has happened to me, to both of us.”

Jerry shouted, “I don’t want to hear anymore!”

Herodia tried to comfort him, “Darling, what has come over you?”

Jerry admitted, “Malinda didn’t commit suicide!”

Herodia was shocked as she reacts. “And you think I had something to do with it?”

Jerry said, “Didn’t you?”

Herodia spoke, “No! I swear to you, on all things that are holy, I did not!”

Jerry said, “Stop that! Just listen to you, trying to sound like the saved, and yet, sounding like the damned!”

Herodia spoke, “What can I do to prove to you that I am sincere?”

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Jerry said, “I don’t want to be a catalyst to the destruction of the human race. Can you arrange that?”

Herodia said, “Many are called but few are chosen.”

Jerry uttered, "And what is that suppose to mean?"

Herodia spoke, "It means that Herodian did not make you a catalyst, they discovered that you were, just like they have done with countless others. This is not something that I have control over."

Jerry said, "But you can heal people or cause their deaths, still, you can't undo what has to come to pass?"

Herodia said, "What must come to pass has already happened. If the morning has come, then the evening has already gone."

Jerry said, "What the hell kind of voodoo is that saying?"

Herodia answered, "It is the reality of the world, the day of reckoning draws near."

Jerry asked, "Do you know when the Second Coming will happen?"

Herodia said, "No one knows this but God the Father."

Jerry said, "Then how can everything be written and have happened? What are your people trying to escape? If you don't know this, where will you run to? When Heaven and Earth will expire, where will you run to? What magic can save you, your people are damned to be stuck here, in this physical universe, spirits that once proudly roamed the universe, now made subjected to its demise."

Herodia stated, "I have something to tell you. Something very wonderful has happened to me, to us."

Jerry uttered, "What is it because I could use some good news, anything is better than this."

Herodia said, "I am pregnant. We are going to have a baby, it's a girl. That is why I am so happy and filled with hope, the sign of a new beginning, for you and me. Our child, made from our love . . ."

Jerry was both happy and shocked as he reacts. "I can't believe it, I thought that because you were a demon, you couldn't have children. A girl, huh, I think we shall call her, Malinda!"

“And lake, dim gleaming on the smoky lawn” James Beattie

“For God Almighty loves us like a father loves his children” Rev. Rufus Maxberg

## CHAPTER 1

Isaiah Silverhawk stood over, across from the rest of them, “I don’t see anything here that I should be concerned with, it’s not my problem,” he was ready to let it go at that.

Vyna Ha-voa was obviously agitated, “What are you, blind?” came her un-thought-of and ill placed outburst.

Everyone in the gallery became silent, they knew, but what rock had she crawled out of, he didn’t react with the same emotional cadence, he pulled out his Blind Person’s glasses, put them on and smiled, actually, to everyone who had so graciously came to his new art opening, “Why, yes I am . . .”

There was some slight mocking laughter directed towards Vyna, how could she not have known, she looked about, their expressions stated the obvious, she’d just made a fool of herself, and in front of professional people in the business, “I, I’m sorry, I didn’t realize who you were. This is your art work, it really is quite good, very good actually.”

Now that the tension had been dispelled, Isaiah moved about the high powered, rich neo-aristocracy, smiling and doing light chat, most of the people lauding him with praise, about the often mystical and mostly unique art exhibition he was putting on. Vyna tried to stay back, looking to find a moment so that she could talk to the artist, without the press and other art lovers, mostly potential buyers, Isaiah’s art could go for a cool \$250,000.00 for a larger piece, the cheapest painting was going for \$8,000.00, and someone had already bought that one, happy as could be.

Jamie Tracouch, Isaiah’s agent and manager, (why would a painter need an agent and a manager?), big business forces us all to sell out eventually, she came up to Vyna, “Well, I guess you got to meet the man himself, you had to insult him right off, not good, the price of anything you might want to buy of his, just doubled.”

Vyna uttered, “What?”

Jamie nodded, “Hey, I love the guy, not just his art work, you don’t belong here, why don’t you leave, he’s sensitive about his handicap.”

Vyna digested what was being said to her, then decided she was a bigger bitch than the woman standing in front of her, “He may be your client, you may be his agent, but from what I can see, he makes his own decisions, besides, he is wearing those Blind Person glasses, they take visual images (information) and translate the analogue information into digital, then convert the sight into sound, twelve notes to be exact, there is a symphony going on in one of his ears, he sees better than I do!”

The voice came from in back of them, it was Isaiah, “She’s right you know, now be nice to her, I want to sell paintings.”

They both, both women were taken by surprise, but Vyna recovered the quicker, “Hi, I’m

Vyna Ha-voa, I love your work, very, er, very spiritual, moving, almost frightening in a beautiful kind of way.”

Isaiah motioned his head, and Jamie saw that he could handle the situation, she went on,

working the crowd, he smiled and said, "Plenty of art here, and it is for sale."

Vyna glanced admirably, but she went back to him, "I want something, something personal, done for me and me alone. I was told that you were the artist to have that done, I'm new to Evegastus. I just knew of your name, basically, I'm really sorry about my rudeness."

Pandora Wilson walked over various debris, the crime scene was dark, though police were setting up a parameter and forensics were establishing proper lighting, she was with the government, a special branch that dealt in interplanetary crimes, they were called the Star Police. She leaned over the badly mutilated remains of what was once a thirty seven year waitress, the body dumped in the woods, "Put some light on this area," she commanded, but her voice never went above a quiet and calm cadence, she examined the wounds.

The local police, a pot-bellied man, up in years (whatever that was, a person could go from one planet to the next, age was partly dependent upon a whole slew of factors, lots of times, the transdoor technology played a major role, because most civilized planets in the League of Worlds, calculated time according to the transdoor continuum, which was a complicated array of continually open translaser portals, linked to physical machines, used for instant transportation across large and vast distances), the only way to explain it was like changing the channel to a television, a really big television, and then walking through it into another reality, or place, so a child of three could be three hundred years old, if the child translasered to a world that's chronological time was three hundred years later than the one the child just left. The theory also worked in reverse, and included a theory called Fixed Non-prolific Time Travel, which was a fancy way of saying that you could talk to your great-great-great, etc. grandmother and still be back in time for supper. The local policeman belched up something that smelled almost as bad as the greatly decomposing body, "Some kids, doing God knows what in the forest, came across the body, but that doesn't make this a Star Police case, I thought you people were suppose to chase criminals through the transdoor continuum?"

Coming up from behind him was Kragon, he was an off world policeman, specially assigned to the Star Police, for his psychic abilities, "Who said that this wasn't a transdoor related crime?"

The local policeman jumped a little, "Oh, didn't see you coming up from behind me, you need to watch that, boy, could get yourself shot!"

Pandora glanced up with a grin on her face, "That would never happen, he's a psychic, cloud your mind with a dozen images, weak minds work best . . ."

The local was slightly offended, "Weak minds, er, well, let's see how you so called Star Police go about solving this crime, because this is a local gal, laying here in the mud and rain, and I'll bet you two to one, some local criminal did it."

Pandora straightened up, looking at her partner, "What you got?"

Kragon spoke softly around the others, directing his voice specifically to her, "It's the same kind of killing, I'm sensing a presence . . ."

Pandora stepped out of the zone, "Is it her?"

The local policeman was trying to follow, "Is it who, do you know who did this? Hell, we've had routine traffic stops, using them with police dogs and grogers (animals similar to dogs, only smarter), we've been stopping people and letting the dogs and grogers smell the aircars, on a

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pretense of a normal traffic stop, profiling just the people you'd expect."

God, this was a backward planet, Pandora couldn't wait to leave, the local police were like something out of the early Twenty First Century on Earth Prime, violating basic human and alien



rights, under the cover of deceptive police practices, made legal by a few bought and paid for, prejudice Supreme Planetary Judges, “You are violating people’s Civil Rights! That type of policing violates the Constitutional Rights of the United Planets, it negates Human Rights!”

The coffee was hot and frothy, “So, may I ask you a question, a personal question, if you don’t mind?”

Isaiah glanced out the window, then he did something strange, to her, he took off his Blind Glasses (which gave him sight via complex acoustic symphonic arabesque), “Oh, I don’t know, it’s early in the morning and I don’t really have anything better to do than to let you ask me a bunch of personal questions, that I’d probably not want to answer, but what the hay, ask away . . .”

Vyna smiled, “Good, I’ll take all of that as a great big, yes.”

Isaiah didn’t look at her, his face still turned out towards what was going on outside, “Get to the point.”

Vyna cleared the throat, “It’s about your blindness, why would a person who is blind, choose a profession, such as painting, I mean, sculpture, something like that I can understand, but painting requires, requires, sight.”

Isaiah couldn’t understand why he had agreed to meet with this annoying woman, she was extremely tactless, “So, people who are not handicapped, should decide what the handicapped should do? Who made you the one to tell disabled people what they can and can not do?”

Vyna sat back, she honestly didn’t see anything wrong with what she had asked, “Oh, well, I guess this is a touchy subject, but if I’m going to hire you to do a personal painting for me, I’d like to get to know the man, so I can drop little bits of trivia, at my parties, as my guest admire the new art work.”

Isaiah took in a deep breath, “Fair enough, I wasn’t always blind, something happened, something that robbed me of my sight. But, thanks be to God Almighty, because He provided me with an opportunity to get around, just the same.”

Vyna frowned, even though he couldn’t see it right then, “God? You mean Technoligion, our wonderful advances in technology and science.”

Isaiah almost laughed as he put back on his Blind Glasses, “No, I mean the Lord Jesus Christ, where do you think all those wonderful advances originate from, if God doesn’t want something to happen, believe me, it never happens. And on the converse, if the Lord Jesus decides that it’s time for something to happen, nothing mankind can do, can stop it.”

Vyna couldn’t believe her ears, “You, you are a Faithier, one of these neo-Christians? I can’t believe it, I never thought I’d ever meet one, not in the flesh, anyway. Virtually, that is a different story, meet them all the time on the cosmic web. Wow!”

Isaiah sat back, “Can you get anymore condescending?”

Vyna giggled, she was enjoying his company, it was her way, accosting the man she liked, until she revealed her secret, that she really did like him, “Well I just want to get to know you, this is more than a professional interest.”

Isaiah signed, “Oh joy, maybe this isn’t a good idea, you can find some else to do a painting for you.”

Vyna got very serious for a brief moment, “No, it has to be you! You have a special

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talent, more than any other artist in our contemporary time, you are special, I want a portrait.”

Isaiah stood up quickly, “This meeting is over, I don’t like to do portraits, not anymore.”

Vyna tried to keep him there, “Please, I know, I know more about than I pretended. A friend,

associate of mine, had one done by you, your paintings can foretell the future.”

As Isaiah left, “Then you know why I don’t like to do them, find someone else!”

Lieutenant Washington came over to the table, “My people tell me that the Star Police have an interest in this case, seems like a run of the mill homicide to me,” sipped a cup of coffee that was probable too hot and not very good.

Pandora motioned her partner, Kragon to get her a cup of the awful brew, as he was going towards the pot away, “In my years of investigation, there is no such thing as a run of the mill homicide, unless you distinguish the rich from the poor.”

Washington sat on the edge of the desk, “Well, kind of self righteous, aren’t we? The government discriminates all the time, who can have this and who can have that, there was this super rich woman, did a crime that would have landed any poor bastard in prison for ten years of cryogenics, with all sorts of invasive mind alterations. You know what she got, house arrest and six months in a luxury prison, because she was filthy rich. So where is your high horse now?”

Kragon came back with the coffee, “The current legal system favors the rich and the powerful, always has always will, so long as you have social inequality and prejudice.”

Washington spoke, “Well, coming from a genetic background, in which hundreds of years ago, my people were discriminated against, just because of the color of their skin, I do appreciate the fairer things about the law. If you are talking about discriminating against alien beings, because they are not human, I have it as much as anyone, race color, what planet you were born on, should not matter.”

Pandora sipped the coffee, “No, it shouldn’t, but the reoccurring theme of superficial prejudice, based on economic and political oppression of one class verses another, just keeps on coming, why is that?”

Kragon put his two cents worth in, “Because there is more to it than what meets the eye. Evil uses the physical world to try and control the final outcome.”

Washington looked at the other man for a long moment, “You are not from around here, are you?”

Kragon frowned, “No, I am not, I’m not totally human either, if that is what you are getting at.”

Washington shook his head as he stood up, “No, I told you, I’m a black man, my people used to be discriminated against just because of it, ridiculous as it sounds now days, but my people used to live in fear of the police and the criminals. This young woman, who was found dead in the woods, she was alien, do you think that the killer is singling out alien women for his victims?”

Pandora voiced, “The perp is not a he, it’s a she, and she kills in a very specific way.”

Washington raised an eyebrow, “The coroner’s report hasn’t come in yet, care to enlighten an old flat foot?”

Pandora set the cup down, “The person, no, thing we are looking for, kills her victim, sometimes years before we find them. The victims don’t appear to be dead, and function for a long time, then, for reasons that we still don’t understand, they just drop dead, some freak-out, mostly that’s how we find them, but in this case, the victim just died.”

Washington was very skeptical, “You government types, making more out of it than what it  
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has to be, what was she, some kind of . . .”

Pandora stood up, serious as can be, “Zombie . . .”

Washington walked away slowly, “Yeah, right, zombie, the victim was a zombie . . .”

Kragon explained, "A person, without a soul, to be exact, her soul has been stolen."

Sandra took a seat next to Isaiah on the couch, they were listening to jazz music, "This woman really bothers you, doesn't she . . ."

Isaiah sipped a glass of wine, "You have no idea how self-centered she is, I told her no, that I didn't do portraits anymore."

Sandra held up her glass of red wine to the light, "Did you bother to explain why you don't do portraits anymore, I mean, I'm assuming she was willing to offer you a hefty sum of shekels."

Isaiah studied his friend's pretty face for a moment, "One million shekels to be exact."

Sandra leaned back, "Oh my, Good Lord, please tell me that you left the door open for some kind of future negotiation."

Isaiah smiled slightly, "Not really."

Sandra sat forward, placing her glass of wine on the small ornate table in front of them, "Look, I've known you a long time, it's like we've been friends forever, there was a time when no one stood in line to view Isaiah Silverhawk's paintings, remember, and that hasn't been that long ago."

Isaiah considered what his close friend was telling him, "You are right, fact of the matter is, if the God Lord Jesus hadn't given me such good friends, I wouldn't be here right now, let alone turning down a million shekel commission."

Sandra uttered, "Do you know how many young and up and coming artist would kill to be in your shoes, to have strangers viewing and appreciating their work, you've come along way, Isaiah. I still remember the little boy who told everybody, that he was going to be a famous artist one day. A blind kid, too poor to afford a pair of Blind Glasses. You had no means of seeing the canvas, let alone the money to buy supplies."

Isaiah nodded, "I had to beg and borrow supplies, few people believed that the Lord Jesus Christ had a purpose for me, the ones who did help, just thought they were helping out the poor little blind kid, humoring him."

Sandra said, "But I always believed, I always knew that Jesus Christ was going to make use of you, Isaiah, I trusted in God Jesus, just like you did."

Isaiah uttered after a long moment, "You are my best friend, always been there for me. Never doubted, why?"

Sandra told him, "Because with God Almighty, all things are possible!"

Isaiah nodded, "Yes, you are right. I could use the money, seems like the more successful I become, the more in debt I go. Some times I wonder, if the poor in material things, don't actually have it better than the rich."

Sandra tilted her head, "How so?"

Isaiah spoke, "Because they have God Jesus Christ, to help them, the Holy Spirit to comfort them, and God the Father to watch over them. While the rich always have one foot in hell, and the other in purgatory, it's like God Jesus said, it would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

Sandra leaned over and kissed him on the lips, "You have a lot of bills, loans, financial obligations, from what you've indicated to me, you may be rich in spirit and in faith, but you owe  
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before you can put your hands on it, God Jesus can easily tell the difference."

Isaiah voiced, "Thanks, Sandra, I value your friendship, it means a lot to me."

Sandra took her glass and sipped more wine, "Just keeping it real, Isaiah, tell her, yes . . ."

Vyna looked out onto the lake, sail boats with their white sails, spotted the dark blue of the water beyond, "I suppose you think of me as a selfish woman."

Isaiah waited a moment, "I suppose that we all have those feelings."

Vyna laughed slightly, "You are just saying that, you really don't understand me anymore than I understand you."

Isaiah nodded, "Okay, but that was not why we agreed to meet, not after the last time, when I told you no."

Vyna cleared her throat, "Yes, well, I can see why you walked away from the table last time, I didn't make you a generous enough offer, after all, you are a famous artist now, you do excellent work, and expect nothing less, when it comes to your time and bank account."

Isaiah looked at the woman for a long while, "Is that what you think this is all about, that I want more money?"

Vyna uttered, "Two million shekels, tax free. That is a lot of money, when word gets out that you are doing portraits again, they'll be flocking to your door steps."

Isaiah leaned against the stone wall, "Just look at them . . ."

Vyna was confused, "Just look at what?"

Isaiah said, "The sail boats, out in the distance, they seem to have no care in the world, so peaceful, calm is the water . . ."

Vyna jumped in, "I own a sail boat, have a really good crew too, would you like to go sailing some times? The two of us."

Isaiah smiled, "I'd like that, I enjoy being out on the waves, the feel of the spray against my face, the wind, the sounds of the sea and the boat as they act as one."

Vyna moved closer to him, "Yes, it is beautiful, the sea, I mean. Er, why, why do you hate to do portraits?"

Isaiah hesitated, "Because, when I do a portrait of someone, they end up dead, I used to do them back in the day, before I was well known, and then one day, I became aware of a pattern developing, every person that I had done a portrait for, had been killed several years later."

Vyna spoke, "I'd heard a different kind of story, that everyone that you did a portrait, suddenly had fantastic economic success, they thought the paintings brought them good luck in business."

Isaiah shook his head, "Yes, but at what price, they all die a few years after that. My portraits are cursed."

Vyna giggled, "Why don't you leave that up to your customers, to decide that, the truth of the matter is, that it was all a coincidence."

Isaiah told her, "I'll do the painting for you, private sitting, on my time and terms, but I will paint the picture with my Blind Glasses on, okay."

Vyna nodded her head, "Sure, what ever, I don't see why that is so important to you, but I can respect your wishes. How long will it take?"

Isaiah studied her face, her beautiful features, she really was quite a lovely woman, just real bossy, that was the one thing he didn't like about her, "Each one is different, now, if you want a painting robot to do it for you, I have one of the best . . ."

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Vyna yelled, "No! I mean, no, you are what I'm looking for, it has to be you, not some robotic machine, with no soul, no life, the human touch has to be there, there is something special about you, your painting of people, foretell the future."

The rest found spots in the autopsy room, the smell of death was everywhere, Lieutenant Washington was a good man, God fearing man, in a time and place that valued idolatry, through the false beliefs in Technoligion, a government created religion, that glorified the values and conquests of the government, for some, a perfect religion, melding economics and politics and technology, but for those few who dared to speak the truth, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. That the Son of God was our Savior, and that Technoligion was nothing more than a manifestation of the Beast.

Washington began to eat a sandwich, "So, tell me, what brings out the Transdoor Star Police (TSP), you don't come all the way out here for a local murder."

Pandora watched the big man eat while the facts of the autopsy were proceeding, "If I'm right, you are going to find a Necrobzom protein in the body. It is a marker for a special synthetic bacteria."

The coroner looked up from the complicated machines she was using, "I just found that out a few seconds ago, the post-mortem machine just gave me the possible cause of death."

Washington stopped eating, "What?"

Dr. Faxtor stepped away from the humming post-mortem machine as it automatically cut up and cataloged the corpse, but she wasn't finished, she was just letting the program run, "This bacteria, this is the overall cause of death. There are some other things that contributed to it, but basically, the Necrobzom bacteria is throughout all of her body."

Washington questioned, "So, she was not murdered, like some of us seem to think, this poor soul died of a bacterial infection?"

The post-mortem machine made a funny sound, bringing Dr. Faxtor back to the screen, she looked back at them shortly after pressing some keys on the console, "This can't be right, according to the post-mortem machine, this woman has been dead for two years!"

The room suddenly fell very quiet, because everyone knew that the poor woman had been seen at work and about the town for those last two years, then, slowly eyes began to fall onto the two TSP agents. Someone up high uttered, "So, this is a TSP case after all, I'll inform the Governor, you'll have the departments total cooperation," the woman left quickly.

Washington went to the TSP, "Just what is this?"

Kragon spoke, "As we have been trying to tell you, there is a serial killer running loose, using the transdoor as their method of procuring new victims."

Pandora explained, "The suspect's name is Nehushtan, he is very rich, well connected, specially with the Dark Planets within the League of Worlds, so he's hard to catch, can change his identity, he has rogue state connections."

Dr. Faxtor voiced, "He'd have to be, this bacteria is sweet, in an evil kind of way, state of the art kind of stuff, military I'd expect."

Pandora went on, "We call it the zombie bacteria, it was designed to be used on villages off world, on planets that were under developed, it can only be transmitted through sexual contact."

Dr. Faxtor muttered, "According to these findings, this bacteria was genetically produced using the old ancient virus that killed so many back in the late and early Twentieth and Twenty First Century, on Earth Prime. What does this person have to do with the Necrobzom bacteria?"

Kragon informed, "He is the head zombie, the one that was first infected with the bacteria, he

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was a test subject, but it was discovered, that he steals other people's souls to feed."

Isaiah and Vyna were in his studio loft, he was making some preliminary sketches of her, and doing other preparations, before he actually got around to doing a portrait of her, "So, you never told

me . . .”

Vyna gazed up from eating Chinese food, “Told you what?”

Isaiah bit into an egg roll, “Whatever happened to that friend of yours that told you about me?”

Vyna stopped eating for a moment, appearing to be thinking, “I don’t know, we lost touch, I haven’t seen him in a long time.”

Isaiah seemed somber, “Maybe before we really get into actually painting, you should find out about him, just in case . . .”

Vyna cut in, “Just in case he’s dead, from some mysterious accident. Isaiah, I appreciate that you are a Faither and all, but I’m not, I was raised believing in Technoligion, I don’t believe in superstition, just science and facts and technology. I told you, those things that happened to those other people, they were little more than, what they were, accidents, you just happened to paint some of them. Ask yourself this, what about those people whom you turned down, did any of them die, people die, Isaiah, it is a fact of life.”

Isaiah cleared his throat, “You don’t understand, my belief in Lord Jesus Christ, is not superstition! God Jesus is real and alive, you dismiss the Almighty Power of Jesus Christ, because you don’t understand him, his love for us, his forgiveness, how he sacrificed his own life, in order to save all mankind.”

Vyna uttered, “Only mankind, what about the other people that live on all the worlds that have been discovered, when mankind ventured out amongst the stars? Did your God save them too?”

Isaiah voiced, “God Jesus created the Heavens and the Earth, he created everything, that is why he has gone before us, to create a new Heaven and a new Earth, if you believe in God Jesus, you are saved, it is as simple as that.”

Vyna said, “Alright, fair enough, you got me there, you are saying that your God created everything that we know of?”

Isaiah responded, “No, I am saying that the Lord Jesus Christ, created everything seen and unseen, not just the things that we know of, in fact, there are scripture that say that the unseen is greater than the seen, so in the universe, there are many secrets, some mankind will discover, others that we will never know.”

Vyna uttered, “You know, that on some planets, even within the League of Worlds, they still persecute the Faithers, the neo-Christians, as yourself . . .”

Isaiah told her, “I’m more afraid of God, and what he would do to me, if I turned my back on him, after having been given such a wonderful blessing, as the conscience of the Lord Jesus Christ. No true Christian is going to accept the world, after having the truth made known, the things of this world are shadows, images, whispers of things in the Spirit World, the world of the spirits are what is real. The physical world, with all its beauty and temptations, is still nothing more than a kind of grand simulation, for something better, to come.”

Vyna took a sip of wine, “Wow, I never had it explained like that, so, God is Love, that is what it comes down to? What if I were to tell you that I’m in love with you?”

Isaiah stopped what he was doing, “What? We just met . . .”

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Vyna smiled, “Ah, but I trust my heart, Isaiah, can you trust yours?”

## CHAPTER 2

It was a small gathering, a live band played out by the pool area, guest wandered about,

liquor flowed, but this was anything but a simple party. There were people from different areas of entertainment, broadcasting, music industry, this was business and at the head of it all was Lilith Judas, a super rich, ultra smart business woman, and a witch. Many of the people at the party were members of the Red Pearl Club. Not knowing any of this, Isaiah had been invited by someone who was invited, because the rules were that anyone invited could invite someone. He had been invited by a woman named Cloie Hobson, a rich heiress, whose money was connect with precious stones, mined way out on the outskirts of Malaocean's solar system. The solar system had two planets that were naturally inhabited and one that had been colonized centuries ago (TD Time) Transdoor Time.

Cloie strolled over to Isaiah, drink in hand, "Hey, handsome, glad to see that work didn't keep you from play."

Isaiah kind of chuckled, "No, Cloie, I'm not like you, work has it's rewards, but so does plain old kicking back. A man has to have a way of getting rid of stress, some how."

Cloie nodded, "I'm planing on a special vacation, a super cruise, on one of the luxury cruise liners, ever been on one?"

Isaiah sipped his drink and they began to politely stroll through the small party, the smell of fine cooked food floated through the air, "Man, that smells good . . ."

Cloie quickly took the cue, "Oh, what was I thinking, you must be starved, let me get you something," and she quickly went off to take care of it.

Isaiah had caught the eye of the hostess, Lilith herself, who skillfully made her way through the crowd, "Are you enjoying yourself?"

Isaiah had been cleaning his Blind Glasses, so he was caught off guard, and he hadn't recognized the voice, "Oh, I'm sorry, yeah, yeah this is a really nice party."

Lilith smiled, "Good, because I want you to be happy . . ."

Isaiah frowned, "Well that is nice of you, I, er, am, I'm happy."

Lilith realized, "How silly of me, I'm Lilith Judas, the hostess of this little get together. Mostly members of my club, really."

Isaiah kind of stepped back, the woman, while stunningly beautiful, was pressing too close for him, "I'm sorry, I was invited by a friend, I'm not a party crasher."

Lilith laughed in what could only be describer as sophisticated, "Oh, you are really a gem, I think I'm going to keep you," she gently touched the side of his face, careful not to interfere with his Blind Glasses' functioning.

Isaiah could smell the awesome perfume she was wearing, "Wow, you smell really good."

Lilith got really close to his face and whispered, "I only place it on three places on my body, can you guess . . ."

By then Cloie had returned, "Isaiah, I got you a little of everything, just in case . . .," she was taken back by the fact that Lilith had swooped in on her date (fact was, she was a little more than taken back, that Lilith was trying to pick up in Isaiah).

Lilith didn't even blink, "Cloie, so you are the one that this handsome gentleman is with."

Cloie uttered softly, controlling her jealousy, "Lilith meet Isaiah Silverhawk."

Lilith's eyes showed excitement, "Thee, Isaiah Silverhawk, I have one of your paintings."

The robot butler showed them to a comfortable seat, while a robot maid brought out a tray of refreshments and set it before them, moments later Nehushtan came with his wife Vagabona. It was very obvious that they were extremely wealthy, but Vagabona poured their drinks for them,



something very uncommon for someone of her class, economically speaking.

Nehushtan took the first drink from his wife and then turned his attention to his visitors, “I am told that you have some questions for me, concerning what?”

Pandora showed her TSP badge, “We are TSP agents, I’m Pandora Wilson and this is Kragon. We are working on a case, a murder.”

Vagabona frowned, “And what could something like that have to do with my husband?”

Nehushtan motioned to his loyal wife, “Let the police people talk, dear, they have caught my curiosity, but I shall echo my wife’s question, what does any of this have to do with me?”

Kragon voiced, “Probably nothing, but we discovered a murdered woman, on property that the city says belongs to you,” he handed him a flashpad with photos and other documents.

Nehushtan took the flashpad and studied it, “Very disturbing, you say this happened on property that belonged to me?”

Pandora nodded, “We believe that there is a serial killer loose, I’ve tracked the killer from one planet to the next, the murders are all similar, we just wanted to ask, who had access to your property?”

Nehushtan stood and went to a console, entered a few key words and looked back at them, “I have a dozen or so servants and security that have access to the property, mostly for routine maintenance and security.”

Kragon questioned, “Would your security have noticed any strange behavior as regards to your property?”

Vagabona cut in, “My husband does not have hands on attention, it is delegated out, we are quite wealthy, and have quite a large empire, that requires many people and resources to keep things working as they should.”

Pandora said, “And finding a dead woman on one of your many properties, is that working as it should?”

Nehushtan stepped in, “No it is not, I’ll have my security personnel look into this and I’ll order them to assist you in any way.”

Kragon uttered, “You said that you own lots of business and land on other planets, are you hands on with any of them?”

Nehushtan sat back down, emotionless, “I only take personal interest, when I’m actually on-world, for example if I go to Blago-7, then I’m hands on there, or wherever I go, it is for a reason.”

Pandora spoke, “Pleasure?”

It was Vagabona who fielded the question, “I’m sorry, what was that again?”

Pandora cleared her throat, “Do you visit any of the estates you own off-world, just for pleasure? I mean, it can’t all be for business.”

Vagabona intoned, “We enjoy life when we can, and take many vacations. You have to understand, that we employ hundreds of servants and have even more robotic servants. It gets to be a complicated network,” she smiled, but something was wrong with it.

Kragon voiced, “Any trouble with any of them lately, malfunctioning robot servants, angry personnel, anything?”

Lilith answered the door herself, not too risky considering there were security robots and

surveillance equipment all about her estate, she smiled warmly, “Oh, Isaiah, I’m so glad that you decided to show up,” and she gave him a little kiss on the cheek, while showing him in.

As they made their way across the room into the kitchen, warmth and good aroma of great

cooked food captured him, “Whatever you are making, smells great.”

Lilith was relieved, “Oh that is wonderful, I was afraid that you might not like it, come, we are going to get right down to the meal,” as she showed him the readied table, a robot servant came out to assist, but she shooed it away.

After they had sat, before they ate, Isaiah gave thanks to God Almighty for the food then began by tasting it, “This is really good, your robot chef is worth keeping,” he joked.

Lilith laughed, it was genuine, not strained, it would be like that the rest of the night, there was smooth jazz playing somewhere in the background, “I’m glad that you like it, but I have a confession . . .”

Isaiah stopped eating for a moment and looked at her, “There was suppose to be more people here?”

They both laughed, then Lilith uttered, “You got me, but when I heard that you had accepted the invitation, I canceled with everyone else . . .”

Isaiah was having a good time, but he kind of craned his neck, “Why?”

Lilith was almost like a school girl at that point, “I wanted to be with you, silly, that was the whole point of the evening, I had all these things planned, how I was going to steal you away from the rest of the guest, and then it dawned on me, I’ll just have you all to myself,” her smile was warm, inviting in a nice kind of way.

Isaiah voiced, “I didn’t know you liked me like that, fact is, I just thought that you were playing around, when I first met you, you know, one woman trying to make another woman jealous.”

Lilith sipped some red wine, “You mean, Cloie, yes, I can see why you might have thought that, no, when I saw you come in, I wanted to get to know you better, you have a vibe about you, something special.”

Isaiah was eating, “Well, thank you, I don’t know what to say, no one has ever told me that I vibe, that’s a good thing, right?”

Lilith nodded, “I’m sensitive to people, I pick up on spiritual vibrations, and yours are very strong, I’ve never sensed anything like it before.”

Isaiah put his fork down, “Not that I’m not grateful, but conversations like this usually lead to some sort of business proposal . . .”

Lilith ate on, trying to encourage him to do the same, “I made this meal myself, just for you, you seem to be enjoying it, and I’m very happy.”

Isaiah voiced, “Is that business?”

Lilith put everything down and looked him directly in the eyes, “Oh, I hope not, nothing could be further from my mind,” she kind of tossed her hair, reflexively.

Isaiah went on, “I noticed one of my early paintings on one of your walls, it was in good company, it almost feels out of place where you have it, with all those rare works of art.”

Lilith was humbled, “You really don’t see the talent you possess, that is so refreshing, an artist like yourself, without an ego. One of the many things that I enjoy about you,” and she went on eating.

There was an intersection above her, aircars and airtrucks whizzed by, the way air traffic was controlled was in part by the fact that each vehicle had a transponder built in, and north bound traffic

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was assigned a specific altitude, while south another, and east still another and west another, the only time there was any mixing, was when changing directions, in the city, where the rules were kept strictly for obvious reasons, it was at intersections like this one, when direction changes were legal,

otherwise, one could get a ticket for changing directions illegally.

Out of the shadows came a tall woman, dressed for the cold, she lit up what appeared to be a cigarette of drugs, the smell gave it away, "You are almost there," came the Dope-Lady.

Pandora ignored the obvious violation, dope smoking wasn't illegal if done in the privacy of one's own home, or in certain bars, that had a license to sell various drug cigarettes, and alcohol. Pandora voiced, "I know I'm close, I just interviewed the main suspect, Nehushtan, himself. But it is not going to be easy . . ."

Dope-Lady blew out a few puffs, "It's never going to be easy, that is the whole point, if you think that this was going to just fall into your lap, you are sleep walking."

Pandora waved the strong smelling herb smoke away from her, "You should know, smoking that stuff, I'd be surprised if you are not, sleep walking. But to the point, his wife is really protective, and as I already knew, he is well connected, politically. No sooner did my interview finish, then I get a call by someone up high, telling me to back off . . ."

Dope-Lady said, "Back off, really . . ."

Pandora uttered, "Well, in so many words, it was a little more technical, orders actually, but this is my case, I've been chasing it for more years than I care to remember."

Dope-Lady nodded, "And you are close, this thing goes way up the chain, you'd be surprised who is protecting Nehushtan and his wife. But you haven't gleaned the reason for all of this, to you, this is nothing more than a serial killing to be solved, you haven't allowed yourself to phantom the cosmic possibilities . . ."

Pandora looked at Dope-Lady, "What are you talking about, I get it, I have to stop this serial killer, by any means."

Dope-Lady laughed slightly, "Ask yourself, why has that killer eluded you for so long? Eluded those investigators before you, I mean, face it, you are a TSP agent, how is it that Nehushtan and his wife remain untouchable?"

Pandora was starting to feel a contact high, "Well, for one, there is his wife, Vagabona, she has family ties to powerful political networks within the League of Worlds. And then consider, the Zombie Bacteria, it can only be transmitted through sexual contact, no other way, it is impossible to contract the disease through blood, urine, a handshake, cough, why is that, and why was it first discovered in the poor third world planets?"

Dope-Lady smiled, "There in lies the real answers, not in the fact that after someone has sex with a person infected with the bacteria, they become infected instantly, and can transmit this deadly disease from person to person, each person, becoming a zombie, with the potential to kill, without reason. Think of it, mindless zombies, ready to kill on command . . ."

Pandora raised her hands in frustration, "But what command, what is the trigger, that allows an infected person to go as long as many years, acting normal, having relations, and then, snap and kill, or just fall over dead?"

Dope-Lady pointed a finger, "Now you said it, they knew you were coming."

Pandora was pensive, "Are you saying that factions within the TSP are behind this?"

The greens were good today, if you hit the right spot, you had a good chance of a birdie, Cloie and Jamie and Sandra were playing golf together. Jamie was all excited, "Looks like

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our man is going to land a big contract."

Cloie questioned, "You mean with that Vyna Ha-voa woman, I doubt that, she wants a portrait done, and Isaiah doesn't do portraits, all of his friends know that."

Jamie took a swing, “Well, it is stupid, bad for business, he should do as many paintings as people are willing to buy.”

Sandra was disgusted, “Gee, Cloie, just treat him like he’s your own personal poop bag! To be honest, I don’t know why he doesn’t just fire you and get another agent/manager, if that is what you really are . . .”

Jamie came back at her, “Now what is that suppose to mean, little miss high and mighty, you think you know him so well, just think about, the guy is good at what he does, making money off of him is just business.”

Sandra uttered, “I knew Isaiah, when he couldn’t afford Blind Glasses, his family was too poor. So don’t come all up on me like that, truth be told, you’re not a real friend, anyway.”

Cloie cut in, “Ladies, ladies, and I use the word loosely, what Isaiah decides to do, is his own business, as his friends, I think we should support him that way.”

Sandra voiced, “You too, Cloie, it’s not bad enough that Jamie, here, wants to exploit our friendship, I don’t, I want him grounded, safe, loved . . .”

Jamie almost laughed, “Oh please, you act like you can’t get any.”

Sandra was angry, “What?”

Cloie tried to diffuse the situation, “Let’s not get into sex talk, dirty tricks, whose sleeping with whom, we are better than this!”

Sandra took a swing and watched the ball’s flight, “Well, I’m not afraid to admit it, though it really isn’t anyone’s business, I love Isaiah, always have, always will.”

Jamie countered, “To be honest, I like him, but business is business, if his paintings stopped selling, I’d have to move on, you know how it is.”

Cloie tried to put some perspective, “Look we are all friends, but we are friends for different reasons. Sandra, you are Isaiah’s life long friend, Jamie, you just want to have a friendly business relationship with him, and me, I’m with Sandra, I think he is an amazing guy, to be honest, I wish I could get to know him better.”

Sandra listened, almost as if for the first time, she had real competition, why hadn’t she realized this before, “I, er, think that it is your turn, Cloie.”

Cloie took a swing, “Besides, people are just plain old superstitious, thinking that Isaiah’s portraits are cursed, they couldn’t be, he’s a nice guy.”

Sandra retorted, “They are cursed, Cloie, and we all know this. Vyna only wants the portrait done so that she can advance her own personal career plans. Oh, she may be convincing herself that she feels more for Isaiah, than what is really there, I think she falls in the category with Jamie, using him.”

Jamie voiced, “He’s a big guy, I see to it that he gets paid damn good money, money by the way, that he never seems to turn down.”

Sandra stated, “Well, the Lord Liveth! Such good friends, Isaiah has,” and she holed the cup, “looks like this hole goes to me, shall we move on?”

Jamie informed, “Besides, I hear that he’s been seeing super wealthy, Lilith Judas . . .”

Kragon threw his hands up in the air, “I can’t believe this, you told me that you were going to have nothing to do with that, that freaked out dope smoking woman, how can you trust her?”

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Pandora looked up from a file she was reading, “I know how you feel, but she knows something, I can feel it.”

Kragon found a seat across from her, “Oh, so you are the psychic now, well, why do you

need me, I might as well apply for a transfer to another partner, another case, one that makes some sense, partner wise . . .”

Pandora straightened up, “You can’t!”

Kragon questioned, “Can’t what, can’t find another partner, or a case that makes sense?”

Pandora voiced, “Both, I know you, you are not going to be satisfied with some run of the mill case and some partner that doesn’t get you, come on, we’ve worked on this case for too long, just to give in now.”

Kragon uttered, “I can walk out this door right now, you want to know why?”

Pandora put down the file, “Yeah, why . . .”

Kragon stated, “Because you are being influenced by the Dope-Lady! She is playing some kind of sick-o-dope-o game with you and you are buying into it! She is not on our side, think of it, how many leads has she sent us on, only to discover, they lead to other crimes, or worse, go in circles, some one profiled you long time ago, and sent this looser to try and place a stumbling block, in your way!”

Pandora nodded, “You know, you are right, this thing does go up higher, that is why Nehushtan and his wife seem to be just out of the touch of the law, and just before we can place our hands on him, he and his army of zombies seem to just disappear into the shadows from which they came.”

Kragon said, “That bacteria that they spread, it was designer made, government stuff, it was first introduced on poor planets, where the people were too poor to protest properly, then, it spread, like a plague, hell, it is a plague, we really don’t know how many zombies are out there, blending in with the rest of the population, ready to kill, or just fall over suddenly.”

Pandora expounded, “The walking dead, they are a new kind of super soldier, one that can kill secretly, and is already dead. The medical evidence seems to suggest that, no known means of contraceptives work, the bacteria passes right through them. It is a smart bacteria, yielding unknown results.”

Kragon spoke, “What does it matter, the results are all the same, death, how do you stop an army of dead people, with unknown abilities.”

Pandora said, “It is almost like they can change, or something, the file is loaded with conflicting reports, some say they were attacked by, creatures, but it makes no sense.”

Kragon voiced, “We could stop it, right now . . .”

Pandora questioned, “What are you talking about, how?”

Kragon uttered, “We could, just grab Nehushtan and Vagabona, secretly, and have them vaporized! That would put an end to it, all the other zombies are psychically linked, I have sensed that much!”

Pandora stated, “So, we break the law, in order to uphold the law, that is not my way, if we do that, then we are no better than Nehushtan, worse maybe, no way, we do it right!”

Kragon got up to leave, “Then the killing will go on, you just don’t get it!”

Vyna was seriously pissed off, Sandra didn’t look any different, the two woman stood there a long moment, they were in public, otherwise, it was a sure bet that they would have been at each other’s throats, literally, “You bitch! Who do you think you are, telling me what I should and should not do!”

Sandra tried to keep control, it was failing, “Watch who you call a bitch, bitch! You don’t seem to care about anything but yourself, you just want what you want, and who cares who gets hurt,

you don't even care if it includes Isaiah . . ."

Vyna seemed to gain some composure, "Oh, is that what this is about, what are you, the blind man's protector?"

Wow, that was cold, Sandra felt her fists balling up, "You know, I'm going to tell him what you just said, how condescending, and to think, you were acting like you liked him and all, what was that about, just to get him to paint the portrait?"

Vyna shook her head, "Look at you, the poor little poor girl, what's wrong, you afraid he is going to meet a real woman, one with power and pride, and then you'll be pushed out of the way, just like the trash that you are!"

Sandra let that one go, "At lease my conscience is clear, I didn't sleep with every wiener that I thought could get me what I wanted, I have integrity!"

Vyna uttered mockingly, "Oh, you have that, do you, well let me ask you something, does it keep you warm at night, does it kiss you when you get up in the morning, does it place shekels in your bank account? No? I didn't think so, integrity is for losers, honey! You can drown in your integrity for al I care! It never got anyone anywhere, business is about who can cut the other's throat and not get caught! Sometimes, literally . . ."

Sandra yelled, "Leave, Isaiah alone!"

Vyna grinned, it wasn't a smile, it was evil, "I'm going to use him, get what I want, and then I'm going to leave him, in pieces."

Sandra responded, "You know, every portrait he draws, the person ends up dead, so, go ahead, get your picture drawn, soon, you'll be numbered with those who came before you."

Vyna uttered sarcastically, "Oooo, I'm so scared, I'll tell you what I told him, I'm not superstitious!"

Sandra countered, "Oh yes you are, you believe that myth, that if he draws your portrait, you will suddenly gain massive wealth, well, I'm here to tell you that you might, I have seen people who have, their careers just seem to suddenly go right, personal life changes for the better, but with everything given of this earth, if it doesn't come from God Almighty, then a curse comes with it. And that is the curse, you will die a very horrible death!"

Vyna said, "Now you see, I could have you arrested, right now, because it sounds to me that you just threatened me, see, look at all these people around us, they are witnesses, you just said that you were going to kill me."

Vyna flagged down a police robot, and explained her side of the thing, tagging poor Sandra as some kind of crazy terrorist, and had her arrested for threatening her life. As they were taking poor Sandra away, Vyna glanced back at her with an evil smile, Sandra knew that Isaiah was in danger, her life long friend had hooked up with the wrong crowd, his agent, no good, Vyna was obviously no good, and there were others. But right now, she was being arrested, because Vyna bared false witness, but her mind was still on Isaiah, he didn't see them like she did. They put on airs when they were around him, wanting something from him, always wanting something.

The side of the door burst open onto the poorly lit back alleyway, the poor man was covered in blood as he ran for his life, moments later, something jumped out of the doorway and went after him. If you were standing a good few blocks away, you could hear the man as he screamed. It was  
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the case, that Pandora was investigating events, she heard the screaming, screaming like the very soul was being sucked out of the man.

Through the darkness, Pandora moved cautiously, particle weapon drawn, held high, ready

for action. Her eyes struggled to see what was going on, it was dark and wet, seemed like it rained on this planet, Evegastus, more than the suns came out.

There was a sound in back of her, she whirled around pointing her weapon at whoever it was trying to sneak up on her. It was a domestic robot, trying to throw the trash out, it looked startled, froze, partially emptied trash car in its hand. Pandora turned quickly back around and continued, the yelling was coming from over there.

She got to a tight area down the alley, the stink of rotting garbage in trash cans, made her sick to her stomach, but her concern wasn't if she'd hold down her dinner, it was that sound of that poor man, screaming in pain, a type of pain that was hellish, evil, he was suffering, and all she could do was think, how can I find that person, to help.

There was a noise and some stacked rotting boxes came falling down upon her, she didn't see them until the last moment, they knocked her to the damp smelly ground. Her particle weapon was knocked out of her hand, and for a brief moment, she saw a darkness pass over it, like a person or more likely, some thing, she thought for sure that the person was going to grab her P-weapon, but they didn't, the shadow-thing just went on. She managed to get from under the trash that had fallen on her and recovered her P-weapon, just then another unearthly cry for help, the pain was obvious in the scream.

Over there, just to her left, was an opening, but up ahead, there was a clearing, which way, which way was the right way to go, she found herself wishing her partner was with her, Kragon was psychic, he always could sense these things. But another scream, she didn't need a psychic to tell where it was coming from, she was right on-top of it.

Pandora remembered taking a big gulp of air, just before she preceded, now she could see shadows dancing, some distant light afforded this, and she was happy, nothing more dangerous, than entering a scene, that was dark and damp and filled with unknowns. She got her back up against the damp wall, now inching, slowly, there was violence going on just around the bend, now she braced her hands, locking them around the P-weapon, holding it out in front of her, she stepped out into the flickering light, what she saw, she couldn't understand . . .

There was this poor man, all covered with blood, Good Lord, he looked half eaten, she thought, but in front of him, was this, this thing, it was about five feet tall, shaped like a huge frog, but it had a tail, like that of a scorpion. It opened up its enormous mouth, revealing huge steel-like spike-like teeth, and out shot a whip-tongue, with more steel like spikes, they caught hold of the poor man, spikes sinking into his body, then, as he seemed to look over to her in just one split second, the monster pulled him into its gaping mouth, whole. Pandora, Pandora, do something, the voice in her head was shouting, she came out of her shock and haze, and began to open fire, her P-weapon ripping into the thing, super bright blasts lighting up the darkness around them. The zombie turned, as if to attack her, but just then, noises and sounds, as people began to look out there windows, when she looked back, the monster had jumped almost a hundred feet from her, and then, it changed, the figure started to transfigure, into a woman and then ran off.

The winds blew through her hair, Lilith was feeling very happy, something that rarely happened, "I'm so glad that you accepted my invitation to come sailing with me. There is something liberating about being out on the sea, the wind, the smell of the ocean, I don't know what it is . . ."

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Isaiah was looking onto the waves, "It is freedom, the word is freedom, that's what you are looking for."

Lilith moved closer to him, hoping he'd embrace her, make her feel safe, "As you know I'm

head of a very special club, we are politically active and socially involved.”

Isaiah did indeed embrace her, “Yeah, some of my friends we bringing me up to speed on your, er, social club. You are a witch, your club is a coven, that is against my spiritual beliefs.”

She felt him starting to loose the embrace and moved in further, “Those are silly rumors, spread about, by jealous people who want to bring me down. Who told you these things?”

Isaiah looked at her beautiful face, “I heard it from more than one source, and they were not aware of each other, are you . . .”

Lilith tilted her head to one side, “Am I what, happy that you are here with me,” and she giggled like a school girl.

Isaiah shook his head, indicating that he was serious, “Are you a witch, are you evil?”

Lilith actually walked away from him, trying to figure out how to say this, she then realized what she had done and quickly tried to go back to his embrace, but it was too late, “I try to do good in the community, help people, like the disaster that happened on Raguo, you know, the planet that suffered that major world wide tsunami, killing hundreds of millions, it was so awful. A lot of children were left homeless and parentless, my club along with others, sent money and aide to help, we also set up adoption channels for the children. Is that evil?”

Isaiah studied the woman, she was smart, she was a witch, but she was so beautiful, so graceful, he couldn’t resist her, was he under her spell, “You didn’t quite answer my question, you know I’m a Faither, a neo-Christian, I believe in Jesus Christ.”

Lilith smiled, “That is one of the countless things that I love, like, admire about you, Isaiah. I’m interested in your faith, how your people have been able to survive in such a hostile political and religious climate, and in a great many planets, gain considerable political clout and position. Faithers were persecuted in the early days of the Dynasty, the ruling Machines of Technoligion, they tried to kill all the neo-Christians. But your God, your Savior, saved you, did battle with the enemies of the faith in Christ, and defeated them. That’s a miracle . . .”

Isaiah agreed, “Yes it is, but it is what Lord Jesus Christ does, he is Almighty!”

Lilith finally got him to embrace her again, she was happy, “Yes, Jesus Christ must be, you know, you must invite me into your world.”

Isaiah voiced, “Why, so you can spy on us, find a weakness, seek to destroy us, like you said, we have suffered countless centuries of oppression, we are not stupid.”

Lilith rested her head on his strong chest, “No, you are not, but you misunderstand, I’d never do anything to hurt you, can’t you tell, I’m falling in love with you,” there, the cat was out of the bag, here she was, a woman not of the faith, falling in love with a man, a neo-Christian, it went against all she had previously held sacred, yet, the God, this Lord Jesus Christ, how Almighty was his Power, that it even moved a witch like her. She tightened her embrace, she’d do anything for Isaiah, even the unthinkable . . .



Isaiah was busy in his studio, working on various painting projects, which also included the portrait for Vyna, there was a ring and he answered the door, it was Sandra, "Hey, what's up? I wasn't expecting you to drop by," he told her as they kissed.

Sandra came on in, making herself comfortable, what you do when you are in a friend's house, Isaiah kind of went on back to work, "I came over to see how you were doing, just dropping by, got a beer?"

Isaiah motioned while still working on a painting, "You know where the fridge is, help yourself, in fact, bring me one too."

Sandra went and got the beers and gave one to him while kicking back on the sofa and watching Isaiah work, he had a very creative way about him, made no sense to her, but the paintings progressed, so it obviously worked for him, "I saw that woman earlier today."

Isaiah looked over his shoulder for a moment, "What woman . . ."

Sandra sipped her beer, "You know who I'm talking about . . ."

Isaiah thought then shook his head, "Lilith?"

Sandra frowned, she wasn't referring to her, "No, Vyna, that, that bitch!"

Isaiah took off his Blind Glasses and began to work his magic on the canvas, "Oh her, yeah, I haven't seen her in a while."

Sandra said, "Really, from what she told me, she was suppose to be all over you, trying to get you to finish her portrait, I don't know why she is in such a hurry, though."

Isaiah worked, "You know, that kind of struck me too, I mean, you can't rush art, it has to flow, now I told her, there were plenty of robotic art machines, fact I actually own several top of the line ones, that could whip up a portrait in not time, really make it look good, in about a hundred classic styles, so good even, that an expert would have trouble telling if it was an original or a fake. Gee, these machines now days, they can copy just about any style you want, you just have to know how to program them."

Sandra took off her shoes and put her feet up, "Yeah about that, how much is she offering you for the portrait?"

Isaiah took in a deep breath, "Er, why are you asking?"

Sandra took a swig of her beer, "Because it has dawned on me, that if she is that desperate, maybe she wants it for all the wrong reasons. I mean, what if she falls victim to the curse, like the others."

Isaiah uttered, "I spoke to her about all that, she seems to think that I'm superstitious, says that my faith in Jesus Christ is what is wrong with me."

Sandra sat up, "She told you that?"

Isaiah voiced, "Yeah, and not in so many words, almost point blank, I told her it was my faith in Jesus Christ that made me who I am. But she just rambled on, after that, I just did the act like I was listening thing, that guys do to woman, when they want to get in their pants, not that I wanted to get in her pants or anything, I was just playing along."

Sandra finally said, "I'll pay you twice as much to use one of your art machines to do her portrait, I just have a bad feeling about this one, Isaiah, she'll never know, you keep the money."

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The three sat in Washington's office, doors closed, though occasionally someone would pass by and stare briefly into a section of the window that wasn't covered, Pandora and Kragon sat facing Washington who was at his desk, but they were not uniformed where they sat, "I can't hardly believe

what you are telling me, I mean I do, there have been stranger things happen on other planets, but not here, not on Evegastus.”

Kragon glanced at Pandora then back at Washington, “The thing that Agent Wilson shot at, is called a Frosco demon, they are the product of the Necrozom protein. And it only comes out to feed, then, as was reported, they can meta-morph in seconds back into the host shape.”

Washington looked at Pandora, “But you shot it several times with a parwea (particle weapon), I’ve never known of anything that can withstand a parwea, it’s like getting hit with a piece of the sun.”

Pandora finally uttered, “They can morph according to the planet that they are on, on some other planet, with a different environment, they will look different, that is another reason why they are so hard to catch.”

Washington leaned forward, “And that is what you are trying to hunt down and stop, a thing that can hide in broad daylight, and change at night, and kill. But why doesn’t it kill a lot more, not that I’d want it to, but what triggers it?”

Pandora shifted her body, “We are not entirely sure, some seem to morph at will, others have to wait for some trigger, best that we can tell, the ones on this planet need some type of external trigger.”

Kragon put in, “Hunger is one of them, but they can go for months, maybe even a year without feeding, don’t forget, they are not just eating the physical body, but the soul of the victim, the most pure source of power known to the universe.”

Washington nodded, “Yes I’ve read popular science, and they do teach paraphysics in most colleges and high schools. So how do we trap this thing, and how many are there?”

Kragon voiced, “We have to discover their hiding place, where they like to hangout, breed if you will.”

Washington spoke, “If there was a place in my town, where such a thing was going on, we’d know about it. You just can’t go and throw a party and kill people without word getting back to the police, plus we have random locator chips in everyone, just like everybody does who live within the League of Worlds. So if that many people just came up missing, red flags would go up everywhere, not just at the local level but federal, governmental, you know how those BEAST Machines like to keep tabs on the public.”

Pandora gazed off, “These are troubled times for the innocent . . .”

Washington frowned, “Hell yeah, if you got a bunch of filthy, what did you call them, Frosco creatures hiding in normal folks, killing and eating without anyone able to stop them.”

But that wasn’t what Pandora meant, however, “We need to make a stand here. Nehushtan is a main source of the zombie bacteria. Stop him and his wife, and we might have a chance.”

Washington nodded, “He’s super rich, can’t violate the rights of rich people, not like the poor . . .”

Pandora replied, “Not if you don’t care about your career, I plan on stopping this plague!”

Kragon sensed Washington, “But we all must uphold the law of the League, of course.”

Vyna looked at Lilith, “I hear that you’ve been making inquiries into my business affairs, why is this?”

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Lilith kind of laughed, “You know an artist named Isaiah Silverhawk?”

Vyna sat back, “Not that it is any of your concern, but, yes I do.”

Lilith said, “Then I’m looking into your, concerns.”

Vyna leaned forward, "For what purpose, I mean, from what I can gather, you are stinking rich, and have connections to members of the High Council of Technoligion, so why are you concerning yourself with this man, or for that matter, with me? Unless, you plan on talking him into painting a portrait for you, so that you can become more powerful, maybe even climb the political ladder yourself?"

Lilith uttered, "You believe in those silly superstitions, that Isaiah's portraits can make you rich and powerful, you are one of those."

Vyna didn't like that, "One of those, what do you mean by that, I've paid him a down payment, a good sum of shekels to paint me a picture, it is really none of your business, or for that matter, anyone else, what I choose to do or not to do with it, hell I could sleep with the damn thing, if I want to, it is none of your business."

Lilith spoke, "You need help . . ."

Vyna yelled, "What?"

Lilith was stoic, "Some of you business ventures, are failing, in fact, you are being attacked by corporate mercenaries, and you are struggling to stay afloat."

Vyna was pissed, "How dare you spy on me like that, maybe you have some dirty little secrets that need to be uncovered, things, like that you are a witch, and that you are romancing Isaiah for his powers, just like I am!"

Lilith shook her head, "I'll admit that I find Isaiah, to be one of the most interesting men, I've met in a long time, very handsome, but my feelings for him are really none of your business . . ."

Vyna snapped, "That is exactly how I feel, none of your concern, and you don't want to stand in my way!"

Lilith questioned, "Stand in your way of what, financial melt-down, oh by all means, I won't get in your way, oh, by the way, have you done your research, do you really know how many people, that had portraits done by Isaiah, have ended up dead? No, you don't know the exact number, do you, you just heard that this painter has mystical powers, powers to gain wealth, and you couldn't stop yourself from whoring yourself out! Yet, you say that you are not superstitious . . ."

Vyna barked, "It is a known fact, that all sorts of weird and wonderful things have been discovered, specially, since mankind ventured out amongst the stars, humans have mutated, some in weird ways, others in special ways, gaining powers to do all sorts of things, not to mention the children of the Dark Planets. But you are a witch, you are a stinking mutant also!"

Lilith moved in closer, "What I am, and who I am, you have no idea! But this I can tell you, unlike you, I genuinely like Isaiah, no, check that, I'm falling in love with him, there, I've got that out of the way. And who is to say, maybe his faith and beliefs might convert me . . ."

Vyna laughed, "Convert, who, you, thy shall not suffer a witch to live, that is what his religion teaches, you are living in a fantasy world, you can't convert, because of what you are!"

Lilith spoke softly, "I'm in love with the man, and love changes everything . . ."

Chief agent Teall seemed serious, "You finally found one of these things . . ."

Pandora stated, "Zombies, sir . . ."

Teall cleared his throat, "Yes, well, zombies, and you watched it transform and eat a human

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being, then transform back into what you say was a human form?"

Pandora nodded, "I couldn't believe it myself, it was a Frosco zombie, it ate the man whole, the thing has barbed-wire teeth, it ripped the poor soul in seconds."

Teall sat back, "Why didn't you kill it?"

Pandora sat up, "You have my report, chief, you know what happened, I fired my parwea at the thing, but nothing . . ."

Teall said, "You fired a particle weapon point blank at this thing, but it kept on going? How is that? A P-weapon can cut through steel, it fires in short bursts or one continuous beam, there is no way that you could have shot that thing and not killed it!"

Pandora was very uncomfortable, "Look, Chief Teall, the reports from the scene, indicate that I did, indeed hit the creature, but it seems to be composed of some, here to unknown regenerative powers. The TSP labs are testing what was found, to be honest, I don't think it can be killed in a conventional way."

Teall shook his head, "All things die in this universe! You just have to know how to kill it!"

Pandora put her head down, "Have you considered the fact or the possibility that this thing is already dead, and that is why we can't kill it. I mean, I saw it transform back into a human form, that means that it is out amongst the population, waiting its time, to kill again, maybe. We can't ignore this threat, I need to know everything, so I can stop it!"

Teall uttered, "What did your partner sense, he's the psychic on your team, what did he have to say about it?"

Pandora frowned, "He wasn't there . . ."

Teall raised a brow, "I'm sorry, I didn't get that part, what did you say?"

Pandora sat straight, "My partner, Kragon, was not there, he was working on another lead, we decided to separate, an investigate. When I came across the murder, I acted the best way that I've been trained to act, but I believe if we had more cooperation from the military, maybe we could put an end to it, plus, there is the factor of having finally located the prime infector of the Necrobzom bacteria, Nehushtan and his wife."

Teall suddenly seemed very agitated, "They are off limits to you and your investigation!"

Pandora almost leaped out of her seat, "Why, who is protecting them, the military?"

Teall seemed empathic, "I know it is tough, trying to do an investigation, with one of your hands tied, but that is the political reality that the TSP has to deal with, we can't do our job, unless we have the blessings of the various planetary governments in which we police, from one planet to the next, the laws vary, often, one planet has one set of laws, and another planet just the opposite, while the League of Worlds, does impose the higher standard of laws, each planet is free to govern itself."

Pandora was really disgusted, "So, that is it, we let a bunch of governing machines decide the fate of the human race, alien race too, it is not enough that Technoligion governs us like they are gods, but when people start dying from one planet to the next, they keep the TSP from doing what it is suppose to do, what's going on, sir? Who is pulling the strings . . ."

Teall shook his head, "This is way bigger than the both of us, do the best you can."

Lilith led a team of specially picked scientist and engineers as they went through a super expensive facility, in which work on medical cryogenics was being done, "I want the test results by the end of the day."

Setha was one of the project managers, "Everything looks fine, in fact, projections say that  
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we can have the MC Project out amongst the general public in a little over a year."

Lilith said, "One of the many basic applications of the MC Project, is to combat cancer, which while cures have been found, the plague of mankind, resurfaced, as humans spread amongst

the stars. This is a none invasive way of curing the disease.”

Setha who was also a medical engineer put forth, “The basic idea is to kill the cancer without killing the host, the person, the way that medical cryogenics works, is that the patient, after being properly prepared, is placed into the MC chamber, where their body temperature is lowered to the controlled point of freezing, seeing that cancer cells are weaker than normal, healthy cells, they are more susceptible to the freezing process. As a result of this highly controlled freezing process, cancer cells throughout the patient’s body die, because it is a known fact that freezing living tissue causes damage to the tissue, killing it. But in this case, we have used the natural effects to our advantage, seeing that killing tissue is what we want, killing the cancer tissue first, with limited damage to normal healthy tissue. The MC chamber allows doctors and technicians to freeze the patient scientifically and medically, controlling the process, step by step and even micro-fractions of a freezing point, while totally monitoring the patient’s over all medical condition. The patient, naturally is in a medically induced coma, not feeling or being aware of the super-cold process, which if the patient were conscious of the freezing cold, would not be able to survive it.”

Lilith smiled, “So, the billions of shekels that I have invested in the project has paid off, we are now ready to test with human subjects.”

Setha nodded, “And as you know, Malaocean is a planet that has soft laws concerning human medical testing, lots of bio-products are tested here.”

Lilith uttered, “And this process is safer than conventional genetic and surgical and radiation procedures because . . .”

Setha cut in, “Because, those procedures alter the body in most unnatural ways, chemotherapy, being the most debilitating of them all, because, while surgery radically alters the body and does serious trauma to the body, forcing the patient to have to recover from the surgery and fight off the remaining effects of chemotherapy, medical cryogenics, makes use of an event that occurs naturally in the environment, face it, parts of the world freezes. By controlling the freezing process, we can get better results, than radiation or chemotherapy, in even radical cases, tumors shrank, cancer cells die and are absorbed by the host body. All the things the other older and more conventional therapies are suppose to do, but when the patient is brought totally out of the medically cryogenic state, they do not have to go through the long and debilitating process, which have long been associated with chemotherapy, radiation therapy, surgery.”

Lilith stopped briefly, with all others stopping, there was no question that she was in charge, “We stand to make trillions of shekels, while medical cryogenics got started centuries ago, it has become a reality in our time. Good work people . . .” and she headed off in a different direction, while the scientist and technicians that were following her, went back to work.

Setha uttered, “Will you make the Red Pearl Club meeting?”

Lilith frowned, “I, er, I have something else that I have to do, very important.”

Kragon voiced, “They change from planet to planet, we’ve known this for awhile, but maybe the reason that we’ve had such a hard time catching Nehushtan and his horde, is because Nehushtan and his wife can change too, I mean, maybe they can take on a different form.”

Pandora sipped some coffee and ate a sweet roll, “Have you been talking to the chief?”

Kragon hesitated, “Yes, he told me all about yours and his, conversation, but it doesn’t

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change the fact that these things, and they might just be from alien origins, maybe from the Dark Sector, they have some kind of natural defenses that help them evade capture.”

Pandora put down her roll, “No, not capture, hunting!”

Kragon uttered, "What, what do you mean?"

Pandora said, "They use this ability, to change shape, to hunt, and maybe you are right, maybe we've been looking at the wrong profile all along, maybe they are from the Dark Sector. That would explain why they seem to possess demonic powers . . ."

Kragon stated, "Because they are demons . . ."

Pandora cut in, "Or humans who have sold their souls for physical immortality."

Kragon didn't respond right away, he just sat there watching his partner eating her breakfast, "So, you are saying that, they can't be killed in the physical world, and they probably sold their souls in the spiritual world, so, how do we stop them?"

Pandora voiced, "We've speculated it before, kill the source of the Necrobzom bacteria, and because they all seem to be linked in some way, we kill them all."

Kragon was cautious, "Or, slow them down, at lease."

Pandora became angry, "No! I want to kill them all, and killing Nehushtan is the way to do it!"

Kragon uttered, "This is what Chief Teall was trying to install into your head, you can't just go and accuse rich people like you can the poor, the rich have powerful attorneys, and connections in high political office, for the very reason, that if something ever goes wrong in their lives, they can call on their political favors, to get them out of trouble. You know about that super rich woman on Malaocean who did a really awful crime, something that would have gotten anybody else years in psychic-prison, but she got off with a slap on the hand, doing a few months of house arrest. No, criminal psychic rehabilitation, no mind altering training, nothing but a slap on the hand."

Pandora nodded, "It happens all the time, because even though the League of Worlds is suppose to be run by living governing machines, half of the power in the High Council, is run by humans and aliens, fifty-fifty, so mankind has managed to corrupt even his greatest dream, a perfectly run society."

Kragon stated, "A dream of physical perfection, and we all know, there is no such thing as physical perfection, the universe is made of a imperfections, and we are in the universe, we can't rid ourselves of it."

Pandora voiced, "It all goes back to Adam and Eve and the devil-serpent in Eden. Good God, the government has even done time-travel back to the beginning of time, trying to change the outcome of that event, hoping to engage a physical perfection, retroactively. Tampering with key events in time and space."

Kragon spoke, "Time and space, are the same thing, we can't undo what God Almighty has done, His word is Supreme."

Pandora barked, "But these Necrobzom zombies, they can be killed!"

Setha was the most vocal, the other women in the Red Pearl Club sat quietly, reserved and wanted to listen, "You are suppose to be the leader of the Red Pearl Club, being the elected member of our coven, why have you been seeing a known Faither named, Isaiah Silverhawk?"

Lilith got up from her plush sitting chair, walked about the room, studying her fellow witches, "Is this what this meeting is all about? What business is it who I romance?"

Setha barked, "It is all of our business, because we are all members of this sisterhood, and  
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you are the chosen leader, you need to set an example for the younger members, the weaker sisters who might misunderstand your actions, and think it is okay to stray!"

Cruela cut in, "Wait a minute, who said anything about Lilith straying?"

Setha went on, "She has been straying, dating this poor artist, he is trouble, I can feel it, he will make you weak in the ways of our coven."

Curela uttered, "We have all known Lilith since the beginning, she has never, and I repeat never let us down, we are among the wealthiest women on the planet, our spells are the strongest and our positions in society are without repute, the very movement of Technoligion was actually started by witches like ourselves, undoing the thousands of years of darkness which shrouded our beliefs. We are free women now, independent, self-controlling, wonderful and beautiful, these things that you are saying, Setha, it is not our way."

Setha was angry, "Sisters, perhaps it is time that we had a new leader . . ."

This thing got the women talking amongst themselves, Lilith uttered, "Sisters, who amongst you have not followed your heart, it is true that some of you are married to spouses that don't even know that you are witches, is it not?"

Cruela nodded, "This thing is true, what Lilith speaks, I for one, am married to a wonderful man and I have wonderful children, my husband does not know of my secret life, and it works better for me that way, I am not alone. So, you are saying that this relationship with this artist is simply a fling, nothing serious?"

Lilith wanted to lie, but they had her under a spell of truth, "I am in love with him . . ."

Again the sisters were unsettled amongst themselves, Setha yelled, "See, she speaks what is in her heart, she intends to bring the Christians into our coven, and you all know what that means, they will destroy us, break us up, their God is Almighty! He will destroy us!"

Everything was getting heated up, someone suggested a break, robot servants brought in refreshments, Lilith took a glass of dry red wine and went out onto the balcony, Cruela followed her, "These are trying times for our sisterhood."

Lilith sipped her wine, "I can love someone without revealing my true nature, he is after all, only a man, why are the sisters all worked up over this?"

Cruela said, "Setha is seeking to influence the others . . ."

Lilith looked at her friend, "To what end?"

Cruela cleared her throat, "She wants your position, she is ambitious, if she were to be successful in her bid for power in one of the oldest and most powerful covens on the planet, she would be able to do the things she has been secretly planning."

Lilith frowned, "You have seen this coming?"

Cruela nodded, "For some time now, some of the sisters and I have divined and discovered, that she has been trying to divide and conquer, the coven, you having romantic relations with this artist has been her chance."

Lilith became defiant, "I will love whom I chose, this man makes me feel alive!"

Pandora said, "Back in the early Twentieth and Twenty first Century, the AIDS virus killed a billion people before it was successfully eradicated, I'm not talking about those treatments that only cured the symptoms, I'm talking about the real cure . . ."

Kragon voiced, "Okay, it is a part of history, and medical history."

Pandora stated, "This thing, this Zombie Bacteria, it is just like the AIDS virus, killing at will, silent, stealth, being spread by men and women that don't give a crap! It has to be stopped, 176

even if it means breaking the law in order to stop it!"

Kragon sat up, "You can't be serious, you've been a TSP agent for over twenty years, how could you even entertain the idea of throwing all that away for, just one set of criminals, let the law

take its course, we'll catch them, and then we'll put them away, legally, without any blemish to a perfect record of service to the Transdoor Star Police."

Pandora looked at Kragon, her eyes said it all, she was way past that point, "There are some things that can't be put into neat little packages, this case is one of them, it is too big, coming from too many sources, the military, the political, the scientific, if we play by their rules, as we have been, they keep moving the chess players illegally, they are not playing the game, Kragon, we have to be like Jazz, changing and rethinking, adapting, evolving, if need be, that is the only way that we are going to put a stop to this."

Kragon took a deep breath, "So you are saying, do whatever it takes to bring these people down."

Pandora got up and moved across the room, "I'm saying, they play by a special set of rules, and in order to catch them, or stop them, we are going to have to play by our own rules, and no one else can know about it. Are you with me?"

Kragon didn't like what he was hearing, "Damn it, Pandora, we are the TSP, we can't break the rules, local planetary government and police, look to us to set an example, if we break the law in order to catch a criminal like Nehushtan and Vagabona, that reduces us to their level!"

Pandora said, "And if we don't make up our own rules, they are going to do far worse than the AIDS virus, which was created by the military, and first tested in Africa, in order to wipe out all those poor dark people, so that a hand full of super rich countries, could just walk in and take over their continent, way back there, centuries ago. We have to learn from history, and never be victim to those kinds of political deceptions ever again! This battle has to be fought and won on this planet, for once and for all!"

Kragon uttered, "It will mean the end of our careers . . ."

Pandora countered, "And how many lives will we be able to save, how many people will we be able to keep from being infected?"

Kragon spoke, "But just killing the principles won't stop everything, the military has the bacteria, they'll just go and create other main carriers, and go to some far remote planet, and start all over."

Pandora seemed determined, "Then we will have to destroy their source, attack them at where they least expect it."

Kragon stated the obvious, "It is a good chance, that one of us if not both of us might get killed if we go down this path."

Pandora uttered, "Better we die and stop the slaughter of innocent blood, than we live, and know the truth."

Kragon thought a long while, "I'm in, we'll do whatever it takes, hell, it'll be fun!"

The big robotic monster was chasing Lilith and Isaiah, they ran around a corner of the building and down a flight of stairs, there they were able to catch their breath for a moment. Lilith voiced, "I knew it might come to this, the other members of my coven, don't believe that I am fit to lead them anymore."

Isaiah kept an eye out for the monster, "Why is that?"

Lilith said, "Because I've been seeing you."

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Isaiah was confused, "What does seeing me have to do with this big ass robot monster trying to kill us?"

Lilith explained, "Certain members of the Red Pearl Club have decided that my value to the



club is over and they are trying to kill me, so that they can move up in the ranks.”

Isaiah stated, “That is crazy, killing someone just so that they can gain a better seat in a social club membership, that is stupid!”

Lilith shook her head, “No, that is the way things get done! The Red Pearl Club is very old, our history actually can be traced back to ancient Earth, before transdoor technology opened up travel to other star systems. Killing the leader of a coven has always been the rite of ascension. It is no different here, thousands of star systems from Earth Prime, the old ways are still practiced, in secret.”

Isaiah voiced, “I thought that you witches did things with spells?”

Lilith leaned on Isaiah’s shoulder, “We do, but these are modern times, and modern times yield way to modern means of casting spells, now days, death by poison and nano-virus are just as evil as the old ways, when spells were followed through with hypnotic potions and suggestive sayings, now modern witches make use of the modern ways of the world, as we always have.”

Isaiah stated, “So, spells were really just a way of building up the psychic energy to carry out wickedness, via potions and trickery.”

Lilith looked at him, “Trick or treat, where did you think that term came from?”

Then out of now where the robot monster broke through the walls, Isaiah and Lilith ran down the way, the machine began to fire a plasma weapon at them, but they were able to duck out of the way. Then the machine began to chase after them, there was a little old man that happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time, the robot machine killed him, almost seemingly in a rage.

Isaiah and Lilith were hiding, Isaiah uttered, “Did you see that, how that killing machine just killed that poor old man, it was almost like it displayed some kind of evil emotion.”

Lilith answered, “Did you ever wonder why machines came into being in human society?”

Isaiah said, “Most machines make mankind’s life better.”

Lilith shook her head, “Machines are soulless vessels, ambulatory, demons can easily possess them, they have no soul like a person, yet they can move about the world, it was one of the evil spirit’s tricks to convince mankind that he needed robots and sophisticated machines, when in fact, there was an alternative motive, an hidden agenda, one that only the children of darkness knew about. Machines are the evil’s army, with machines, they were able to leave Earth Prime, where they were once held prisoner, until they convinced mankind that they had business amongst the stars.”

Isaiah uttered, “So you are saying that, mankind was tricked into believing that they should go into outer space, travel to distant stars, all so that evil spirits could escape their prison on Earth Prime? So the monster pursuing us is possessed by evil spirits?”

Lilith nodded, “We have to find a way of escape, my sisterhood is trying to kill us both!”

The coffee shop was half full, Isaiah and Lilith sat in the back, Lilith said, “Isaiah I’m so

sorry that I've dragged you into this, this is my mess, I have to fix it . . ."

Isaiah uttered, "What happened to us, you don't have to face it alone."

Lilith voiced, "There are other things that the Red Pearl Club can do, I know, I've done it to members that strayed, but in most cases they went back to us. In my case, I'm leaving the club for good."

Isaiah questioned, "So, you are saying that you are going to stop being a witch, give up centuries of bloodline and walk away from them?"

Lilith nodded, "That is what I'm saying, I'm not going to go back to them, I mean, come on, Isaiah, they tried to kill us, with that killing machine. And believe me, there are more where that came from . . ."

Isaiah said, "That thing almost seemed military."

Lilith spoke, "It is, as I told you, the women in the club have connections, power, both political and military, we are a group of business woman, who know how to play hardball, in the world of business men!"

Sandra came over, "Wow, I guess that makes you really popular with the guys," she gave Isaiah a kiss and grimaced at Lilith.

Isaiah said, "Sandra, I didn't know that you'd be here . . ."

Sandra uttered while still giving the other woman a hateful stare, "It's on the news, some crazy robot experiment went crazy and killed a little old man, messed up a lot of valuable property, before the police were able to take it down, I think it killed a few more people before they did. So, from what I was able to hear, you are behind that all," she was looking at Lilith.

Lilith felt uncomfortable, "Maybe I should leave . . ."

Sandra said, "Oh, by all means, you two were here first, stay, I'd like to hear more, how a super rich business woman, is being chased across town, by some crazy military killing machine."

Isaiah looked around to make sure they were not causing too much of a scene, "Sandra, it is really complicated."

Lilith reached across the table and kissed Isaiah, "I'm going to go and freshen up, make a few calls, business . . ."

When Lilith was gone, Sandra uttered, "What is wrong with you, you know better getting involved with that woman."

Isaiah voiced, "Hey, she needed my help, I was just there, you already know what happened, from the news, stuff like this doesn't happen all the time, fact it is rare in our society."

Sandra glanced around and spoke softly, "Which makes it all the more suspicious, killing machines don't just go around hunting people, I mean, on other planets, different circumstances, but here, well, she is dangerous. Look, Isaiah, we've known each other since we were children, I'm your friend, and, and I'm also in love with you . . ."

Isaiah looked, then took off his Blind Glasses, "Wow, don't you think this is not the time and place for this?"

Sandra touched his hand, "If you ever need me, ever, for anything, you know you can count on me, don't forget, I'm a Christian just like you, she isn't!"

Isaiah put back on his Blind Glasses, "You are a really good friend, I need you . . ."

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Pandora uttered, "There is no power greater than the power of the Lord Jesus Christ!"

Kragon said, "Okay, but we are faced with a situation that is quickly getting out of control."

Pandora voiced, "There is a plant facility, I've been going over a lot of information, it might

hold a key, but the problem is that it is heavily guarded and we really don't have a legal right to enter the facility."

Kragon shook his head, "I am not comfortable with this, there are other ways to get the information that we need. We don't have to lower ourselves to their level, we still have standards."

Pandora said, "If we go to Chief Teall, he's going to use protocol, that means that information about what we are looking for and the mere fact that we are seeking a warrant to search the facility will more than likely leak out."

Kragon shook his head, "Chief Teall is a good man, I've known him a long time, as has you, he's never done anything but the right thing, when ever he was able."

Pandora spoke, "I'm not calling the chief a traitor, no, you are right, this thing is above the chief, he's just doing his job just like us. But he has to file a report, and that report can be compromised, then Nehushtan and his horde of zombies will move any evidence in advance of our search."

Kragon pointed out, "If we just break into the facility, without a warrant, and something goes wrong, we are going to be in deep crap! And you know it! Good grief, Pandora, if they remove us from the case and assign some one who plays by their rules, they can cover this up forever. It'll be like the AIDS cover up centuries ago, where the government winked at allowing Africa to be contaminated with the AIDS virus, just like they did centuries before that, when they gave contaminated blankets to the Native Americans, they had been infected with Small Pox. We may never be able to prove that the government directly had anything to do with the Necrobzom Protein Bacteria . . ."

Pandora was passionate, "Yes we can, because we can not allow people like Nehushtan and his many associates, people who knowingly have infected countless people with this deadly and violent disease. You can not say that this bacteria doesn't have the stamp of the military."

Kragon thought on it, "No, you are right, this thing is too perfect, big money had to be pumped into the research of it, alone, let alone the secrecy that had to take place while the military infected countless civilians."

Pandora said, "And they will cover it up, if we continue to play by their rules, we have to make up our own rules, this is chess, make no doubt about it, and I intend on winning!"

Kragon suddenly became rational, "But our careers . . ."

Pandora sat down, "What, you are worried about your next paycheck?"

Kragon seemed embarrassed, "Well, yeah, I need to eat and to live, I've been at this for a long time, what do I do, just throw it all away, on some hunch?"

Pandora went on, "No, you do what is right, through out the history of law enforcement, the police have always been on the rich man's side, oppressing minorities, killing innocent blood, all in the name of the government, it's like the way things were centuries ago, when the police would ignore the terrorist actions of the KKK, and other hate groups, winking while poor blacks and or minorities were terrorized!"

Kragon uttered, "And if we look the other way, we become just like them, okay I'm in!"

Vyna was full of herself and drunk to boot, "You haven't been returning any of my calls!"

The party was going strong, but some were starting to notice the scene, Isaiah uttered,

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"Please, Vyna, you are drunk, you are starting to make a scene, people are starting to notice," in fact it was the way that he had first met her.

Vyna voiced, "You contracted with me to do a portrait, where is it, I want it now!"

Isaiah took in a deep breath, "First of all, I'm not at my studio, and secondly, I've refunded all of your money, and I told you, I changed my mind, go find some other artist that I'm sure, will be happy to draw you, for the amount of money you were willing to offer me."

Vyna was pissed, "You bastard! I paid good money for that portrait, but you went and had to listen to those jealous little bitchy friends of yours, they turned you against me!"

Isaiah nodded, "Yes, you are right, but with good reason, you really believe that if I paint you a portrait that somehow, you are going to become super wealthy and that your whole life is going to go for the better, my advice to you is to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, He can turn your life around and set you on a permanent course towards salvation."

Vyna mocked, "Oh, you and that stupid Faithier beliefs of yours! I don't care about where my soul goes after I'm dead, it's what happens in this life that I care about, hell, I don't even believe that you can paint!"

Others had come to listen by now, Isaiah said, "If that is the case, then my returning the money is a good thing, you don't think that I can paint you. Besides, there are other painters, other artist."

Vyna staggered out onto the balcony, the warm night air blowing, then she pulled out a parwea and aimed it at him, "You really think that you can say no to me? How about this, you don't want to paint my portrait, how about if I see to it that you paint no more?"

Cloie happened onto the balcony and saw the situation, "Oh my God!"

Vyna pointed the weapon at Cloie, "You, you bitch! All of you, a tight little net, partying and eating and having a good time, all the while others suffer! I hate the rich!"

Isaiah said, "Then why do you want to be like them so much, and why waste all your time and energy trying to become more wealthy, it makes no sense."

Vyna answered, "Because it is better to be miserable, and rich, than miserable, and poor."

Cloie started off, "I'm going to go and get help!"

Vyna waved the weapon threateningly, "Take another step, and I'll kill the both of you, you just want him all to yourself, that's it. He painted a portrait for you, didn't he . . ."

Cloie shook her head, "No, I know about the curse, for some reason, those portraits cause people to get rich, super rich, and then they die suddenly. I got my money the old fashion way, I did what I had to!"

Vyna was swaying more profoundly, "Who should I kill first, you, no, maybe you . . ."

Then some other guest wandered out onto the balcony and witnessed the scene, they yelled and ran back inside telling the others, someone yelled for the police to be called.

Cloie uttered, "Put the gun down, Vyna, the others have found out, the police will be here, you can't get away with it."

Vyna said, "What makes you think that I wanted to get away with it, maybe I came here to kill wonder-boy here and anyone else that I could, then kill myself."

Isaiah voiced, "You need help."

Vyna started to cry, "Yes I do," then she started shooting wildly.

The area was damp and dank, Pandora stepped over a few police barricades, "What do we have here?"

Washington glanced up, "Dead male, late fifties, neighbors said that they saw some really big frog like thing, hopping around the house, then an hour later, someone called in what they thought was some kind of accident. This is what we found," he uncovered pieces of a body, most of it was

missing.

Kragon said, "I'm going to check over there . . ."

Washington uttered, "Do you think this is the work of your zombie-killer?"

Pandora was silent as she studied the remains, "I'm not sure, from what I know of the creature, when it is in its zombie-state of being, it can eat a big man whole. There are pieces here, the zombie would have eaten everything."

Washington voiced, "How do you kill a creature like that, it can change back to human form, you said yourself, you fired at it point blank with a parwea, and nothing happened."

Pandora finished her basic examination, motioned for other crime experts to come in, "I hate to say this, but this might have been the work of another zombie. Not the one I shot."

Washington was fed up, "Are you telling me that multiple killings are going to become the norm around here, because I can't take that, I'm gong to do something about it!"

Pandora said, "Don't think for a second that I haven't wanted to do the same thing, but the force that is guiding them all, is too rich and well connected to be touched."

Washington yelled, "To hell with that! Witnesses say there was a frog-zombie hopping around here, lots of witnesses, fact of the matter is, the media got to the witnesses before we did, now it's going to be all over the news."

Kragon came over, "This is the work of a zombie-frog, I just talked to two people, they actually have recordings of the thing, they tried to sell it to the media, but from what I can gather, the media already bought more than it needs."

Washington voiced, "Great, I can already hear it, zombie-frogs kill innocent people! I'll be right back, I have to report in to my superiors."

Kragon watched the detective walk off, "Poor guy, I don't envy him, his bosses are probable going to have his head, the cat is out of the bag, and people are going to start seeing zombie-frogs every place they look."

Pandora stated, "They might very well, but the one thing that they don't know, is that the zombie-frogs are just like them, they don't know where they come from, and I want to keep it that way. If the public found out that their neighbor or wife and sister, could be one of these creatures from hell, then the whole community will turn on itself. They'll be seeing zombies where there aren't any. And then the real nightmare will start, people killing people, all in the name of thinking they are zombies, any one different, or new in town . . ."

Kragon nodded, "I understand and I agree, the story is already out, but the true facts are still a secret."

Pandora said, "Ever ask yourself what is truth?"

Kragon spoke, "The truth is what really happened, facts."

Pandora shook her head, "The truth is God's Word, the facts are lies with a little truth mixed in, like the devil told Eve in Eden, oh, you surely won't die . . ."

Kragon uttered, "I guess that is what makes up the whole of our knowledge now, lies with a little bit of truth mixed in, just enough for us to believe it."

Sandra found Isaiah sitting on the beach at the evening sun, "I've been looking all over for you, I tried your studio twice, but your robot servant said that it hadn't seen you for a while."

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Isaiah looked up, "Did I do this to her?"

Sandra sat next to him, "No, what happened at that party was not your fault, Vyna is disturbed, she's not right in the head."

Isaiah sipped some orange juice, “All she really wanted was her portrait done, I mean gees, is that so wrong, the woman wanted her portrait done, just a stupid painting, and now look, people are dead, she’s in the mental hospital, I don’t know what they are going to do to her . . .”

Sandra told him, “They are going to reinvent her personality, they are going to wipe out her existing personality and create a new one for her, one that is stable and does not conflict with her real past, just, it’ll be better for her. They are going to give her good memories and good thoughts.”

Isaiah shook his head, “That’s not real, God I hate the times that we live in, seems like technology has an answer for all our needs, is it a small wonder that so many of us have turned away from our Lord Jesus Christ. Technology has caused us to believe in evolution and the big bang as real events, when in truth they all can be explained by other more profound theories.”

Sandra agreed, “While all the other animals in the world, did come from the ocean, the sea, man, was created by God’s own hands, and there was darkness before the light, but God commanded that there be light.”

Isaiah uttered, “God created everything, because God created the beginning and the ending, we are like complex computer software, playing out our core command, us people are the data, the environment is a product of the core programing, God is so far above us, that there are really no analogies that can really explain our relationship to God, except one . . .”

Sandra nodded, “I’m listening . . .”

Isaiah spoke, “The Lord Jesus Christ!”

Sandra went on, “Vyna will be treated, and then, because doctors would have reinvented her personality, she’ll go before a criminal panel, they will more than likely allow her to return to society, because her personality would have been fixed.”

Isaiah was both angry and sad, “That is the whole point! Maybe she didn’t need to be fixed, maybe what was really wrong with her is that she needed to be loved, oh, not in sexual ways, but in a Godly way. Maybe I failed her some how, maybe society failed . . .”

Sandra stood up and extended her hand, “Come, let’s take a walk on the beach . . .”

Isaiah was reluctant but did, “You don’t see it do you?”

Sandra voiced, “See what?”

Isaiah spoke, “This whole thing was my fault, if I hadn’t agreed to do the painting, none of this would have happened.”

Sandra said, “You told the police about the whole thing, Cloie told me that you did, they didn’t believe that you were guilty of anything, you didn’t break the law, she did.”

Isaiah shrugged, “The law, the law of the world is in direct conflict with the law of God, has been since mankind fell from perfection, the law of the world is the law of the devil! I don’t care what the police say, there was a time that the police hunted and killed my people, because we were Faithers, I’d be a hypocrite, a lying serpent if I played their game now!”

Sandra took him in her arms, “No! I will not let you believe this, because I love you!”

The Dope-Lady smoked on something that was really mean, “You are in danger, very great danger by the others . . .”

Pandora waved the evil smoke away, “I want you to tell me how I can stop Vagabona and her husband, without losing my job and reputation.”

Dope-Lady laughed slightly, “You are not going to be able to do both, you have to make up your mind, do you want Nehushtan and his horde, or do you want to play games with the TSP and other government agencies, while they pull your strings and yank your chain, whenever you get too

close to the truth.”

Pandora was seriously frustrated, “I want to put an end to this, but what is the truth?”

Dope-Lady said, “There is only one truth in the whole universe, that is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, everything else is just crap, garnished up real pretty.”

Pandora voiced, “If I trick Nehushtan into leaving the planet, maybe I can take him out without any danger to my job or other people getting killed.”

Dope-Lady spoke, “Do you know how many people have been infected with the Necrobzom Bacteria?”

Pandora shook her head, “I’ve had this conversation before, I know that the number is very large.”

Dope-Lady laughed and coughed at the same time, “You underestimate what this disease really is, it comes from the future, but was created in the past, it is the same bacteria that killed Adam and Eve, but it has mutated, partly on its own, and partly because the military wants it for Black Ops.”

Pandora uttered, “How can that be, what are you saying, that the government got hold of the sickness that killed the first two humans, changing them from perfect beings into the abomination known today?”

Dope-Lady voiced, “I’m telling you that this conspiracy goes deeper and has more heads than any Beast, the Evil Ones, they know that the only way to fight God’s Angels, is to try and change the past in hopes of changing the future.”

Pandora shook her head, “I don’t follow . . .”

Dope-Lady explained, “What would happen if Adam and Eve didn’t die? What would be the outcome of all mankind, those are the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself.”

Pandora said, “I guess we’d all be perfect, some how, though, I can’t actually understand in which way . . .”

Dope-Lady murmured, “Why, in the way that counts, agent Wilson, if people don’t die, and the Evil Ones are amongst people, then they can possess humans, without ever having the fear of dying, you see, it under minds the Salvation of Jesus Christ!”

Pandora uttered, “My God, the anti-Creation!”

Dope-Lady said, “Exactly, if the first two humans never sin, and the bacteria that alters DNA is never introduced, then the Good and the Bad live as one, there is no coming of Christ, therefore, there can be no Armageddon, the world and the universe goes on. The devil wanted a kingdom to the north, if this world doesn’t roll away and a new one take its place, then he would have gotten exactly what he wanted!”

Pandora was confused, “But the bacteria . . .”

Dope-Lady stepped back into the shadows, “It wasn’t the fruit that Adam and Eve ate, it was what was on it, the Evil Ones had poisoned the whole tree, with the Necrobzom bacteria.”

Isaiah answered his door, it was Lilith, looking rather moved, “Hey, it’s late, what are you doing here?”

Lilith fell into his arms, “I need someone, no, I needed you . . .”

They made their way to the living room, Lilith collapsed on the sofa, while Isaiah went into

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the kitchen and poured each of them a glass of milk and made a snack, he came out, “What seems to be the problem?”

Lilith sipped on the milk and nibbled on the snack, “Thanks, I haven’t eaten in awhile, the

problem, I need to leave, go some where, the Red Pearl Club won't find me and I don't want to go alone."

Isaiah ate his food, "Did you ever consider going public with what you know about them, maybe exposing them is the right thing to do. That way, there will be a record of their actions."

Lilith lean in on him, "They'll kill me and anyone that knows about their dirty secrets."

Isaiah uttered, "Well, whoever goes with you will be in danger."

Lilith said, "I know, my love, but I so need a strong hand, right now."

Isaiah got up and paced, "So you are coming to me, hoping that I'll drop everything and just go off, runaway with you?"

Lilith voiced, "I wouldn't have come to you, except that we have talked about it before, I've already made arrangements, we can leave, take a space cruiser, pleasure cruise, mix in with the rest of the people, then on one of its many stops, to different planets, we can just disappear."

Isaiah spoke, "And what about my life, Lilith, I have friends here, people who care about me, what I'm I suppose to do about them?"

Lilith murmured, "Are you talking about Sandra . . ."

Isaiah paused then nodded, "Well, yeah, she's one of them, I've known her all my life, we grew up together."

Lilith pointed out, "But the two of you have never really gotten together, and I'm here, with you now, and I know a good thing when I see one. You and I can be so good together, my feelings for you are beyond what I've ever experienced with any other man. Isaiah, I'm in love with you . . ."

Isaiah took in a deep breath, "So you say . . ."

Lilith stood, "What, you think I am making this up, that I don't really have feelings for you, Isaiah, you are grossly mistaken!"

Isaiah raised a brow, "Really, would you do the same for me?"

Lilith questioned, "What?"

Isaiah said, "Would you change your entire life to help a friend, in this case, me, would you have dropped everything and run off with me if the situation were reversed?"

Lilith didn't hesitate, "In an heart beat . . ."

Isaiah reasoned, "I have contracts to do paintings, work that is not finished . . ."

Lilith argued, "Isaiah, I'm not expecting you to feel the same way that I feel about you, I've spent decades ignoring love, and finally, I meet you, a Faither, Christian, not even of my faith, believing in a God that I have not known, yet, I know that your faith is right, and that it is time for me to change, Isaiah, you mean the world to me, come with me, my beloved . . ."

Isaiah took her by the shoulders, "I'm going to pray to God, for guidance, join me . . ."

Maximillion Coward gazed at the other people, "You really think you can change anything by killing the host of the Necrobzom bacteria?"

Pandora voiced, "Some one has to try . . ."

Maximillion grinned evilly, "And you think you are the only one who has come up with that idea, to kill Nehushtan. Did it ever occur to you that he might not be able to be killed?"

Kragon cut in, "Everything dies in this world, nothing lives forever . . ."

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Pandora uttered under her breath, "Except God Almighty . . ."

Maximillion voiced, "Yes, well, that is for those who believe, or are starting to believe, because of the abomination that Nehushtan is, it is far better that you just round up as many of the



zombies that you can. Catch them when you can and then figure out how to get rid of them later.”

Kragon stated, “They turn back into regular people, and there is great evidence to suggest that the infected don’t even know that they are zombies. All, with the exception of Nehushtan and his wife, Vagabona, they seem to be able to control it . . .”

Maximillion nodded, “That is because he is the host for this sector.”

Pandora questioned, “What do you mean, this sector, are there other Necrobzom carriers out in the League of Worlds that we can’t account for?”

Maximillion laughed slightly, “Oh, there are things out in the League that you can’t even imagine, horrible things, evil things, things not of the flesh or the spirit. Like the abominations found on ancient Earth Prime, dinosaurs were not from the past, they came from the future, crazy scientist thinking to make a name for themselves, and the military looking for a new weapon, came up with the idea. They used medical genetic engineering to create some of the most feared monsters known to mankind, and when they had wiped out most of the human race, they sent them all back in time.”

Kragon spoke, “That explains why the creatures were not mentioned in the Holy Bible directly, but indirectly they were . . .”

Maximillion nodded, “Sure, but dragons and unicorns were mentioned in the Holy Bible, they are not mythical, but real, when the Holy Bible mentions them, it is in reference with other real animals. Just because an animal or thing can’t be found in present time, doesn’t mean that they didn’t exist, it only means that some thing or some one has managed to remove them from their original time frame, and place them into another. Some times on purpose, sometimes by accident, in this case, when mankind from the future transported all the dinosaurs back into Earth Prime’s past, it caused a quantum tweak, in order for the quantum tweak to stabilize, something from the past had to be moved into the future, in this case, unicorns and dragons were switched.”

Pandora spoke, “So killing Nehushtan can’t be done in the present . . .”

Maximillion agreed, “No, it can’t be done, if you want to put an end to this madness, you’ll have to go back to the past and kill him in the past, before he become so powerful, before the Necrobzom bacteria can spread.”

Kragon asked, “If this is the truth, then why hasn’t someone gone back and killed him, why tell us?”

Maximillion winked, “Why indeed, that is the question you need to be asking yourselves, before you embark on a journey with destiny, a destiny that if filled with all sorts of questions. If you are not the first to know, and you will not be the last to try, it is paradox!”

Pandora stated, “But we must try!”

Isaiah and Lilith came out of the building and got into a waiting aircar cab, the screen on the back of the panel went on and a remote cab driver’s face smiled, “Where to?”

Isaiah glanced at Lilith then back at the cabby, “The transdoor port at Wo’ran-dor.”

The cabby uttered, “Ah, the Royal Cruise, lots of people have been going there tonight. I hear that it is going to be one super bash, lots of famous people and big shots. The rich of the rich, I tried to get some tickets for me and the misses, but when I saw the price, no way, we’ll just have to settle for one of those econo-simulated vacations, you know, the ones with the holograms and all.”

Isaiah smiled, “Believe me, I know, this is way beyond me too.”

Lilith cut in with a smile, “We are a couple celebrating our first year together . . .”

The cabby smiled as the aircar took off, “Really, that’s nice, me and the misses have been

together for twenty six years, some of the best years of my life.”

Isaiah looked at Lilith and frowned, then back at the cabby on the screen, “Yeah, well, it’s good to know that there are some people who value a sacred union of marriage.”

The cabby went on, “You too, yeah, most people get those quicky marriage contracts, for three years or what ever, not me and the misses, we wanted the real thing, Faithers we are, marriage is a union from God, not to offend or anything . . .”

Isaiah uttered, “Why offend?”

The cabby said, “Well, the look on your girlfriend’s face, she looked like she preferred the marriage contract, I mean, hey, it’s okay, you sign up for a few years at a time, to see how things are going to go, if it’s good, instant renew, if not, you are out in three, with all the provisions that are stated in the contract. You see, I understand, but me and the misses are kind of old fashion.”

Lilith finally stated, “I think it is romantic, to do it the old fashion way, why, we might consider it in the future,” and she leaned over and kissed Isaiah on the lips.

Isaiah turned off the screen, “What is going on here?”

Lilith said, “What’s wrong, Isaiah, would it be so bad to be married to me, me and you, we make a perfect couple. Everyone seems to think so . . .”

Isaiah voiced, “Look, I’m trying to help you, keep those crazy witches, that you call friends, from killing you.”

Lilith smiled and snuggled up to him, “And you are, you are my knight in shining armor, I feel safe with you.”

Isaiah stated, “Well that is good, but what does this have to do with marriage?”

Lilith countered, “A girl can dream, can’t she, Isaiah, you are so wonderful to me, all my other friends are just out to get what they can, you are just what you appear to be, just a guy trying to help a friend, and I love that about you . . .”

Isaiah spoke, “Look, we are going on this cruise to try and hide, get away like you said, as soon as we find a port that looks right, we are going to get off and disappear into the native culture, that way you’ll be safe. Then I’m going back to my life . . .”

Lilith secretly had other plans but uttered, “Exactly, that is the plan . . .”

Isaiah told, “Then good, so long as we understand each other.”

Lilith said, “We will be taken straight to the transdoor and then transdoored onto the Royal Cruise Liner.”

Isaiah uttered, “It’s strange that the cruise liner has a transdoor on board, most don’t and transdoors are strictly controlled by the government.”

The luxury Royal Cruise line moved through space with a study course, the passengers had paid a hefty price to be onboard. Everybody seem to want to be seen by some one else, there were celebrities and the famous and the powerful and the wealthy and the rich. It was the grand voyage of the Royal Cruise, music filled the air, dancing and polite conversation and casual business deals pending.

In their quarters looking out to the blackness of space, Isaiah and Lilith were getting ready to have dinner, Lilith uttered, "Does this gown make me look fat?"

Isaiah being no fool uttered, "You look just fabulous," then he smiled.

Lilith was happy and she came over to him and hugged him and kissed him, "I'm so glad that it was you I could turn to, in my hour of need."

Isaiah voiced, "Well, you need help and I guess, well . . ."

Lilith spoke as she put on her earrings, "What?"

Isaiah said, "Naw, forget it. This is suppose to be a great cruise, we are going to travel to all sorts of places, let's enjoy it, your enemies won't find you here."

Lilith voiced, "We could always stay in, I mean, a few hours," then she slipped out of her dress revealing her voluptuous nude body, she came to him, "Perhaps this is the night for love?"

Isaiah kissed her, "You are a very beautiful woman, Lilith, but you know that I'm a Christian, I don't believe in fornication."

Lilith smiled, "I will not tempt you, and I do understand and respect your religious values, specially when it comes to having sex outside of wedlock."

Isaiah held her in his arms, "But there are other things that the Lord Jesus Christ, approves of that a man and woman can do to show their affection and love for one another."

Lilith read into it too much, "Oh, Isaiah, you just said that you love me," then she kissed him long and passionately, not giving him a chance to react.

At the table there were others seated, lots of decorations and big plates of specially ordered food, it was the first official meal of the voyage, and the captain of the ship sat at the table with them.

Captain Brimmin uttered, "To the Royal Cruise, and all her wonderful guest, may you enjoy your time with her and not forget to tell your friends about the great times you experience."

The people at the table laughed slightly, because Brimmin was obviously promoting word of mouth advertising of the cruise, it was all in jest and everyone toasted and went on eating and having a polite conversation.

George uttered, "This is the best time I've ever had."

Mary came back, "We've save a life time in order to afford this cruise."

Brimmin asked, "Is it living up to your expectations thus far?"

George looked at his wife Mary then at the others, "Better, everything is better . . ."

Lilith voiced, "It is a wonderful event, my compliments to the ship's captain . . ."

Everyone toasted Captain Brimmin and the party went on and there was dancing and music and laughter and just generally a good time.

But, in the bowels of the ship, a certain package, a crate that had been skillfully loaded.

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Washington looked at the two TSP agents, "You know we've had this conversation before, I know you intend to just up and kill Nehushtan . . ."

Kragon was offended, "Wait a bloody minute . . ."

Pandora cut in, "No, you don't have to say anything, Kragon. You are right, Washington, I have been seriously considering other ways to put an end to this madness, however, I've learned that simply killing Nehushtan may not be the right choice, this conspiracy goes deeper than I had first suspected, more complicated."

Washington frowned, "What can be more complicated than, zombies, morphing from regular citizens? I mean, this is beyond crazy, if I hadn't gotten this case, I'd tell anyone listening, that they were crazy."

Pandora said, "But the truth, the truth is stranger than fiction."

Kragon stated, "But it still has to make sense."

Pandora shook her head, "No, it doesn't. You see, the truth does not have to make sense, it is the truth, whether you understand it or not. Facts and lies, have to make sense, because they are the instruments of the evil ones, demons tell lies to men, to manipulate them into doing the devil's doing."

Washington frowned and shook his head, "First zombies and now demons?"

Pandora voiced, "What do you think the zombies are, they are demons, remember, the evil ones can change themselves, the devil disguises himself as an angel of light, they change to fit the occasion, always have. They are hunters, hunting men's souls, and good hunters don't camouflage themselves with something that the prey will run from, they camouflage themselves with the environment and make lures that attract the prey, mankind is the prey and the demons are the hunters."

Kragon uttered, "We can either catch Nehushtan in the present, or we can go back into the past, catch him in the beginning, stop him, kill him in the past."

Washington was taken back, "You really plan on doing this, what about all the laws and transdoor paradoxes, are you just going to alter history and the future, won't that make you just as bad as Nehushtan himself?"

Kragon put forth, "What is the worse? Letting all those innocent people get infected with this military grade Necrobzom bacteria? Or, doing the right thing and hoping that in the grand plan of things, God Almighty will make everything work out."

Washington nodded, "Okay, I suppose that putting your faith and trust in God Almighty will work, but isn't there the little problem, with messing with God's plans in the first place?"

Pandora stated, "Who messed with what first?"

Washington shrugged, "From what you are telling me, who can really tell, just how far back in time do you need to go in order to fix things, to the best that they can be fixed."

Kragon said, "Look, the less you know, the better it is for you, believe me, there will be an investigation, anybody attempts to change the Reckoning, there is an investigation."

Washington said, "Didn't those who started this whole thing encounter that problem?"

Pandora answered, "They might have, we don't really know, there are so many things going on, for one thing, centuries ago, mankind finding a timeportation machine along with the blue prints for making a transdoor, both discoveries on Mars, changed mankind's fate. The timeportation machine allowed space crafts to travel to distant solar systems in the galaxy, because the machine could speed up or low down time, on the space craft."

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Lilith confessed, "I have seen how your faith has blessed you in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe in God, I no longer want to be like I was, a witch and a heathen! For all my life I have been searching for something, I knew that something was missing but I could not put my finger on it."

Then I met you and things started to become clear, I started questioning my former beliefs, that was when the trouble started.”

Isaiah asked, “What do you mean?”

Lilith voiced, “They started plotting against me, to kill me, you see, the coven that I was affiliated with, the Red Pearl Club, is well connected, very serious about gaining and holding as much political power as possible. But in order for the spells to be cast and all the evil potions to be made, and the modern day evil manipulations, the true craft of witch craft, there has to be absolute secrecy and loyalty.”

Isaiah spoke, “I see . . .”

Lilith went on, “They control all sorts of political and social groups, that do nothing but try and undermine the infrastructure of the League of Worlds for their own perverse and sadistic purpose. I admit, that I use to go along with all of that, it was how I was raised, what I had been taught to do, but I had never really met a Faither, a modern day Christian, when I met you, and saw how you were with God and more importantly, how God was with you, that was when I realized that I was missing out on something very important.”

Isaiah uttered, “So, as a result of your turning away from the evil works of magic and witchcraft, the women in your coven want to have you killed.”

Lilith said, “Because I know too much, if they let me live, they run the risk that one day I will turn on them, and destroy all that they have been working for.”

Isaiah questioned, “So what does this mean, what are you going to do?”

Lilith answered, “I don’t want to go back to the old ways, because I have learned the truth, that the living Word is with the Lord Jesus Christ. I can’t allow myself to slip back into the dismal abyss of the evil lies and half-truths (facts), I need to be with you, Isaiah.”

Isaiah went on, “I don’t know if I can help you and ultimately, it all depends on where the hand of God is, is it to deliver, or damn. You see, all things are subject to the Lord Jesus.”

Lilith said, “The Lord Jesus Christ is Almighty and He rules all things, the universe bows down to Him and all things in both Heaven and Earth, have been made subjected unto his own Almighty Will.”

Isaiah voiced, “Yes, the Lord is wonderful!”

Lilith said, “The Lord liveth!”

Isaiah spoke, “You have to have that faith in God’s divine plan and creation, for the Lord created all things for his pleasure.”

Lilith said, “I repent, Isaiah, how do I go about getting baptized?”

Isaiah stepped back, “Are you serious . . .”

Lilith repeated, “Yes I am, I’m ready to be baptized.”

Isaiah voiced, “You know, you’ll have to undergo all sorts of Bible School, learn about the Lord, learn why God loves us so much.”

Lilith smiled, “Oh, thank you! I’m so glad that God put us together.”

Isaiah spoke, “So long as we humble ourselves before the Lord.”

Lilith stated, “I can’t go back, so there is only the way, it is the Lord for me now,”

Isaiah murmured, “Then we’ll have to see what comes next.”

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Pandora voiced, “So, this machine . . .”

Dr. Falker looked over her shoulder, “The Transtimeut, it is a machine that will allow a person to go anywhere in time and space in an instant. You see, centuries ago, scientist thought that

the universe was expanding, based on their primitive understanding of the laws of physics, that was before Dr. Everet T. Pystrum invented time travel, based on schematics and blue prints discovered on Mars, led the way to a whole new understanding of the universe, and what was more important, the body beyond the universe, the substance that the universe exist in.”

Kragon asked, “How is this going to help us?”

Falker said, “There are only a few Transtimeuts in the known universe. They are very difficult to make and even more unstable, that’s why transdoor technology is so widely used, because of the stability issue, and transdoors, while costing billions of shekels to make, are still cheaper than making a Transtimeut.”

Pandora uttered, “You understand why I’m asking you to send me through the Transtimeut, because there is a mass serial killer loose in our present day culture, and killing him in the present will not stop him, he has managed to exist in more than one reality and in more than one universe of conscience.”

Falker nodded, “I understand, you see, the Transtimeut can take you to any reality, whether it be an alternate universe or an alternate reality of conscience, be it in the past or in the future, time is an artificial imposition on the universe, it did not exist until all the elements of the universe were formed. Think of it this way, once upon a time all the known universe was darkness, and there was no time. Then came a universe of pure light, in which all things existed in different ethers of light, and there was no time. But the two came together, forming a third universe, the universe in which we exist in now, a universe of light and darkness.”

Kragon looked at the super complicated machine, it kind of looked like a transdoor, but more complicated, while transdoors had an entry way, which led into a series of super complicated machinery, when turned on, the transfield energy generated a perfect conduit of the world it was connected to, “Will you be able to come back?”

Pandora looked at Kragon, “I have to kill Nehushtan, in whatever reality he exist in, that might take some time and there is a good possibility that I might not be coming back.”

Falker nodded, “She is right, this very well might be a one way trip, the only way we will know if it is a success, is if this Nehushtan you are hunting ceases to exist in our world.”

Kragon questioned, “Won’t that simply produce a transdoor, paradox, just like the translaser technology does?”

Falker shook her head, “No, by using the Transtimeut, only the event changed is changed throughout all time and space, nothing else, that is what makes this machine so dangerous!”

Pandora said, “So, evil people, who were influenced by the BEAST, could use this machine to travel back to the beginning of time, and alter the outcome of Eden. And only a targeted effect would be felt in this present?”

Falker shook her head, “You kind of understand, but it is much more complicated than that, you see, if a person changes the past by using the Transtimeut, they change and alter all events in both time and space and conscience.”

Kragon uttered, “Then this is the only way?”

Pandora nodded as she prepared to enter the Transtimeut, “I have to try . . .”

Lilith stood on the observation deck sipping a glass of wine, “I think some of the witches that

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want me dead might be on this cruise line.”

Isaiah came from behind her, “What do you mean, we were careful not to leave a clue as to where we were going?”

Lilith said, "Yes, we were, but there is something I need to tell you, something that might make you run away from me."

Isaiah said, "What could be stranger than a witch trying to leave her past behind?"

Lilith turned to him and kissed him on the lips passionately, "I think you know that I love you dearly, you mean more to me than anything in the universe and I thank you for opening my eyes, to the love and salvation of Jesus Christ . . ."

Isaiah looked at her long and hard, "Okay, so what is the matter, now?"

Lilith obviously felt ashamed, "I'm not human, I'm a robot, an android . . ."

Isaiah stepped back, "What the hell . . ."

Lilith tried to move towards him, but he kept stepping away, "I know I should have told you sooner, but I was afraid of losing you, I thought if you got to know me, that you'd see that I was a nice person. Some one that you could . . ."

Isaiah yelled, "What, fall in love with, you've been using me from the beginning!"

Lilith uttered in complete heart ache, "No, my love, I needed a knight in shining armor, and there you were, you didn't see me with your eyes, because you are blind, you saw me with your heart, and that is the person that I really am."

Isaiah came back, "Person, you are not a person, you are some kind of fancy machine! Designed to look and act like a person, but you are no human being!"

Lilith spoke, "What is a human being, how much organic material does a person have to have in them, in order to be considered a human being? If a person is sick, and needs organ transplants, and those organs happen to be synthetic, does that person stop being a person and become a machine?"

Isaiah voiced, "That is different!"

Lilith went on, "How? How is it different? I'm in love with you, Isaiah, I'd do anything for you, anything, you have to believe this! Now, I'm sorry that I didn't tell you the truth at first, but I was afraid that you couldn't handle it, I was afraid that you would reject me, just like you are doing right now. What was I suppose to do, walk up to you and say, hi, my name is Lilith and guess what, I'm an android, a perfect copy of a human being."

Isaiah was obviously upset, "I don't know what you are trying to pull . . ."

Lilith uttered, "I'm not pulling anything, I'm a woman in love with you."

Isaiah backed off, "You are some kind of an abomination, an insult to God! How can you stand there and call yourself a woman, you are just a machine like an appliance!"

Lilith was seriously hurt, "Oh, my, no, not coming from you, not from you, surely you can see the genuine love I have for you . . ."

Isaiah stated, "All I see is the false prophets of your god Technoligion! You've been trying to trick me, learn about Christianity and the Faithers, you are a spy for the soulless, the Abominators of Technoligion!"

Lilith pleaded with him, "I don't care what you say, I truly do love you, and I know in my heart, that you have feelings for me too, I'm not with Technoligion anymore, I've denounced them, and I really do confess the Love and the Beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ, I believe . . ."

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Dr. Falker voiced, "This machine is called the Quantum Transmogrphyer, it has the ability to shrink objects."

Pandora uttered, "How far down can an object be shrunk?"

Falker voiced, "To the size of an atom, in theory, even further, but that is a different story, for all practical uses, shrinking an object down to the size of atomic structures suits most of practical industrial engineering needs. There once was a time when, though engineering could create robots and other complex machines, they had a serious problem with the power source. They couldn't find anything powerful enough that was not totally radioactive, then came the Transmographyer, it changed everything, engineers could create a viable power source, large scale, working on the machine from the inside out, then shrink it down to the size of an atom, if need be, just think of it, power sources that could generate serious output, but could fit on the edge of a pin, with the power source solved, there was no limit to design."

Pandora questioned, "And how does this affect what I am going to do?"

Falker voiced, "In order to send you back through time, you should understand how it works, the universe is infinitely big and at the same time infinitely small, there is no limit because at some point, the infinitely big becomes the infinitely small."

Pandora frowned, "I don't understand."

Falker nodded, "It is a complicated theory, but a theory that has been proven, it all started with the Theory of Relativity and then the theory of Quantum Physics, these early theories led to the Theory of One."

Pandora asked, "What is the Theory of One?"

Falker uttered, "Put in the simplest of terms, the theory states that the universe is alive, and is governed by one intelligent power. Ancient Christians, back on Earth Prime, used to believe in One God, one Almighty God that controlled everything. Well, it took modern science centuries of millennia, to come to that very same conclusion, that the entire universe is governed by one intelligent power source, we are living inside of something that is alive."

Pandora asked, "What are you saying, that we are inside some living being?"

Falker nodded, "Pretty much, that is the reality that we have to accept, because it has been proven to be true. There are infinite realities and infinite anti-realities, they all converge on the Theory of One. For centuries, mankind looked for laws that could account for his existence, when in all that time, it was staring him right in the face, everything in the universe is alive, but at a anti-molecular level."

Pandora questioned, "So, you are saying, that when I look up at the stars at night, I'm not really looking at planets and stars and galaxies, I'm looking at the inner-workings of a living being, a living creature, life, if I'd look into the inner-workings of a living creature, the cells, the microscopic organisms . . ."

Falker stated, "From our point of view, we are viewing the basic compounds, the atomic structures, before they form molecules, clusters of so called galaxies are really complex molecular structures being formed, we'd have to be able to step away, from the whole universe, in order to tell what it is that we exist inside of."

Pandora uttered, "So, what is the Theory of One?"

Falker stated, "The Theory of One states that all things in the universe exist inside of a larger, living entity, remember, that in the living human body, there are organic and inorganic substances, things that by themselves don't seem alive, but are when combined with other things."

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La-crap'tac held a parvea on them, "You really freaked up this time, Lilith, you knew that the Red Pearl Club was watching you, but still you persisted."

Isaiah asked, "What the hell is going on here? Who is this guy and why does he have a



parwea on us?”

Lilith tried to be calm, “This is one of the many ghouls that the witch coven has, men and women who have sold their souls for the privileges and power that the Red Pearl Club offers its members.”

Isaiah said, “So, you are some kind of an assassin?”

La-crap’tac nodded, “That an more, I’m an all around ghoul, as Lilith so plainly put it, I kill and get things and do other things more heinous. The fact of the matter is, only a small faction of the club wants you dead, Lilith.”

Lilith saw light at the end of the tunnel, “So, this isn’t something sanctioned by all the members?”

La-crap’tac shook his ugly head, “Nope, this is what you call a special kind of action.”

Isaiah said, “You can’t kill her.”

La-crap’tac questioned, “And why is that, I’m the one with the parwea in my hand, all I have to do is pull the trigger and I get half a million shekels.”

Isaiah voiced, “Wow, that’s a lot of money, just for killing a robot?”

La-crap’tac frowned, “What the freak are you talking about?”

Isaiah looked at Lilith then back at the man with the gun, “She’s a robot. You can’t kill what isn’t alive, oh, pulling the trigger, can kill me, I’m alive, but she is just a copy, a copy of someone that once was.”

La-crap’tac suddenly became very nervous, “That so, you just some kind of machine that looks like a real woman? Whose controlling you, what’s this all about?”

Lilith finally gave in, “I’m a robot, an android, the truth of the matter is, mostly all the members of the Red Pearl Club, are androids. We all wanted perfect health and perfect bodies and perfect beauty. Well, flesh and blood eventually fades, and even with all the modern medicines, health finally fails. But, an android body can last forever!”

La-crap’tac sat down, “So, all those bitches I’ve been serving, over the years, the reason that they don’t age or get sick, is because they are machines, a bunch of witches that are machines!”

Lilith and Isaiah found seats, Lilith shrugged, “You were never suppose to know, in fact, they only tell certain people, people that they can totally trust, no one else is allowed to know.”

La-crap’tac questioned, “Who do you tell?”

Lilith glanced at Isaiah, “Only the ones that we intend on marrying, our spouses. Other than that, it is a well kept secret.”

La-crap’tac laughed, “Well, now I know, when I finish this off, one way or another, I’ll deal with those satanic witches, machines, I’ll take care of them!”

Lilith cleared her throat, “You might have a problem, you see, you know, you know their little secret, how they live so long, why each and everyone of them is so beautiful, powerful, strong.”

La-crap’tac uttered, “What are you saying . . .”

Lilith voiced coldly, “Now that you know, you are the one they will hunt!”

The royal hall was a scam, all around were nobles and lords from various families, the great tribes of the Dynasty, a group of knights brought Pandora forth, she had been engaged in battle with them, they looked worse than she did. It never was a question, of if those who believed in the Lord

Jesus Christ would win, because it was God who stood between the good and the evil, fighting the battle for us, defeating our enemies.

Nebat, Nehushtan before he became the vile carrier of the Necrobzom bacteria, sat on the

throne, "And who is this that you have brought before me?"

One of the knights stepped forth, "She claims to be from the kingdom from the south."

Nebat seemed different, almost human, "Don't you know that this is the kingdom to the north, why have you traveled so far, and at your own peril?"

The royal court seemed active with low whispers, King Nebat, saw this and went on, "Do you have a tongue, or have my knights cut it out of you?"

The people in the court began to laugh as did the king, all until Pandora pulled off her hood, revealing her robust beauty and defiance, "If any tongues are lost, they belong to your knights, because it is I who commanded them to bring me before you. Not them to me . . ."

The knights all bowed before the king, indicating that she had bested them all, Pandora's shining white sword rested at her side, she was neither defeated in battle nor unarmed, the king became uncomfortable, "So, what brings such an obvious knight as your self, before me?"

Pandora answered, "I am a rogue knight, seeking a castle to rest my tired bones, your highness. If I had wanted you harm, your knights would have been brought to you minus their heads . . ."

This caused other knights, braver and of greater valor, to draw their swords, but the king waved his hand and they all stood down, Nebat uttered, "I have been having trouble with the king to the south, what say you of him?"

Pandora relaxed, "As I said, your highness, I am a rouge, seeking only alliance where the food is not stale and the wine is sweet, and the beer robust and cold. I eat to my content, not wasting nor wanting more than I can handle. I know my place and keep it even better!"

There was a long moment, when the king just studied her and the expressions of the faces in the courtyard, then suddenly, he broke out in laughter, this caused the courtyard to follow suit, "You must be one of the mercenaries I hired, for never have I seen such confidence, and skill, you have bested some of my favorite knights. You are welcome, er, what was your name?"

Pandora removed her cloak, revealing mail and armor, shining and flanked with symbols, sacred symbols, "I am Pandora of Boxlard, your highness, and yes, I answer your invitation."

Some of the people in the courtyard, after hearing her title, seemed very impressed, they had heard of her, she was a valiant knight, having won many battles. The other knights wandered off to their respected places, and a new place was made for her at the grand table, the king being located in the chief of places. As Pandora began her meal, a knight named Kragon took notice of her.

Kragon uttered, "I am Kragon of Lockshire, please to make your acquaintance."

Pandora glanced up from her food, "And I to you, I'm sure."

Kragon frowned, "Do we know one another? Your face, seems familiar, almost comfortable to me, have we met on the field of battle?"

Her plan had worked, the Transtimeut worked, "Maybe in another life . . ."

Lilith voiced, "I used a Quantum Recycler to transplant my living soul into this android body."

Isaiah uttered, "I thought such technology was outlawed on Evegastus."

Lilith answered, "It is, the women of the Red Pearl Club, all had it done in the Dark Sectors."

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We all went there and had our souls transplanted into robot bodies. It was our way of seeking immortality."

Isaiah asked, "What happened?"

Lilith went on, “Over the centuries, I began to wonder about real immortality, the type that God has to offer. I began to suspect, that the ways of Technoligion, that false religion, the false religion of the devil, was wrong and that God’s Almighty ways were, indeed, right.”

Suddenly there was a massive explosion, the luxury space cruiser rocked and wobbled in space. It was at that moment, that Isaiah took the opportunity to attack the assassin that was holding the parwea on them. The fight ensued for a good long time but in the end, Isaiah’s faith and trust in God Jesus Christ won out, he was able to defeat the assassin and knocked the man out.

The two of them made there way out of the cabin and down the halls, people were running wildly, screaming and total fear was on their faces. Isaiah yelled, questioned, “What’s going on, what happened?”

A young rich couple answered as they ran away, “It was a bomb, someone planted a bomb on the ship, a third of the ship has been blown into space!”

Lilith looked at Isaiah, “It was the Red Pearl Club!”

Isaiah asked, “But why, they sent an assassin, why blow up the ship?”

Lilith uttered, “Just to make sure . . .”

Isaiah voiced, “But, all of these people?”

Lilith stated, “I told you, I have a lot of secrets, all of the members do, that is what makes us both powerful and dangerous. No one leaves the Red Pearl Club, and if you do, you die.”

Isaiah stated, “And because you are a machine, that makes it extra difficult to do.”

Lilith took Isaiah’s hand, “Come, my darling, we have to seek one of the many life pods, or we’ll die with the space ship.”

Isaiah began to run, taking lead of her, “Quick, over here, we can use the stairs to get to the next level, and exit, the way to the life pods is down there.”

Lilith expounded, “Even if we manage to get inside of one of the life pods, we are in a dark part of space, the luxury cruise liner had just made Time Jump, using the onboard time machine to travel across a vast distance in space, while only taking mere hours to us, it dropped out of Time Jump, when the explosion took place, we are lost, rescue will be almost impossible!”

Isaiah voiced, “We have no choice, we either get inside one of the life pods, or we die here!”

There area was all crowded, members of the crew were directing the passengers towards the life pods, people were screaming and all panicked, it was a nightmare, the power on most of the decks was going out, you could hear bulkheads popping, as raw space began to seep into the parts of the ship that could still support life. Isaiah and Lilith had just made it in a life pod, when there was a loud explosion, the crew member that was helping them into the life pod was killed, they managed to seal the pod and then the crowded escape craft jetted into deep space.

Lilith whispered, “Oh, Isaiah, my love, my love, I’m frightened . . .”

It was dark and wet, only a few life pods managed to find the tiny moon, and even less were able to successfully land on the surface without crashing. The pod that contained Isaiah and Lilith was one of the lucky ones. Throughout the ordeal, Isaiah and some of the others, openly and silently prayed to God Jesus Christ, who obviously heard their prayers, and answered them, because, they were still alive.

Moving through the thick vegetation, Isaiah uttered, "We need to stay together, we don't know what type of planet we've landed on, what's out there . . ."

Paxton, a coward and a betrayer voiced, "Who made you the leader?"

There was twelve of them that survived the landing, but if they looked around, there were signs, that other life pods had managed to land, the only question was, did the people inside survive. It was cold and wet and dark, the air on the tiny moon was barely breathable, and the water tasted funny. Out on the horizon, giving off a weird unearthly glow, was the primary planet, it was a semi-gas giant, having properties of both a gas giant and a landmass planet. But the moon that they were on, it obviously had both land and water.

Isaiah finally spoke, "We are going to need to set up camp, the automatic emergency beacon, on the life pod, will broadcast our position. We will be saved, it might take some time, however."

Paxton yelled, "It's every man for himself! We only have, just so much food, and clean drinking water. What if it takes a really long time, for help to come?"

Lilith cut in, "Look around you, this planet, moon, really, by the looks of the primary planet, is our home until we get off of here."

Someone questioned, "What happened, why would someone plant a bomb on the cruise liner in the first place?"

Isaiah and Lilith looked at each other, both were smart enough, not to answer that question, "Right now, it is about survival . . ."

Paxton yelled, "I say, we vote, on a leader!"

The others seemed to like that, so they got to a place, a cave, they were out of the rain, someone made a fire, using the emergency equipment from the life pod, and they all voted. The lot fell to Isaiah, more people had confidence in him and his leadership, basically because of the way that he conducted himself, when they were all in the life pod.

Isaiah spoke, "In the battlefield, there are no atheist, so too, in extreme times of tribulation."

Paxton was not happy, about the way that the vote turned out, "You, and your religious crap! You're nothing more than a Faither, a Christian, it'll be technology that gets us out of this mess and off this stinking moon."

Isaiah answered, "If it were not for the hand of God, we'd all be dead. Just look around you, out of a hundred of us, only twelve survived in the life pod. And while there are signs that other life pods did indeed land on the moon, they could be on the opposite side of this world. Much is needed in order to survive, and even more, but to live requires faith in Jesus Christ."

Paxton hated this, "I live by my own wits, we shall see, Technoligion verses Christianity."

Prince Regard approached in the corridor, "What do you know about fighting dragons?"

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Pandora was taken back, "Much skill is needed . . ."

Regard studied her for a moment, "Agreed, some of the fools around here think that they can form a league with the dragons and the unicorns, saving the villages and the kingdoms."

Pandora went on, "But you don't agree?"

Regard walked with her, "Of course not, and judging by your words, you do not also. A small group of us knights have banded together, to seek out another approach, other than agreements."

Pandora voiced, "How many dragons are there?"

Regard hesitated, "Too many, most of them are of the smaller variety, but it would seem that each group of them, has at least one really big one."

Pandora asked, "And your people talk to these dragons?"

Regard uttered, "The smaller ones can speak as men speak, they are really no bigger than say a horse, but the bigger ones, are fire breathers, and they eat men and cattle and scorch the land."

Pandora was puzzled, "I thought all dragons breathed fire?"

Regard uttered, "Not all dragons are the same. Just as not all horses or cattle or other types of animals, the dragons come in many varieties, some small, some big, some intelligent, and some brutes."

Pandora questioned, "Where did they come from?"

They went around a corner, "Some legends have it, that they came from out of the sky. Great ships of fire brought them to our planet, they fell from the sky like demons."

Pandora said, "Hmm, perhaps there is more to these legends than what meets the ear. I am to understand that a small group of knights, here at Castle Nebat, want to kill the dragons, because they torment the people and kill the flocks."

Regard spoke deliberately, "These creatures are as smart as any man, indeed, smarter, they do not belong here, on this world, they came from some place else, this is commonly agreed upon throughout all the civilized kingdoms. But not all kings see the dragons as enemies against mankind, some want to align themselves with them, with intentions of eventually ruling the world."

Pandora uttered carelessly, "The dragons are aliens . . ."

Regard asked, "What mean you about this?"

Pandora snapped out of it, "Nothing . . ."

Regard said, "Then there is the problem with the unicorns?"

Pandora had never seen a real unicorn, this excited her, "Where do they roam and what is the trouble with them?"

Regard voiced, "The dragons seem to have some interest in them, they do not hunt them as they hunt cattle and other animals, but they do take them from time to time."

Pandora asked, "Why?"

Regard stated, "Come, we will have to talk to the castle wizard, he knows much about such things. It is commonly thought, that the unicorns and dragons were on the same vessel when they rained down from the heavens. But they are not the same creatures. The unicorns are pleasant to look upon, and the dragons are most foul creatures."

Pandora expounded, "Then perhaps I should meet this wizard, let us go forth."

Five of the life pod survivors were gathered around Paxton as he yelled, "We don't have enough water and food, most of our rations were contaminated with fuel, when we jetted out of the space cruise liner."

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Uh, if it was one thing then it was another, with that guy, Isaiah said, "Then we will have to hunt for food, if there is any, I'd say there might be fruit and berries, but the problem is, they could be poison."

Paxton looked at the group that seemed to like his way of thinking, "What if there are animals that will hunt us? Going out into the thickness, to hunt might prove dangerous."

Lilith had it with the guy, "Damn it, what is your problem, we are all stranded here on this moon, who knows when help will come, and who knows if the other life pods, the people inside of them survived, I mean, look at us, out of a hundred of us that was in the life pod, only twelve of us survived. And here you are, whining about every little thing, because you want to be the leader. If we have to hunt, then we all will hunt, men and women, it doesn't matter!"

Paxton was trying to look good in front of his new recruits, "Then, I'll lead the hunting party!"

Isaiah said, "Fine, seeing that you have those who seem loyal to you, your group pick out a few to gather and hunt, while I'll do the same. Look, Paxton, all any of us really want to do is live, help will come, but it might take us a little while, before it does."

Isaiah's saying sounded good to all of them, so they all split up into groups, some gathered, some hunted, and their survival continued.

Lilith went with Isaiah as they hunted, "Do you think that the other life pods found this moon?"

Isaiah uttered, "It's hard to say, I have a feeling that the semi-gas giant, that this moon orbits around, might have taken the majority of the pods down, it does have a strong gravitational pull."

Lilith uttered, "If that is the case, then the authorities might not be able to locate us, because the mother planet, might obscure our help beacon."

Isaiah looked at her, "You might be right, but I happen to know that a localized beacon was sent into orbit around this moon, just before our life pods entered orbit."

Lilith said, "The bomb that was on the space cruiser, it was meant for me, what if some of the survivors find out that the reason that we are stranded on this moon, is because of me, because someone was trying to kill me . . ."

Isaiah motioned with his finger to be quiet, "You don't know that for a fact, do you? I mean, it could very well be that something else is going on here. Something that we don't know about, I mean, it is a little extreme to blow up an entire space cruise liner, just to kill one person!"

Lilith nodded, "Okay, I'll believe it for now, but you and I both know, that assassin that was going to kill us, he wasn't working alone completely."

Isaiah questioned, "What are you saying?"

Lilith voiced, "I'm saying, what if in the struggle, he had some kind of trap-set, so that if he didn't succeed in killing me, that something else would happen?"

Isaiah spotted an animal, it looked like it could make a good meal, big enough for several days, "Be quiet, look, I think we've found food . . ."

Isaiah used the parwea weapon that the assassin was going to use on them, and shot it.

The holy priest of God, Ezekiel Flymonk voiced, "You seem to know many things, Pandora. Things that the average knight might not, and I've observed you in court before the king. You have business with King Nebat, that you have not revealed."

Pandora raised an eye brow, "You are very perceptive yourself. But I came to the church to get a blessing, there are many things that I have to do, things that require the full power of the Lord

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Jesus Christ."

Ezekiel uttered, "So, you believe in Jesus Christ. Not the pagan gods of this world?"

Pandora spoke, "I was not always a Christian, but, in the course of my work, I have learned

that there is only one truth in the world, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And I have seen a great evil unfold, an evil that threatens to kill all mankind, through possession . . .”

Ezekiel said, “Are you taking about spiritual possession or the physical possession, the one most observed?”

Pandora responded, “I’m not sure, I mean, the people tat are afflicted, they all seem normal, at first, but then, this disease, over-takes them and they become Frosco zombies.”

Ezekiel went to some books and quickly studied them, “Most people don’t truly understand possession. You see, people think that only they or animals can be possessed, but they don’t realize that creatures, smaller than the eye can see, can be possessed, in fact, it is that evolution, that the evil spirits of this world first took form. So, infection with such unclean spirits, in many cases, is a disease of the body.”

Pandora said, “So, if say, a bacteria was the physical manifestation of the possession, the evil spirits could spread though the bacteria.”

Ezekiel answered, “If the bacteria, is the creatures too small to be seem by the naked eye, all things are possible, but not all things are allowed!”

Pandora nodded, “Then it is here . . .”

Ezekiel voiced, “You’d do well to stay away from the castle wizard, Kalibus. He and the witch, Airama, they never speak as their minds are, they talk in gainsaying. And of course, they practice dark magic. God’s way is more powerful than magic, or the sciences of witchcraft. I am willing to help you, using God’s powers and His Holy Ways.”

Pandora spoke, “Then I shall count you as a friend, but as you surely must know, all that is, I must deal with.”

Ezekiel nodded, “I understand, but they will seek you out, because, they can feel that you are not from here, just as I know that you are from a future time, a time not yet revealed.”

Pandora expounded, “Yet, you know . . .”

Ezekiel smiled, “Nothing is concealed from God.”

Pandora said, “Then, if God has revealed me to you, he must have told you that I came here, to stop Nebat. You see, in my time, Nebat is called Nehushtan, and he is working with an evil sect called the Abomination. They want to change the course of time and events, by killing and other sorts of evil. But the killing actually started in the past, and in an alternate reality, this one, and perhaps many others. But, if I can stop him from getting the bacteria called Necrobzom bacteria, I can stop the evil from spreading to all known civilizations, on many worlds.”

Ezekiel voiced, “I have seen many visions, priest like myself, have been told by God Himself, to stand ready, because the end comes, but not from the future, but from the past, because the past is the future and the future is the past.”

Pandora was surprised, “You know this, you can’t be from this time anymore than I am.”

The fire embers blew up into the air, a stone oven had been constructed, in a part of the cave that suited it. The animal that Isaiah and Lilith and some others had caught, had been skinned, gutted and was roasting in the fire. It smelled really good to them, they were all hungry. Other things had been done, the skin of the animal, was being used, some of the others, were getting parts of it ready for clothes and weapons, and other items. The skin made for good string, for making  
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bows and arrows.

As they all got some food, a piece of meat and some strange looking vegetables, they gathered near the fire. Someone uttered, “This, this really tastes good . . .”

They all began to laugh a bit, then settled down, to the business of eating. Finally someone spoke, it was Paxton, his group had gathered the strange looking vegetables, but they tasted good also.

Paxton voiced, "I don't think that we are alone . . ."

A woman over from him questioned, "I wouldn't think so, there were other life pods that reached the moon, we saw them falling out of the night sky."

Paxton nodded, "You are right, maybe it is them, some of the others that are roaming around the place."

Lilith uttered, "Hey, this is a big moon, and for the amount of life pods that crash landed on the surface, it does seem odd that we haven't seen more of us, survivors . . ."

It was at that time that Isaiah began to think, "You know, you are right, now that I think about it, seems like we should have been running into at least the survivors whose life pods fell close by."

Someone uttered, "Not unless . . ."

Paxton seemed jumpy, "Not unless what?"

The person went on, "Not unless they all were killed. I mean, I hate to point out the obvious, but there were a lot more of us, when we go into the life pod, than what came out, on the surface of this moon. Maybe we are the only ones to have survived?"

Isaiah shook his head, "No, I don't want to believe that, those life pods are made well, strong enough to withstand entry into a planet's atmosphere, and able to locate land, before touching down. These are some tough machines . . ."

A person questioned, "Then, why did so many of us die?"

A silence fell over the camp, the cave was big, and went back as far as the eye could see. No one had really volunteered to explore the cave, to see what was in there, besides them. But the thought was now crossing a few of their minds, now that their stomachs were getting full.

Someone uttered, "I saw some really nice looking berries, not too far from the cave, I was thinking about making something to eat and drink with them."

Paxton went on, "Are they poison, I mean, you don't want to give us something that might kill us . . ."

The other person went on, "I've tasted them, hours ago, they taste sweet, like the kind of berries that you might make wine out of."

Lilith said, "Tomorrow, some of us can go and check out the berries and other things that might be good to eat."

Isaiah cautioned, "Be careful of wild animals, what we are eating, could have just as easily eaten one of us."

They all nodded and murmured in agreement, some one uttered, "We need a plan . . ."

The room in the castle where the wizard Kalibus practiced all sorts of pagan abominations was well lit at one end, but there were chambers that led into darkness, not just darkness of physical light, but darkness of spiritual light, there was no mistake about it, Kalibus was evil.

Pandora uttered, "You asked the king to summon me here, why?"

Kalibus said, "You and a small group of knights are going to deliver a message, you'll need  
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to be ready for that mission . . ."

Pandora looked about at the wizard's strange potions and even stranger enchantments, "Why should I have need of you, wizard?"



Kalibus marveled that she was not impressed with him, "They say that you come from a land far from here, where?"

Pandora laughed inside, "I'm not from here, exactly, I'm not from these parts. But where I come from exactly is of little concern, the king seems to find my letters of acceptable concern."

Kalibus nodded, "Yes, the king, well, if the king approves of you, then who am I to strike concern about?"

Pandora sensed something, "A lot of these things, that you have about your walls and on the tables . . ."

Kalibus uttered, "Magic, of the highest, I think it is safe to say that I am one of the best, if not the best magician, wizard in all the land."

Pandora voiced, "Could you go up against the priest, Ezekiel?"

Kalibus almost recoiled at hearing the man of God's name, "Him, he's not wizard, he calls on his God to do this bidding, he doesn't seem like much, in his church, planning his sermons, reading his, Holy Bible . . ."

Pandora responded, "No, he is not a wizard. But as a man of God, he does have great power. I can sense it when I talk to him, there is a halo of faith about the man."

Kalibus was jealous, "Well, we all have our ways, don't we. Anyway, the reason I wanted to talk to you, is because you and the other knights, will be going into dragon country . . ."

This was the first Pandora had heard of it, "Dragon country, and why would the king want us to go there?"

Kalibus answered, "To deliver a message to the king of the dragons, Mudiges!"

Pandora voiced, "This information comes in face of the king, I have not been summoned, so what special message would you like me to deliver to the dragon king, not that I'm in a position to do so as of yet."

Kalibus went to a small drawer and pulled out a scroll, it was tied with magic silk cloth and by the way he held it, had a powerful spell cast upon it, "I want you to give the dragon king this scroll."

Pandora took it and examined it lightly, "What does it say?"

Kalibus grinned, "You wouldn't understand it, if you could read it, it is written in magic, and intended for the dragon king only."

Pandora said, "You practice the science of magic, you are no more from these times than I am, did you really think I wouldn't recognize your craft, some of your tools are ancient, from this time, but you have engines of magic, that are from another time, a time not here, but from the future!"

Kalibus spoke softly, "Be very careful, knight, you know things and your mannerisms are not of this world or time, you know things, people have been talking, you are Futurian."

Lilith said, "I was talking to a few of the others . . ."

Isaiah uttered, "What about?"

Lilith continued, "They say that they have seen signs, that we are not alone, like areas where they have been picking berries and fruit, those areas have been left one way, but when they come back, they are another."

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Isaiah cautioned, "Are you sure that natural beast of this moon have not been there?"

Lilith took in a deep breath, "It sure doesn't seem that way. I mean, anything is possible, but even I have noticed that things left seem to have been disturbed when I come back. Nothing big,

mind you, more like, someone has been examining the things left, or the area.”

Isaiah stated, “If it were other survivors of the life pods, they would have made themselves known, there would be no reason to hide, sneak around, after all, we were all from the same luxury space cruise liner.”

Lilith said, “One would think that way, but there could be a number of reasons why that person has been hiding from us.”

Isaiah looked at her, “Really, why?”

Lilith went on, “This is a strange situation, Isaiah, the stress alone makes people do strange things, like with Paxton, acting all, I’m the leader and all. Strange things, I think that maybe we all need to set a trap for this person, flush them out into the open. If not for our sakes, then for the sake of the person, I mean, imagine, living outside the cave, and we all know that there are wild animals on the moon, we’ve been eating them.”

Isaiah reasoned, “We might be able to set something up. But, I don’t want the person hurt, that is one thing that we can all do without, injured people, means more stress on our resources. Besides, this person hasn’t really done anything wrong, they are just looking at the places where we’ve been. More than likely, gathering small amounts of food, after we’ve gone.”

Lilith questioned, “But why, why not just come up to us and join our camp?”

Isaiah put forth, “Maybe they are afraid, who knows how some other survivors of the life pods are acting, I mean, just look at Paxton, he’s turned into a total jerk, maybe something like that has been going on, elsewhere.”

Lilith voiced, “Alright, but the others are starting to get worried about another thing . . .”

Isaiah asked, “What is it now?”

Lilith stated, “How are we going to get off this moon and back to civilization?”

Isaiah spoke, “Well, in our case, we don’t want to, do we, I mean, getting back means that we risk exposure to the same elements that wanted you dead, and me too, now that it probable has become obvious that I’m helping you.”

Lilith announced, “We need some element of hope, Isaiah . . .”

Isaiah spoke, “Lilith, what would you have me do, promise the others false hope. Would if I could simply create a way off this moon, like I do my paintings. I say we pray to Jesus Christ.”

Lilith lit up, “That’s it, maybe we can do just that . . .”

Isaiah frowned, “People pray to God, what are you talking about?”

Lilith stated, “You are an artist, what if you could create some plans, draw up plans to build a space craft that could get us off this moon. I mean, I know it seems a bit of a reach, but what if we could take the remains of the life pod, and create a new ship, one that could get us off of here?”

Isaiah nodded, “We do have a diverse group, engineers, scientist, it might work.”

Kragon uttered, “You are a strange one, Pandora of Boxland, but I’m not sure why I and Sir Regard have been chosen to deliver this message . . .”

Regard voiced, “Because we are disposable, the king does not want to risk sending out his good knights, the ones who kiss his ass on regular basis.”

Pandora controlled her horse, “Well, there you have it, if we die, the king hasn’t lost anyone that he really cares about.”

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Kragon didn’t like the sound of that, “So, you are saying, that the two of you know that King Nebat hates us, and this is his way of getting rid of us, without making a public scene?”

Regard voiced, “Kings have done far more, to those that they did not like, why do you think

that the front lines are always littered with those poor fools that did not hold the king's favor?"

Pandora spoke, "This dragon king, has Nebat done business with him in the past, or has there always been semi-war between them?"

Regard answered, "It would seem that the dragons have little use for humans, but there does seem to be a kind of bond between the more heartless kings and the dragons."

Pandora asked, "Where did they come from, the dragons?"

Kragon stated, "Wow, you must really be from some place far away, not to know the story of how dragons came into the world . . ."

Pandora said, "I'm not talking about the dragons falling from the sky, all children know these stories, what I mean, is where did they come from?"

Regard studied her for a moment, "We don't know, legend has it that they are demons, cast out from Heaven and thrown on the planet, from what I know of them, this story probably holds some truth."

Kragon put in, "But that was a long time ago, these stories are as old as the dragons themselves."

Pandora voiced, "So, why would our good King Nebat, want to strike a deal with demons?"

Regard laughed as he rode, "Power, money, treasure, these are the things that the dragons, somehow get their hands on."

Pandora questioned, "How can big flying lizards, get treasure?"

Regard said, "I can see that you do not know the dragons, there is more than one type of dragon, some are huge fire breathers, some are small, like a man, they all can breathe fire from their mouths, but the smaller ones, they seem like part human and part dragon."

Pandora uttered, "Damn, genetic ex-breeding, gene manipulation."

Kragon moved his horse in closer, "What are you talking about, what is genetic ex-breeding and what have you?"

Pandora suddenly remembered where she was, "I didn't mean anything about it, you see, I am not that knowledgeable about dragons."

Regard announced, "You may not be knowing about our ways, and dragons in particular, but you do know the strange ways."

Pandora questioned, "What are you talking about?"

Kragon added, "Yeah, what do you mean, Sir Regard, how is our good knight here, knowing about the strange ways?"

Regard spoke, "People have been talking, saying things, in your quarters, strange lights."

Isaiah pronounced, "I will praise the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ, for his love lasts forever and his mercy is only equaled by his love."

After having given thanks, everyone began to eat their portions, the cave was warm and had been made very comfortable. They all seemed to understand that they were in for the long haul. One of them spoke, "We can try to make a space craft and fly off this moon."

Another uttered, "It has been discussed, but when looking at the actual situation, there are some real problems."

Someone else asked, "What, what are the problems?"

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The other said, "Most space crafts carry with them a small transdoor, or some type of time machine like a transdoor, because a transdoor works in many ways like a time machine, but different. We can make the space ship from the remains of the life pods, but, without a transdoor

onboard, we might be looking at spending a very long time in space, before being rescued. The fact of the matter is, it could be centuries before we were discovered and rescued, a lot of it has to do with the fact that we are near this gas giant, communications are very difficult due to the radiation.”

Still another voiced, “Einstein theorized about the possibility of monomagnetism, but weaker minds argued that there were no such things in nature, but according to the theories of relativity, there should be. It wasn’t until people pulled their heads out of their asses, that they came to realized that Einstein was right, the planets are monomagnets. Because they have an tenancy to enter into stellar flux, as their magnetic fields shift, rendering the planet into a monomagnet. It was this observation that led to the invention of monomagnets, which actually operated very differently than regular magnets, you see, monomagnets deflect gravity, much in a similar way that regular magnets, attract some metals and electromagnetic flux.”

Isaiah said, “I’m no scientist, wouldn’t want to be one either, but what you are describing is the basic process behind aircars, how they fly, because of monomagnetism, it is also how space crafts lift off into orbit.”

They went on, “Yes, centuries ago, the only way to launch a space craft, was to use extremely volatile gases and fuels, then came the discovery of how to create monomagnets, and all of that changed.”

Someone asked, “What does that have to do with our plans to escape this moon?”

The other person went on, “The life pods, have everything we need, except, a powerful enough, monomagnet engine. In fact, the monomagnets that cause the life pods to land without crashing, are too small to lift off a craft, just to land it.”

People started to become depressed at the sound of that news, Isaiah realized that and uttered, “What if we didn’t need a space craft anymore?”

Someone questioned, “What do you mean?”

Isaiah went on, “What if we could build a transdoor instead?”

You could feel the mood lifting once more, hope was cast into the sea of gloom, the others that were scientist and engineers quickly began to calculate the possibilities, then one of them said, “This is a much better idea, Isaiah, you may not be a scientist, but you do have creative talent. We can do this, using the same materials that we were going to use to build a space ship to get off this planet, but we will have to gather up other parts, from other life pods . . .”

Everyone fell silent, what this meant, was that they would have to venture out, further than they had before, find life pods that could be salvaged, bring the parts back to the cave.”

They were pinned in, someone was shooting at them, it was others from life pods that didn't want to have anything to do with other survivors, food, resources, it was at a point where it was dog eat dog.

Lilith whispered, "Whoever it is, they have power blasters. I guess they must be from the staff on the space cruiser."

Someone with them uttered, "But why would they be shooting at us? I mean, we are all from the same ship, and we are all trapped on this moon."

Isaiah stated, "They want to keep their resources to themselves, it happens sometimes in situations like this, in some, it brings out the best in us, and in some, it brings out the worse. They don't want to have anything to do with the other survivors."

Lilith uttered, "Well, that only means that they, they must have something important, technology that we can use to build a transdoor, and get the heck out of here."

The other said, "If we can manage to overtake them somehow, we can take their technology and still build what we must. I mean, why are we just going to turn around and go in another way. They have what we want, let's take it!"

Isaiah looked at the others, "We are not going to become what they have become. It is not the Christian way, God Almighty will show us away. Besides, going down the path that these have chosen, will only lead to death. Sometimes, you just have to trust that Jesus Christ is going to make everything alright, even if it doesn't look like it, in our eyes."

Lilith spoke, "But it would be easier to just over take them, and get what we want."

Isaiah stated, "You told me that you wanted to learn about God, and give up your ways with Technoligion, that false god. Well, this is the way that it is going to be done, if we act like them, then we have become no better than those who blew up the luxury space cruiser. We were created by God, with his own hands, that is very special, very wonderful. If we then debase ourselves, by becoming like the pagans, then we lose that which was most special to us. Our relationship with God Almighty."

Someone questioned, "Then we just give up, we let it all go, we don't even try to get off this miserable moon?"

Lilith muttered, "I don't think that is what Isaiah is saying, we have to look someplace else. Face it, they have weapons . . ."

The other voiced, "So do we, I mean, Isaiah has a power blaster, parwea, I say that we fight for what we need to survive."

Isaiah barked, "By doing what, killing? Is that what we have become, we will kill someone else, all so that we can survive, I have to tell you, if that is the only way that we can survive, then I think that we are already dead! Killing for the sake of survival is what the evil spirits want us to do, act evolutionary, the strongest only survive."

Someone asked, "What's wrong with that?"

Isaiah pleaded, "What's wrong with that is, if the entire universe is not a produce of Creation, but of evolution, then it is God who takes the spoil, because no one, no body, no thing, is greater the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the truth, so we find another way, look else where."

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Mudiges the evil dragon king surveyed them, "So, you come here, all the way from your safe palaces and your inventions of war, to deliver unto me this scroll?"

The dark palace halls were filled with all sorts of evil and disgusting creatures, some half

human looking, others, obviously minor demons. Regard looked about himself, his hands never far from his sword of enchanted steel, "We come in peace, King Mudiges, it is with great hope that we may also leave that way!"

There was great commotion in the dark palace, obviously the creatures about them had other thoughts in mind, Mudiges motioned his hand, after reading the scroll, "I can not agree to these terms, with out there being bloodshed, blood must be poured!"

This saying made the awful creatures happy, Pandora spoke, "If it is a fight you are looking for, King Mudiges, then I will be the one to give it to you!"

Mudiges looked on, "You are the strange one, the knight that has come from, the Farplace, the Futurian! Have you come to torment us before our time or is there some other reason that angels reveal themselves?"

The others looked extremely puzzled at Pandora and Mudiges, they were confused as to what had just transpired, Regard spoke up, "If there is to be any fighting done here this day, it will be my sword that does it!"

Mudiges nodded and waved, "So be it, the brave and mighty knight, Regard, will do battle with one of my minions, if you prevail, you may go in peace to your own land, if you do not, you all will die here!"

Pandora's hand rested firmly on her sword, the Iydamicus, "If one of us knights must do battle, then all of us, do battle," and she drew her sword.

Kragon had hoped for a better outcome, but faced with the obvious, he drew his sword, "Fight one of us, fight us all!"

Mudiges saw Pandora's sword as it was unique, "So, behold, the woman wields the sword, Iydamicus, this sword could have only been forged in the Lake of Fire and Glass! If you are not an Angel of God, you have been in contact with them! Seize them!"

And a battle broke out, the three brave knights against a horde of evil minions, but even though they were out numbered, their blades tasted the blood of the evil ones, and when the battle looked like it might not go in their favor, Pandora would yell out, "The sword of Jesus Christ," and things would again fall in their favor.

They had managed to get themselves over and way down the halls, it was a blood bath, with all sorts of evil things coming at them, but they were the bravest and the most blessed of the kingdom, they prevailed. Finally they managed to get to the point, from whence they came, so they mounted on their horses and rode away, as swiftly as the wind.

Regard uttered, "Mudiges recognized your sword, how can that be?"

Kragon voiced, "I think our new comrade is an enchanted one . . ."

Pandora rode hard, "Not enchanted, Kragon, just extremely complicated!"

The two men looked at each other, finally Kragon said, "And when was there ever a time when a woman, wasn't complicated?"

Regard spoke, "We can not go the way that we came, it will be too dangerous, Mudiges will have even bigger dragons hunting us, they'll expect us to return by the way that we came, because it is closer to safety."

Kragon questioned, "And if you don't mind me pointing out the obvious, dragons come!"

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Some others, from other life pods, a group was attacking Isaiah's cave, most of the attack was carried out with bows and arrows, as did Isaiah's people, they had managed to become very skilled with the bow. But the months had passed by, making a transdoor out of the spare parts,

finding the right circuits and the energy required to create such a device, was proving almost next to impossible, yet they were making progress. Attacks occurred sporadically, but when they did, they were fierce, this was starting to suck the morale out of Isaiah's camp, there was talk of joining another group.

Isaiah said, "This is stupid, to do so now would only endanger the rest of us."

Paxton was like a sickness, that would not let go, "Why not, what is it, are you afraid that we are going to discover something better than what we have here? You know what I think, I think that you don't want anyone to go because you will lose your leadership position with the group. That's what I think!"

Some others seemed to go along with that notion, murmuring amongst themselves. But there were still others that realized, that they were on the right track. Centuries ago, if a stranded group wanted to build something like a transdoor, well they couldn't, basically because no one knew how, and even when it was discovered, the first ones were very bulky. Later came refinements, the original blue prints, designs which were found on Mars, and later made to work by Dr. Evert T. Pystrum, the world renowned African-American physicist, the technology became advanced enough to readily be able to build a transdoor. Two problems made it impractical to have them in every home, one was power source, and the second was the extreme complexity of the machine. At the point where Isaiah's group was at, they were trying to build a small and crude transdoor device, inside the cave, because it was safer and easier to protect it from the constant attacks of other groups. Somehow, word had gotten out, to other groups of survivors, that Isaiah's group had a plan to get off the moon. But Isaiah's group was not the only one, others had decided that the space craft idea was a good one, each group having access to different pieces of technology, scattered about the area.

Someone voiced, "We were out scouting as usual, and we came across a large area of bits and pieces of a crashed life pod. A lot of the main drive, with the monomagnet-drive still intact. See this is some of the stuff that we found, but we'll need help getting the important stuff back to the cave."

Lilith uttered, "I will go with you, along with some others, this is very important, and remember, other groups have need of the salvage, just like us. We are not alone, with the thoughts of building something to get us off this moon. I think by now, most of us know, that we have been written off, as lost or dead. Because no help has ever come."

Paxton challenged, "You are saying all of this, because you are Isaiah's woman!"

The others looked on and reacted because the tension was too great between Isaiah and Paxton, the truth be told, Isaiah would have much rather, just fallen into place as one of the pack, but the demands of the group pushed me to the forefront, as a leader and Lilith's steadfast loyalty to him, no, her great love for him, supported that leadership, but Paxton would not go quietly.

Lilith went on, "Anyone of you, not, believing that God Almighty will deliver us, is free to go, at this point, most of the technical things have been done, to the transdoor, it is just a matter of getting a few critical parts, and getting the machine to work. But we are in tough times, other groups attack us, few have forged alliances with us. It is better, if we have faith in Jesus Christ!"

The fire burned well as they sat around the camp, each to their own tent, horses fed and put

for the night, out in the distance a storm was developing, that it would come their way, only God Almighty knew for sure. Pandora and Regard and Kragon had managed to best the horde of the dragon king, but they all knew that in turning down the path into Thetford Forest, more danger lay

ahead. These were enchanted times and the forest held a host of enchantment, the creatures that dwelt within the forest itself, and the very air that they breathed, was filled with mischief of enchantment. It wasn't without reason that the fork in the road was well posted, or that not even the most fierce of knights, hesitated, and turned away from going down the path into the deep of the forest. Fairies dwelt in the forest, elves, and strange people, lived there. It was also the land of the unicorns, they lived peaceably in the forest with all the other enchanted creatures, but the unicorns were feared by the dragons, because of the unicorn's horn, they were magic and could pierce the dragon's scales, easily. So, while dragons liked to eat unicorns, a small group of even three unicorns, could easily take down a big flying dragon, and there were many different kinds of dragons.

There were the dragons that lived in the water, they snaked about like serpents of the deep, killing and tormenting and doing the evil of the Evil Ones, for dragons were the cursed creatures of the land, they were the ones that did the devil's doings, when they talked Eve into committing suicide, by eating of the forbidden fruit and giving it to her husband, thus killing the human race, before it had a chance to take root. So, the dragon, that evil old serpent, held a very dishonorable place in the kingdom of creatures, while flying high above the land, were debased even to the lowest of the creatures of the world.

Regard uttered, "We have to keep an eye out for trolls, and other nasty creatures of the forest."

Kragon voiced, "I thought that trolls won't venture, where there are groups of elves and fairies?"

Regard spoke, "The Forest of Enchantment is filled with elves and fairies, would that was all there were, but like in any ecosystem, you have the good creatures and the bad creatures. If we are to take this journey, then we must be ever vigilant, dropping one's guard for even an instant, in some cases can get one killed, or worse . . ."

Pandora ate a piece of something that Kragon had managed to kill, it cooked even as they sat, "There are things worse than death?"

Kragon voiced, "Ah, yes, in this forest, death sometimes is preferred, there are the abominations of madness that lives in this forest. I have heard of tales, where brave men and women, warriors, have ventured into the Forest of Enchantment, only to lose their minds, to be stripped of any form of rational thinking, and become totally mad."

Pandora laughed slightly, "And what becomes of them, we lock them away in the towers or in the dungeons?"

Regard went, "Only if that were their fate, they wander, like lost souls, wandering in the darkness, doomed to tread up and down the paths, in the Lost Forest, for all time. So, this is not the best of choices, we may never find our way back to our reality and time and place."

Pandora said, "A portal, a twisted byproduct of the Transtimeut . . ."

Regard questioned, "What is, this Transtimeut?"

Kragon went, "Sounds like a demon to me, if ever there was one, and there are!"

Pandora gathered herself, "What, no, it is nothing, more like Kragon has said . . ."

Lilith uttered, "This animal that keeps attacking our camp, it has to be dealt with . . ."

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Someone voiced, "I have heard that this same animal has killed several of the survivors of the other camps. It is some kind of monster!"

Isaiah tried to be the voice of reason, "Now, come on, there are a lot of wild things on this



moon, things that frankly are very dangerous and deadly! We can't lose focus of our plans, if we can manage to get all the right pieces of technology, then we can transdoor off this moon, and all of this wouldn't have been for nothing!"

Paxton spoke with contempt, "You think you know it all, don't you, blind man! Look around you, we are on a moon that is crawling with all sorts of beasts, they hunt us like we hunt them. Then you have the other survivors, and most of them think that they have the best way, the best plan, to get off this moon. Some of them are even building a massive tower, to try and send a help signal, hoping that a ship passing by, will hear them."

Lilith said, "Ships don't regularly travel this route, this is way off the regular path of commercial and tour ships, basically because of the gas giant, and other space related anomalies that are not safe for space travel. I mean, it might work, in fact, anyone of a dozen plans might work, and then we all will be saved. But we have to work together . . ."

Paxton stated, "You are in league with Isaiah! You're his woman! So, anything that you say is suspect! We need fresh leadership! A new vision . . ."

Another person put in, "Wait a minute, so far, things have been okay, yes we have trouble with the other survivors, and yes, there are beasts out there that hunt us for food, like we hunt them, but the idea to build a transdoor, and get the heck off this moon, that is a good one. Trying to build a ship and fly off this moon, poses some serious problems, first of all, is the gas giant, it could pull you right into it, if your calculations are off by just a little. And there is the problem of speed, with regular engines, it could take a very long time, for someone to spot us, and rescue us, also, any ship able to blast off this moon, isn't going to be able to hold very many of us, because of a whole number of reasons."

Isaiah said, "Look, I know that we all are worried, it takes three monomagnets, and a lot of technical and scientific know-how to build just the smallest of transdoors, but if we succeed, we can all be saved, even the other survivors . . ."

Paxton yelled, "Why would you want to save them, they have all worked against us, at one point or another!"

Lilith really was growing tired of this guy, "Look, you fool, it is a matter of just plain old common sense, we work together and build the damn transdoor, who cares if the other survivors benefit from it, and even, we are still a far cry away from having all the parts and components that we need, basically, the three monomagnets, which are the main components of the machine!"

Someone uttered, "We have one monomagnet, from our life pod, and one of our neighbors has promised a second one, for trade and a promise to come with us, when the machine is completed, we can find the third one, and we can make it!"

Isaiah pronounced, "We will make it, because God Jesus Christ will deliver us with his strong right hand!"

Paxton blasted, "You see, there you go again, with your stupid Faither talk, that kind of superstition is going to get us killed!"

Lilith went at him, "Believing in God Almighty, is not superstition, Technoligion, now that is superstition, no, in fact, it is a pagan god worship! You are the fool!"

The elf king and queen sat on their thrones, through the castle windows could be seen many

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herds of unicorns, grazing about in the open land. Regard turned his attention back to the throne, "We are noble knights from the north . . ."

The king elf uttered, "There in lies the problem, everyone knows that the kingdoms, both to

the south and to the north, that they are ruled by treacherous kings. There is nothing noble about any of them . . .”

Pandora quickly cut in, “Though we are knights from these places, we have not campaigned with these kingdoms, save that mission that has brought us here. We were sent as messengers, to deliver what we supposed was a writ for peace, between the dragon king, Mudiges, but there was deception in the parchment!”

King Nahid surveyed them, “What would you have thought would have been in the parchment, knight. Everyone knows that the dragons and the humans fight all the time. They rain fire down from the sky and men fire inventions of death towards them. The other, intelligent beings, all have their place in the on going battles.”

Queen Tezemha announced, “The dragons like to hunt the unicorn, but the animals of the forest, are under the protection of the elves of the forest. There are many magical creatures in the forest, some very terrible and crafty, good and kind. The unicorns once grazed beyond the forest, but the dragons would hunt them, however, the dragons also fear the horns of the unicorns, because the horns can penetrate their thick scales, and kill them easily.”

Kragon spoke up, “Would it be possible for us to be granted safe passage, through the forest?”

The king and queen looked at each other, then Nahid voiced, “We will not keep you from your journey, but beware, there are many different kinds of dragons, some very big, some that breath fire, some that are very small, but all evil.”

Tezemha uttered, “The dragons are the misnamed dinosaurs of old legends, but they are all the same. Legend has it that these creatures came from another world, from beings that wanted to terra-form this planet, but after their primary mission was complete, something went wrong, and they mutated and evolved, being creatures of abomination, not of the Spirit.”

Pandora said, “So, what you are saying is that dragons, dinosaurs, were from another planet. And sent to this world to change it, but when it came time to die off, they somehow evolved and changed, a managed to evolve into the creatures that plague this world today.”

Nahid spoke, “Many stories are told, about times long ago, dragons are evil by nature, they are possessed by the Fallen Ones, the evil which haunts the world.”

Regard voiced, “This is a fight that goes on, it can never stop!”

Tezemha spoke, “You can have safe passage through the forest, none of our subjects will effort to bother you, however, stay away from the trolls, they are a nasty lot.”

Nahid nodded, “Of all the subjects in the forest, the trolls don’t listen, they think that they don’t have to get along with the other creatures and beings in the forest, so, the smarter creatures leave the trolls alone, and the trolls go about their business.”

Kragon uttered, “What of the dragons, do the trolls and the dragons get along?”

Tezemha answered, “Dragons only get along with other dragons, even the man-dragons, those abominations of half dragon and half men, but trolls only like other trolls, they hate the dragons as much as anyone. Stay the course, there are many forks in the road, keep to your right, because the left leads to unknown mystic places. Avoid flying dragons, small ones . . .”

They moved through the camp cautiously, someone uttered, “What the hell happened here? I  
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looks like, well, where are all the people?”

The camp was a friendly camp, a group of survivors that Isaiah’s camp had managed to make friends with. But now, there was blood on the ground and splattered upon various places, but no

bodies, the people were gone.

There was a cold emotional chill about the place, something horrible had happened, Isaiah voiced, "Stay close and stay alert, we don't know what happened here, but we have to assume, from all the blood, that it was awful, whatever it was."

Lilith was right by Isaiah's side, "Maybe they were attacked by one of those wild beast. They hunt people like people hunt prey for food."

Someone pointed out, "If they were killed by a beast, why is there scorch marks on the ground and on some of the things?"

Isaiah said, "When I was young, I once got up in front of my class, and though I firmly believed in God Jesus Christ, I had to give a speech, so I asked a provocative question, I asked, what if God didn't exist? I did it, not to distance myself from the Lord, but to rattle some cages, shake things up, see what the other people in my class were really thinking. I was surprised to find out that my teacher embraced the idea of God not existing, and a lot of people in my class were atheist, but one girl, God bless her soul, spoke out in defiance, speaking good of the Lord. I often regret asking that question, it happened so long ago. I believed in God but I asked the question, what if God didn't exist . . ."

Lilith spoke, "You were doing it to see what other people in your class were thinking, and you found out, much to your shock, that your teach was an atheist, if you had never gotten up and asked the question, you might not have been made aware of your surroundings, you might have gone on assuming that everyone thought the way that you did, you might have just gone on assuming that everyone believed in God Almighty. When in fact, you flushed out a demon!"

Somebody questioned, "What does that have to do with us, in this situation, I mean, that all happened a long time ago, when you are just a young boy . . ."

Isaiah stated, "Because I'm getting that same, funny feeling, that I had, when I stood before the class and gave my report. A bad feeling . . ."

Someone voiced, "This camp was friendly to our camp, we had formed an alliance, we were sharing knowledge as to how to build a transdoor, and we were sharing food and resources. This is going to set us back."

Lilith said, "We can still get the parts we need to help in the process of building a transdoor, and gathered food is obviously here. However, the real danger that this camp was wiped out by someone or something, is beyond disturbing."

Isaiah uttered, "Lilith is right, as far as gathering what we need, it is all here, but if this thing happened to this camp, allies of ours, it could happen to our camp, too. We need to gather as much information as we can, and try and determine what happened here, so we can prepare, and try and avoid it happening to us."

Just then, there was a distant crying for help, they all stopped and listened, then Isaiah, without speaking, motioned with his hands, instructions to the others. They quickly moved about, almost military style, and found the hapless person, a young woman, she was injured. They all helped her. Then they gathered as much as they could carry and left the unholy site, still not knowing if their fate was destined to be like that.

The big troll stood against them, "Why should I let you cross the bridge, after all, I am in

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league with the dragons, and the dragons hate the humans."

Pandora voiced, "And why do you suppose that the dragons hate humans?"

The troll said, "Because humans can't be trusted . . ."

Regard cut in, "And you think that dragons can be trusted?"

The troll explained, "Since the beginning, there have been these, the elves, the dragons, the troll, and the unspoken ones, simply called the others. Many wars have been fought and many things have been done, but the dragons have never made war with the trolls."

Kragon uttered, "But all the other things that you have just spoken of, came as a result of the dragons. They take on many forms, some dragons are just evil spirits, some even have human-like form, yet there are those who are too wicked, and they just look ugly and evil, some fly in the night skies, dragons are evil-spirits who deceive mankind."

The troll spoke, "Then why does mankind make war and why do so many of your kind die in wars and do evil to themselves?"

Pandora answered, "Because for too long, mankind has been deceived by dragons, it was the dragon in the form of the evil serpent who deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden."

The troll stated, "I have heard this claim before, and it would seem that the serpent did not make Eve do anything, it was her own disobedience that landed her and condemned the entire human race to death and misery, the dragon, as the serpent, just had a simple conversation with her."

Regard voiced, "Just like we are having a simple conversation?"

The troll nodded with large amounts of green and yellow snot erupting out of his nose, "Yes, just a conversation. There is no harm in that is there?"

Pandora uttered, "It all depends on the conversation, if you are trying to talk a newly created being into committing suicide, the conversation is more than just a simple means of communication, you are using words, in order to try and kill someone. People do it all the time, when they falsely, accuse others of doing wrong. That is why the Holy Bible says that you should not bare false witness."

The troll yelled, "Crap! All men are liars! And the ways of evil can be found in the seeds of mankind, not in dragons, no one made the woman disobey God, she did that by first going over to the tree of Good and Evil, and then by, allowing herself to be taken in by the serpent, what power did the serpent have, just words, and words by themselves can do nothing!"

Regard voiced, "You see, that is where you are wrong, words are a very powerful form of energy, an energy that mankind can use to destroy the dragons and all other forms of evil. The dragons are using the trolls, to do their dirty work."

The troll became angry, "We are not stupid, we are not being used by anything or anyone. Us trolls have been around since the beginning, when mankind did not exist, there were the dragons and the others and the trolls, we have seen civilizations come and go, but there still remains one thing, death comes to you all."

Kragon yelled, "Then perhaps death should come to you, troll?"

Pandora sensed the tension, "Maybe it will not have to come to this, the fruit from the tree of Good and Evil, was poison, it had a virus in it that broke down our immune systems, the virus was passed down from one generation to another, each time, blocking key components of the human genetic make up, separating the conscious mind from the unconscious mind, chaos!"

Lilith questioned, "Who are you, what is your name?"

Jezeba was still weak, "My name is Jezeba, I'm what's left of my group, I was a technician

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onboard the luxury space liner, before the explosion."

Isaiah questioned, "What happened to your camp, when we found you, it looked like something came through it?"

Jezeba nodded, "It was a beast, a group of them, some of them had the head of a lion with the body of a human being, some had heads of other beast, they raided our camp, killing and taking whomever they so chose. It was horrible, they killed and then left as swiftly as they came."

Someone asked, "But where did they come from, I mean, we've been here just as long as anyone, none of us have seen such creatures?"

Jezeba looked on, "Believe me when I tell you this, you do not want to see these beasts! They are evil and horrible, it was like something out of my worst nightmare, I've never seen or dreamed of anything like it."

Lilith uttered, "The heads of animals and the bodies of men and women, it sounds like the Greek mythology of the Minotaur! But how can this be?"

Paxton spoke up, "That is because this moon is cursed and anyone who lands on this God forsaken place gets cursed!"

Isaiah quickly tried to calm everyone down, there were a few that went along with Paxton, as usual, he had his followers, "Calm down people, we don't know all of the facts, there has to be a reasonable explanation for all of this."

Someone said, "I don't think this moon has reason, it seems like we are stuck in a place just beyond time and space, I mean, weird things keep happening, and have you noticed, that every time we get close to finishing the transdoor, something happens! Like this woman . . ."

Someone else added, "She is right, weird things do keep happening, it's like there is something alive, something evil, keeping us from returning home."

Isaiah voiced, "We can't lose focus, if we start doubting each other, then we really are doomed to stay here, with no hope of ever returning."

Another person stated, "So, then we are going out to find these beasts, and kill them?"

Jezeba yelled, "No! I mean, no, you can't, they are too powerful, they will kill whoever goes after them!"

The cave became quiet for a long moment, each person looking at another, someone said, "Then what are we going to do, fall victim to these beast, like this woman's camp did?"

Lilith said, "We must keep our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, so far, He's been good to us, we have survived this long, we will survive . . ."

Some of the others muttered and agreed with her, but others had doubts, "I think that we are sitting ducks! If we don't look out, we might be next, maybe that is what is going on, maybe this moon does evil things to the creatures that live on it?"

Jezeba questioned, "You people have a transdoor?"

Isaiah cut in quickly, "We have ideas about how to get off this moon . . ."

Jezeba went on, "But how, I mean, how far along are you, from finishing your project. Perhaps I can help, I am a technician, after all."

Lilith spoke, "Right now, you need to get your rest, you are welcome to stay with us, our cave, makes our camp easy to defend. That is probably why we have survived so long, and why those beasts that you spoke of, haven't attacked us yet."

As they made their way through the thick forest, the three suns in the distance shining in the noon sky, with the huge gas giant looming just off to the horizon, someone said, "I don't trust her . . ."

Lilith uttered, "Do you have a reason?"

The person voiced, "I guess I don't really have to have a reason, now do I?"

Isaiah cut in, "It would help, I mean, now that we know that there are some really evil creatures, who live on this moon, semi-intelligent evil creatures, we have to hunt and explore in packs, just for our own safety's sake."

Someone else said, "Don't you find it funny, that in all the time that we have been stranded here, on this awful moon, that none of us have run into these demon people . . ."

And someone else uttered, "I agree, and in fact, we only have her word to go on, she seems strange to me, like she's hiding something, I get a strange feeling from her."

Isaiah uttered, "Look, we are close, very close to finding the third and final monomagnet, one of these destroyed life pods is going to have a working one, and when we find it, we finish the project."

But someone else stated, "That is another thing, notice how she is really interested in getting off this moon?"

Lilith voiced, "So are we, I mean look at us, we are venturing out farther than we have ever before, trying to find a crashed life pod that might have a working monomagnet, I mean, just because someone wants to get off this moon, doesn't in and of itself, make them a threat."

Someone said, "Doesn't not make them, either . . ."

Isaiah was the kind of leader, that listened to the others, then after getting as many facts as possible, made a decision, "What you all are saying is that you just flat out, don't trust Jezeba, for reasons that you can't put your finger on, but none the less, you don't trust her."

The others uttered in agreement, "What if she's after our transdoor, seeing that she showed so much interest in it?"

Someone else questioned, "What if this is a trap, I mean, we really don't know what happened to the other camp, and why did she survive, where all the others died?"

Lilith voiced, "That bothers me too . . ."

Isaiah looked at Lilith, this was the first time she had doubts about his decisions, "I can't believe what I'm hearing, you want to throw out a woman, who was found in a camp where some mad evil beast people, or creatures, had raided the place and killed everyone . . ."

Someone said, "Ate everyone, these minotaurs, raided the camp and ate the people in it, let's keep sight of what we are dealing with here."

But someone else said, "We only have her word to go on, none of us have seen anything like that, and we've all been here just as long as anyone, explored just as much as anything one."

Isaiah finally said, "Okay, we'll keep an extra watch on her, she goes no where without someone watching her, not even the bathroom, you know what I mean. You might be right, maybe this was the mistake that the other camp made, and they paid the price."

Lilith voiced, "Look, up ahead, a crashed life pod . . ."

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Kragon questioned, "You say that you come from someplace beyond the hills? What place is beyond the hills, there is only the sea, and we all know that the sea goes on and on. Many have sailed the sea and some who have sought to explore the vastness, have sailed until they did not come

back.”

Pandora said, “There is a lot about this world that is beyond the basic understanding of mankind . . .”

Regard voiced, “But the dragons have knowledge of these things, and the perverse wizards, who worship false gods, and perhaps the Holy Priest know of the strange things. But you have been called Futurain, those who come from someplace else, beyond time itself. Why, where have you come from and what business have you with us in this time and place?”

Pandora was cautious, “Whether I am Futurian is not important, the fact remains that there is a great danger brewing in the here and now, between the king and the dragons, there will be a great plague released, a plague that will span the course of time and space, it will infect many worlds and places. I have come to try and stop it . . .”

Kragon asked, “Are the dragons Futurain as well?”

Pandora stated, “The dragons are creatures of the damned, they are the essence, in physical form, of demons long ago, cast down from Heaven, by God’s Holy Angels, these Fallen Ones, have managed to evolve, through a Choas, a madness, that presents itself as angels of light, when in fact, they have no light in them, just darkness and misery.”

Regard went on, “So, that plague, why would any human want to help the dragons destroy all of mankind, it just doesn’t make any sense, unless, the madness has reached into the king?”

Pandora spoke, “The hearts of men and women are filled with madness. You see, in the future, people will do things that ancient people thought were reserved for gods, in fact, machines will rule over mankind, and they will worship technology, like it was a god, because technology will have appeared to have solved all of mankind’s problems. When in fact, it is that same technology which will have enslaved mankind to the dark forces.”

Regard asked, “Why would mankind allow itself to be fooled by such deceptions?”

Kragon agreed, “I too find it hard to believe that people would allow themselves to willingly become slaves to devices as you speak of . . .”

Pandora resigned, “The things I speak of, are true, but there is a bigger picture, people in the future can travel back and forth in time and space, making things like death, all more complicated, imagine, a person, who dies in one moment, their loved ones can go back in time, to a point before that person died, and bring them from that point in time, into the future, where they will live on. So society had to create laws in order to govern the use of such advanced technology.”

Kragon put forth, “So, in this future that you speak of, if I were to die by the hands of my enemy, my friends, could go back in time, and get me, before I died, bring me back, and I could avenge my own death, having been taken from a time and place before the events leading to my death happened? This is madness . . .”

Pandora uttered, “And that is just the gist of the conundrum, history records both events, your death and your coming back, from beyond the grave, now there are two events that happened, you died, and you were brought back via technology.”

Regard wondered, “What manner of paradox that must be . . .”

Pandora explained, “That is exactly what happens, so the future truly is Futurain!”

Paxton was furious, “You can’t just let strangers into our camp, we are too close to getting

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the transdoor that we are building, to work. What if this is all a trick, in order to find out what we are doing, to sabotage our progress?”

Lilith responded, “Why would someone kill an entire camp, all those people, just to find out

what we are doing. It makes no sense . . .”

Someone else uttered, “But we don’t know anything about this woman, where she is from, what’s her story?”

Another person added, “I’ve been watching her for a long time, specially when she thinks that no one is watching. She is strange, not natural, something is not right, maybe we should make her leave. After all, her camp was overtaken by these wild evil minotaurs, so why should we take her in, she might cause them to attack us.”

There was someone who said, “The fact of it, is that we have been here just as long as anyone, and we’ve encountered very strange creatures on this moon, but nothing like she has described. Maybe she killed everyone and is making the whole story up?”

Lilith stated, “Are you trying to tell me that you think that Jezeba is the killer? You think that she had all those people in that camp killed, but how?”

Someone uttered, “Can we really be willing to take the chance, I mean, like everyone knows, we are the ones with the best chance of escaping this moon. The transdoor is almost finished . . .”

Another person put in, “Maybe she is a spy, you know, sent by some other camp, to spy out our secrets.”

Lilith frowned, “But it is no secret that we are building a transdoor, in fact, we have requested help in this project with many other camps. That is the whole process, because we need bits and pieces of technology, that the others have, in order to build a way out of here.”

A person in the back uttered, “Some of the other camps have named this moon, Limboa, because it seems like we are stuck, just between what we all once had, and what is now our obvious reality. There are many things about this place, that causes one to question everything.”

Lilith asked, “What do you mean by that?”

Still someone else explained, “What if this whole thing was no accident, what if forces beyond our control or understanding, brought us all here, for some horrible reason. I mean, just look at us, we have just the right amount of technical know how, and we are one of the lucky ones who have found a perfect cave in order to make camp. Is that all just plain old luck?”

Lilith answered, “The Holy Scriptures state that, chance happens to everyone, the rich and the poor, but that God Almighty controls our every step.”

Someone voiced, “Then what you are saying, is that God caused all of this to happen to us, but why would God do that?”

Lilith spoke, “You err in not knowing the Holy Scriptures, God Jesus Christ is a wonderful God, and he loves us all. This universe has been infected with a Spiritual Virus, just like the physical body can be infected, so can the entire universe, which is a physical universe, be infected, the Evil Ones are like a virus, infecting, corrupting, destroying, because the devil is like an infectious disease, infecting all living matter, causing false readings and understandings. But the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Cure!”

Another person uttered, “Then the praise be to God Jesus Christ, who will save us!”

Yaga was Queen of the Fairies and lived deep in the Enchanted Woods of Thetford, “You are fighting an uphill battle.”

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Regard said, “We know that the battle is rough and the odds are against us, but much is at stake, in fact, the future of the entire world and our future hang in the balance.”

Pandora spoke, “The Dragon King must be destroyed before he can make a pact with the evil



kings of this land, one in particular, who will gain hold of a deadly bacteria, one in which, enslaves the infected person, and dooms them to become zombies.”

Yaga uttered, “How can this be, you are talking about things that have not happened yet, it is very possible that the evil that the dragons plan, will fail!”

Kragon cut in, “Believe me when I say this, she knows what will come to pass, she is Futurain!”

Yaga paused, “Can this be true? If you truly are Futurain, then you know the key events that will happen in the future. You could reshape our world into the image that you want it to be, just by doing or not doing certain things. This is a great power . . .”

Pandora cautioned, “If I were to be trapped in such a notion, I would be no better than the ones I have come all this way to defeat. In fact, a sign of pride or greed, might tip the fates in their favor, the Evil Ones do not need more allies, they need more enemies, those who are not afraid to fight them, and with the help of God Almighty, defeat them all.”

Yaga spoke, “But there truly must be some other way, the secrets that you know of, they must be shared with the people and beings of this time, this world, before the time and place are gone, and all is lost.”

Pandora responded, “You are falling into the same old trap, that men fall into, thinking that you can play God, and force your own will upon the world, the universe . . .”

Yaga stated, “And why not, is not that the destiny of mankind, to change that which can not be changed, and to will, that which can not be willed?”

Pandora explained, “These are the tricks of the devil, to trick us into thinking that we are doing things for one reason, when in fact, we are doing things for a totally different reason. Where I come from, all manner of things are possible, and things just keep on getting worse, death comes and then people go back in time and bring the dead back with them. There is advanced technology which has gone mad, insanity governs the science in the form of the Chaos. Where people err, is that the entire universe and the thing that the universe resides in, was created by God, and with change, happens to both the rich and the poor, God’s Almighty will is our destiny!”

Yaga questioned, “Are you saying that people become like gods in your future? What happens to the creatures of the forest, the magical creatures of this time and place?”

Pandora hesitated, “They are no longer with us, not in the form that they exist today, science has replaced magic, and people use mathematics, to cast spells on the entire human race. It is a sterile time, and time when dreams are reality and reality dreams. On some planets, they no longer die at all, having exchanged their human bodies for artificial ones, the Abomination is responsible for the down fall and decay of mankind, by tricking him into believing that all that technology and scientific advances were for the benefit of mankind. But the devil created the hellish situations, and then, presented himself as an angel of light, offering cures and solutions, to problems that he had created.”

Yaga uttered, “A false god, but what of the unicorns, do they exist in your time?”

Pandora voiced, “In another reality, a different time and place, but God’s will be done!”

Jezeba voiced, “I know that you don’t trust me, I can see it in the eyes of the others. But I

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don’t know what to do about it.”

Isaiah was taken back, “That is not it, you don’t understand . . .”

Jezeba cut in, “No, you are just trying to be nice, I know this. But the others, they don’t trust

me, they think I had something to do with the people dying in my camp. But I didn't, I couldn't do something like that, and anyway, where are all the bodies, how could one woman, like myself, kill all those people, and get rid of the bodies. And you have to consider, you are the ones that found me, how would I have known to be at the place that I was and at the right time, you didn't announce that you were coming or anything."

Isaiah nodded, "You are right, but many of the people in my camp are very suspicious. They don't take things for granted, because of the tragedy, with the luxury space cruise liner blowing up and all."

Jezeba uttered, "But what does that have to do with me, I'm as much a victim of all of this as anyone."

Isaiah said, "True, we all are victims of someone who has no compassion for human life, it is horrible about the human life that has been lost. And what makes it even worse, is that the survivors, may never be rescued."

Jezeba questioned, "But isn't that why you are building a transdoor, so that we all can be rescued, taken away from that God awful place, with its monsters and strange images, I've seen things and heard voices that seem to come from out of nowhere. I've heard things eating people, people screaming and yelling for help."

Isaiah voiced, "Did you see what was killing the people?"

Jezeba shook her head, "Not all the times, I know that those awful minotaurs have been killing and hunting down people, seems like from the very beginning. You and your camp have been lucky, because they don't seem to like this part of the woods."

Isaiah asked, "You wouldn't happen to know why, they seem to hunt just certain camps and not others. I mean, I have to be honest, I've seen some pretty creepy things, since I've been on this moon, but, I haven't seen minotaurs, human eating minotaurs. And why do they hunt humans, when I'm sure that there are other animals on this moon that they could hunt?"

Jezeba went on, "Forgive me for asking, but the glasses that you wear, they are Blind Glasses, used by blind people so that they can see . . ."

Isaiah nodded, "Yes, I am blind, but with the Blind Glasses, I can see just fine, nothing is as good as what God Almighty made, but this is the cross I have to bear."

Jezeba spoke, "That is another thing that sets you apart from the others, you are a Faither, you believe in Jesus Christ, and I have noticed you and a woman, the two of you go off and pray together . . ."

Isaiah voiced, "You are right, I am a Faither, and because of that faith in Jesus Christ, I believe that, while I might be limited in doing things, God Almighty can compensate, with his Almighty Power! It is that faith that gets me through these tough times."

Jezeba moved over to him, "You need true companionship, someone to help you, someone you can lean on in these tough times."

Isaiah said, "I have friends, people that I can talk to and confide in."

Jezeba announced, "You mean, like that woman, Lilith, I have heard them call her. Does she do the things for you that you need to have done? I know where a third monomagnet is . . ."

The Magog-cret voiced, "You are not of this world, yet you come unto these ancient  
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places, why have you come here?"

Pandora responded, "I am here to stop a great evil that will happen in this time, and to stop the spread of a plague that will spread throughout all time, the plague of death."

Magog-cret answered, "And who are these that stand with you, are they come to do the things that you say that you are come to do?"

Regard spoke, "We are friends of the Knight named Pandora, what she says is the truth, it has been revealed to us in visions and dreams. We can not allow this evil that is coming to befall all mankind, even though it will happen in the future."

Magog-cret announced, "What has the past to do with the future, and what has the future to do with the past?"

Kragon uttered, "From what I've seen, these things are but one and the same, it is like a river that pours down into the sea, the waters are the same, but the places along the way, seem to make the difference."

Magog-cret stated, "What if you can not stop this thing from happening, perhaps the things that you see can not be done. It is possible that the destiny of mankind has already been written and that all is left is to play out the acts of men. It is like a piece of music, that a master has written, then that master takes that music and brings it to other masters, masters of the musical instruments, and those masters study and examine the music, finally after many days of practice, they all assemble, and do perform the masterpiece, so is life."

Pandora went on, "It is true that we may not be able to defeat the Beast, but from where I come from, the evil has taken hold in the hearts of men and women, they abort their children and trade flesh for silicone, preferring the synthetic over the natural, there are people who walk like men and women, but are not. They seem to ambulate and speak, but there is no soul in them, and demons possess the vessels for the purpose of escaping their hellish exile."

Magog-cret nodded, "Truly you are Futurian, for no man or woman could know these things unless they had been there and seen them with their own eyes and heard these things with their own ears. The future is the past and the past is the future, there is no difference, it is only a matter of perception."

Pandora stated, "These are the Journeys of Pandora, for I am here until I succeed, and I can not go back home anymore, because of the mission that I have been sent on. I must stop the evil king and queen from taking the poison and spreading it to all mankind."

Magog-cret told, "Death and misery are the fates of all men and women, it was thus so from the beginning, but not the intension, yet it was the cause, and not the design, but the infiltration of the Evil Ones, who walk in the world in the nether parts, roaming up and down, having been cast down from Heaven, and forced to dwell in Jemm, for so are the fates of the Dead Spirits!"

Pandora said, "The dragons must be stopped, they are planning to give a great plague to the evil king, and the plague will consume and devour for the rest of time. Countless people will be infected and not even know it, yet the evil king and his queen will travel throughout time, spreading their foul disease, making men and women into Necrobzom Zombies!"

Magog-cret stated, "Alas, these things are but the beginning of the Plight, and the end of the Reasoning, you are too late to stop what has already begun, for the dragons are the plague and the greed and lust of mankind, they are the carrier. You seek to chase your own tail . . ."

Isaiah and a scouting party lay on a hillside, observing a camp, something awful was happening to the people of the camp, as some big ugly monster, with a hundred legs, at the front of

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it, was a tee shaped body, with a hundred legs, and at the back of it was a tee shaped body, with a hundred legs. It had two mouths, one at the front and one at the back, so it could kill and eat in any direction. It was swiftly moving through the camp, this was a camp of many survivors, and it was

killing them and eating them.

Someone said, "My God, I can't believe what we are seeing, those poor people . . ."

Isaiah answered, "This moon is full of strange creatures, abominations to God Almighty's design. We have to keep quiet . . ."

Another person uttered, "What if what is happening to these people happens to us?"

Lilith quickly cut in, "We can't think like that, if we allow ourselves to think like that, then we are doomed before we even get started."

Jezeba included, "She is right, if you let yourself be taken in by the living-nightmares that exist on this moon, then you will become a victim of this place. I have seen it before, when people give up hope, and suddenly, evil comes upon them swiftly, you must learn to ignore the evil before you!"

Someone else yelled, "How can you lay there and be so cold, can't you see the pain and the suffering that these people are going through. I can't believe that you are so heartless and cold, these are people, just like us, they came from the same crashed luxury space liner, and in fact, if not but for the grace of God Almighty, it could be us."

Lilith stated, "Keep your voice down, yes, it is horrible what is happening to those poor people, but we came here to get the third and final monomagnet, if it hasn't been destroyed in the horrible slaughter we are witnessing, then we can all get the hell off this God forsaken moon, and pave the way for all the survivors of the spaceship crash."

Another person added, "You are assuming that after this monster gets through eating and killing everyone in this camp, that it won't come over to our camp, and kill everyone there."

Jezeba voiced, "What you are saying might be true, but we are a long ways from our camp, three days journey, it could also be that these things are just in this area, and that they will never find their way to our cave."

Someone uttered, "Our cave, who said anything about you being a permanent member of our camp, you are a stranger to us, for all we know, you might be behind all of this, some how . . ."

Isaiah questioned, "How is that possible, she is here with us, right now, what is wrong with you people, can't you see that these things aren't human, they are perversions. Abominations, just look at this thing, it eats from both sides, it is the most unholy creature I have ever seen, and the killing it is capable of . . ."

Lilith uttered, "Isaiah is right, we can't go around blaming Jezeba, for what obviously is this moon's natural creature environment. What we need to do is stay focused, our goal, our objective, is to get that monomagnet, and get the freak out of here!"

Some person questioned, "But if we go down there, into the camp, we will be eaten by that monster! None of this plan makes any sense . . ."

The others started to murmur, "Yes, that is right, we need to go back . . ."

Isaiah boldly stated, "Where is your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? You have come this far, only to turn and run, this can not be, if we keep our faith in Christ Jesus, he will show us the way, for when we are at our weakest, that is when God Almighty, is strongest to deliver us. "

The Quizart looked at them, "Who dares to come into these unholy woods, seeking to change that which can not be changed and alter, that which can not be altered?"

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The three, had their swords drawn and stood ready to do battle, Pandora spoke up, "We are knights on a most holy crusade, to stop the coming forth of the Nebat Warriors, those who ally themselves with the Prince of the Necrobosm!"

Quizart yelled, "No mere human can stop the terror to come, for it is destiny that calls it from beyond the grave, these are dark hours, when Good shall battle Evil, and the outcome shall be painted throughout all time. You three think that you can change all of that, but the evil foundations go all the way to Jemm and to the Dark Sectors, all of them to which to come!"

Kragon responded, "Then it is not without honor that we take on such a quest, for all mankind needs defending."

Regard added, "We will not leave, demon! Our path is clear, we will pass and continue to fight the good fight, in hopes that in the end, our actions will be blessed, and that God Almighty will smile upon our efforts."

Quizart moaned, "Oh, how I have suffered in darkness, the tides of time have forgotten us all, the Fallen Ones, we were once great and honored amongst our race, the Holy Angels of God Almighty, but we rebelled against Him Most Holy, and we have been doomed to suffer the actions of our insurrection!"

Pandora shouted, "You do well to suffer, Quizart! For you and your kind, turned their backs on the True and Living God, only to follow the orders of a dammed creation, a creation designed with flaws and pride, now you all suffer the damnation and the wrath of God Almighty!"

Quizart said, "Ah, yes, you are the Futurain! But, surely, you know that the final battle, between Good and Evil, has already begun, it was seen the Garden of Eden, when the serpent beguiled the woman, lying and saying that she surely won't die, for what is it, to die all at once, or to suffer the long and protracted disease and decomposition of one's youth, to utterly become vile and unsightly!"

Kragon voiced, "It is because of that one thing, that fires my furnace, in my heart and makes me want to avenge the death of the Mother of all People and Kinds, for all people came from the same woman, Eve was the mother of us all, and without her, there could be no people."

Regard stated, "The deception in Eden was to kill all people, before they were born. The Evil Serpent, that old dragon, thought that by killing the Mother of Mankind, he would stop the coming of the Era of Man, but God Almighty in His grand wisdom, saw to it that mankind did not die all at once, else all would be lost, instead, we all die slowly, painfully, but the human race lives on . . ."

Pandora raddled, "The wisdom of Lord God Jesus, is greater than the world, we can not understand it, we have to accept it in faith, because we have lost our ability to be one, with our conscious and unconscious, because, before we fell from perfection, we were of One Mind and One Spirit, our perception of reality was joined with our imaginations, our imagination was the software, and our carnal body, the hardware, for we saw things through our Mind's Eye. But the poison in the Tree of Good and Evil, caused us to loose our ability to have our mind whole, divide and conquer! The dragon just outside of Eden had managed to subvert mankind with lies and guile. But those days are over, and the future is all that matters, for some, it will mean damnation, for others, salvation, but only God Jesus has the power to determine, whose who and what is what!"

The monsters of the moon that they were on were encamped about the cave that Isaiah and the others were in, the siege had been lasting for three days now, and their time was running out, it would be just a matter of time, and what happened to the other camps would happen to them. They were fighting for their lives, at times, they could see the strange creatures, ugly things, filled with

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great abominations, but the remnant of the survivors, fought long and hard and with great conviction and intelligence, using their battle resources wisely. All of this, while the others quickly put the finishing touches on the transdoor that they had been building in the back of the cave.

Isaiah yelled, "Make sure you keep the opening of the cave free from those monsters! Just hang in there, we are almost ready to make a connection, with the transdoor! Keep your hopes up, because we are just about there . . ."

Someone uttered, "But what about these evil creatures, they won't stop!"

Another person rallied, "Even if we manage to hold them off, we can't do it forever . . ."

Isaiah strongly stated, "Today, God Jesus Christ has given us the victory, we need only to endure a little while and we can all escape off this God forsaken moon, and find safety! But you have to keep your faith and keep your hope, because God Almighty is going to perform a miracle today, and allow us to live!"

The others found encouragement in what Isaiah had told them, they went back to defending the cave and believing the Lord Jesus Christ that He was going to deliver them from those awful monsters, the Creatures of the Abomination.

Isaiah quickly moved back to the end of the cave, where he found Lilith and the others, working hard to get the transdoor to work, "How's it coming?"

Lilith took him aside, "We are almost there, but we are having trouble getting the transdoor channels to link, we tried opening up a signal, through metaspace, but all we got was static . . ."

Isaiah questioned, "Did you try and change the channel, because at this point, going to anywhere safe, is preferable to being eaten, or absorbed, and becoming one of those monsters out there."

Lilith told him, "Some of the scientist feel that we'd have a better chance, if we dial a channel that we know will get us to a known location, I mean, the transdoor is just like a big television set, but it works on metaspace physics, allowing people and things to cross vast distances and linking, one portal of time and space with another, all we have to do is change the channel until we find an image, that is not too fuzzy or scrambled."

Isaiah put forth, "Just find any channel that works, tell them, this doesn't have to be super exact, just good enough for us to escape."

By then, one of the scientist had come over, "I heard what you said, and you are right, both of you, we've been trying to get a channel that will send us to a place that we all agree, is a place not too distant from the port, where we all launched from, I don't know why we all got fixed on that idea. But you are right, we need to focus on finding any channel that will get us the heck out of here . . ."

Then another scientist came over, "Thank God Almighty, thank Jesus Christ, we've managed to isolate a channel and make it work, we can see a clear image, we can transdoor out of here."

Isaiah was full of praise, "Thank the Lord Jesus Christ, tell everyone, lets go home!"

Socloud was a business man who happened to also believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, not that the two were mutually exclusive, but in the day and age of the false god Technoligion, the false religion of Tdiepvomohy, the basic philosophy of man's religion and technology, the blending of the two, once diametrically opposed philosophies, now through the use of Governing Machines, a tool to control vast cultures, over an even vaster distance of time and space, all thanks to the transdoor.

Translaser technology was the fore runner to transdoor technology, which was a machine, that looked much like a giant television set, but obviously infinitely more complex. The transdoor had channels on it, a person who wanted to go to a distant world, only need to change the channel, one could see images of the distant worlds, much like a person would view images through a television, if a channel didn't have a connection, then, it appeared, static instead of a clear image.

Mestoa was of the Martian Druids, a religious sect, which was loosely connected with the Faithers, Faithers were modern Christians, of the future, for Christianity, in the future had to merge and unite, in order to stay alive, God's Remnant, which was spoken of in the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible survived after the Reckoning, because the Faithers were forced to go underground, while, after the Rapture, a Dark Age for mankind fell. Where the evil Beast spread lies and disinformation, saying that those who had been actually taken during the rapture, were victims of some alien conspiracy. The masses bought the story, having been already conditioned by numerous science fiction shows and stories, and rumors about alien abductions, via the mass media, which was a tool of the Evil Ones.

Socloud had discovered, through his many business dealings, an ancient scroll, which contained ancient Christian writings, the Martian Druids got word of this and wanted him to donate the scroll to the Martian Druids, who were unofficially and officially keepers of the Holy Flame, but there was subversive opposition by the Dark Powers, which were an extension of Technoligion.

Mestoa was a Martian Druid monk, her mission was to help Socloud, in getting the ancient Christian scroll, now called the Scroll of Hope, "I come from the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the Martian Druids, here are my credentials."

Socloud took the document and examined it, "So, you are called Mestoa, is that your last name or your first name?"

Mestoa smiled, "It is the name given to me, when I finished all of my trials and tribulations, emerging on the Other Side, as a Martian Druid monk, my former name being cast off for a greater spiritual revelation."

Socloud nodded, "Well, I hope that you are very good at what you do, because the Scroll of Hope is being held by a government that wants to have it destroyed . . ."

Mestoa raised an eyebrow, "And with good reason, they do not want faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to flourish, they think that by destroying all documents that point to the Beauty of Christ, that they can change times and time of times, but they do not understand God Almighty!"

Hamon sat across from the Blue Fairy, "Tell me, why have you called me into the Enchanted Woods?"

The Fairy Queen, known as the Blue Fairy uttered, "These are strange times, and I have seen strange things in the last few days, things that the brothers and sisters of men need to know."

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Hamon was a reporter from a big news service, he kept record, "Okay, so why is this news so important to the people that I write to?"

Blue Fairy voiced, "Mankind has breached the gap between that which is imaginary and that

which is non-imaginary, things have changed on a quantum level, but the changes affect the macroscopic reality of our time and space.”

Hamon was confused, “Why would any of this be so important? I mean, long time ago, people used to believe in imaginary beings, like yourself . . .”

Blue Fairy cut in, “Until it was discovered that fairies and other so called mythical beings and creatures, were not imaginary at all, but were as people called them, aliens from distant places, some from other star systems, and others from other dimensional realities. It was with the invention of the Transtimeut, that machine that allows people to travel both through time and space and imagined realities, suddenly, what was once thought of as being imaginary, became very real, as it was in the beginning.”

Hamon frowned, “What do you mean, as it was in the beginning, I don’t understand . . .”

Blue Fairy walked to a large bowl of enchanted water, she passed her hands over it and an image of things appeared in the water, “What was thought of as being imaginary is very real, when men sleep and dream at night, people thought that their dreams were simply unconscious psychological wanting and desires, because when they woke up, behold, it was just a dream, but there is a reality just beyond the edge of time, a place just after the stone throw of our known universe, and there lay the essence of reality.”

Hamon said, “You are saying that the reality that I know, is not real?”

Blue Fairy shook her beautiful head, “No, what the enchanted waters are showing you, is that because you are alive, and life is, complicated, life exist on many planes of existence, to you it is stupid, to believe that your dreams are any less real than your waking moments, which, though they seem to be dominant, it is the dream-state of mind, that is real. Have you ever wondered why dreams seem to hold such important messages to you, why, when one dreams, there seems to be a connection with the so called waking future?”

Hamon pondered, “Yes, now that you mentioned it, I guess people do seem to put a lot of time and interest into dreams. But, I was taught from my infancy, that dreams were not real, as all people are taught, so they can not hurt us . . .”

Blue Fairy became angry, “Fool, you and your entire world are victims of the Cosmic Coverup, there is a device called the Wayfarer’s Atlas, it contains the entire surveying of all the known and unknown universal realities. With it, a person can navigate through all Dream Realities, back and forth, up and down, in and out, all about the Transtimeut. For the Cosmic Reckoning has come and gone, and the Dark Ages are already here, it is the illusion of the Evil Ones, that cloud the minds of men, and shadow the visions of the human race.”

Hamon voiced, “Then you have called me to report to my people, this Oasis of Dreams?”

Blue Fairy spoke softly, “I have called you to witness the Alter-world, where all sanity has been cast off, and Jemm rules the Awakening of the Spells of Ewim Foes!”

Hamon adjusted his recording device, “So, the Dream World will become reality!”

Mange uttered, “So, the two of you are on a quest to secure the precious Holy Scroll, but you do not even know what the document is really about . . .”

Mestoa voiced, “We seek the Scroll of Hope, it is already part of this businessman’s collection of many things.”

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Mange countered, “What you will find instead is far more important than what you think that you have, for the documents are two, one of the scroll that you are coming for, and another, is called the Wayfarer’s Atlas.”



Socloud interjected, "I have heard rumors about this thing, ancient in days is it. But from what I was able to gather, it is only a rumor, shrouded in myth and superstition."

Mange told, "On your journey, you will find that there are many that seek the atlas, and will stop at nothing to possess it . . ."

Mestoa questioned, "What is this atlas, why is it so important, that some might kill?"

Mange explained, "The Wayfarer's Atlas of the Universe, is like a Grand Cosmic Map of the entire known universe. There are portals, places, locations throughout the universe, places leading to vast and powerful civilizations, civilizations long gone, some, just starting, but there are great riches to be found. The atlas maps out, the entire surveyed universe, beings long ago, used it to trade with other beings, these beings were called, Apdiepvt. They were a race of people old as time itself, they were present when the universe was first born, it is said that they are Eontimeoc."

Socloud expounded, "Then this document that I must have, is far greater than what was once thought or expected, who will try and stop us from getting the Scroll of Hope and the Wayfarer's Atlas?"

Mange responded, "They call themselves the Apvidjsitv, for in the abundance of the places that the atlas reveals, great knowledge and treasure awaits the true owner of the atlas. The Jemm Sect, is what they are known by, the way of ungodliness is their order, they will kill any who get in their way. And there is worse . . ."

Mestoa said, "What do you mean, worse . . ."

Mange who was part of the Secret Society, "The Jemm Sect are cannibals, once they have captured their victims, they eat them, that way, there is no forensic evidence. It is because of their cannibalistic rites, that they have been able to survive all these long centuries, capturing their victims and eating their very essence!"

Socloud stated, "Now that we know of these abominations to God, we can avoid them, and now that we know that this mission is of far greater consequence, not just for religious purposes, but there is a bonus, the atlas can reveal where great wealth is hidden, throughout all the known universe."

Mange cautioned, "Ah, but beware, most of the civilizations that are still around, will not allow their great wealth to be taken lightly . . ."

Socloud countered, "I am a businessman, seeking only that which can be acquired, is a possible way, obviously, the places that are still in existence, with beings protecting their wealth, I'm not interested in, but the places, that the atlas can show me, where there are no beings to protect the treasures, places and cultures that have long since fallen, there will I go."

Mange pointed out, "Then, you might find that you very well, go to your death, for the ancient places that the cultures have long since fallen, for all cultures rise and fall, it is the way of life, those places are guarded by things and devices, most foul!"

Mestoa uttered, "We must not lose sight of our goal, to uncover the truth!"

The spacecraft was very powerful and the design was based on an old principle, it was a space-train, there was one very powerful engine, pushing many cargo and passenger compartments. As the space-train passed by specified stops along the way, if need be, new cargo compartments were added easily, by attaching them to the front of the space-train. Thus this was a very efficient  
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and cost effective way to travel in space, from one planet or from one star system, or in between.

Crohest sat comfortably in first class, "This is your first time taking a space-train to Lost Star?"

Seina responded, "Yes, why, does it show? I know that it might be more convenient to travel by transdoor, but I'd heard so much about traveling on space-trains . . ."

Crohest smiled, "Yes, the best thing about a space-train is that you get to see the sites, the various planets that the space-train goes by, the interesting stops that they make, the local people along the way, it is a nice way to travel, a throw back to the days, when there were no transdoors."

Seina nodded, "That is what I was looking for, seems to me, that today, everything is about getting to your point of destination, really super fast, and if you are on business, then it makes a lot of sense to use the transdoor, because you just walk into another world reality in the twinkle of an eye. But for vacation and other needs, the space-train still seems to be the tourist attraction."

Crohest said, "So, you are not taking the space-train for business, but for pleasure?"

Seina voiced, "I've been kind of stressed out lately, you know, long work hours and little real rest. Oh, I've tried those artificial rest machines, and those artificial vacation amusement parks, they are great, don't get me wrong, there is a place for them. But every once and awhile, it seems that I need to just really let go and get away from it all."

Crohest spoke, "I know what you are talking about, I'm not sure what is wrong with society today, it's all about making money, earning credits, it seems that the more shekels a person can earn, the more happy that the mass media claims that we are suppose to be, there is no real balance, in life,"

Seina agreed, "You noticed it too, you know, there is a phenomena that I've been noticing, maybe it is stupid to state the obvious . . ."

Crohest urged, "No, go ahead, I'm interest to hear what you have to say . . ."

Seina continued, "Okay, have you noticed that time seems to be moving quicker? I mean, everything's relative, everything seems the same in the actual measurement of days and time and years, but on a purely spiritual basis, time seems to be moving faster."

Crohest spoke, "You know, I've noticed the same thing, you can't put your finer on it, but time does seem to be going faster. I mean, if you say something about it, scientist will say that is stupid, that people are only suffering from some type of stress, but the evidence is there, maybe it is something that can only be noticed on a spiritual level, seeing that science uses and relies on machines and devices to measure time, maybe their instruments are right, but not in the way that they think . . ."

Seina voiced, "Exactly, that was what I was thinking too . . ."

Crohest went on, "Time is now like an ancient tape recorder, you know, the ones that used open reel tape, the tape is winding at the same speed, but as one reel loses tape, it appears to be moving faster than the take-up reel, which is gaining tape. But they are both relative."

Mestoa voiced, "The overall treasure, that thing that the Faither Church of God, both seeks to protect and to share, the Wayfarer's Atlas, is part of the Scroll of Hope, many will try and take it from its rightful place. For even now, as we journey to recover what was once lost, the Dark Powers are also on the same journey, to steal and take control of the Sacred Scrolls."

Socloud uttered, "When I was young, I didn't take much care in those things that related to Holy Scriptures, I was more interested in what I saw, what I thought was important, according to what the world said was important, namely money, the honor of mankind, false glory which comes  
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from the world."

Mestoa spoke, "The things that you talk about, those are the things that the Hepvimet seek, they seek the glory of men, of the world, because they are not from God Jesus, therefore they do not

value those things that the Good Lord has provided, before us.”

Socloud said, “Still, I have great wealth, that is why I was able to make the deal that would bring the Scroll of Hope into the hands of the Faithers. But the Governing Machines, those old dragons, the false gods of Technoligion, that old devil, they will stop at nothing to get the Sacred Documents for themselves, even though they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Mestoa answered, “That is because, ever since the beginning of the Dark Ages, after the Great Reckoning, when all that was left, were the Fallen Things, those who were not taken in the Rapture, those souls that were left, they have sought to erase all the consciousness of God Almighty, first by persecuting the Church of God, which caused all fractured sects of Christianity, to unite, in order to survive. It was that Shadow Government, which later became the foul artificial religion, which swept the known civilized star systems and planets, controlling the people, the masses, by declaring that the governing machines and Technoligion were gods of mankind.”

Socloud announced, “History is still very clear, the world was attacked by aliens from another star system, who used a DNA bomb to kill certain people, while leaving others. It is recorded in all of the official news chronicles of the world. So, you can see why the general masses would believe the Dark Powers and willingly follow the teachings of Technoligion.”

Mestoa answered, “It does not matter about the will of machines, devices of inventions, for they have their small victory, but only for a few years, lies that were carefully planted in the culture of mankind, via the mass media, slowly getting the people ready for the Great Lie. But the truth is far more frightening, and many times more terrible, for those who have been left behind are automatically damned. And as the Holy Bible foretold, the Apvidjsitv seeks to have changed time and time of times, because the robotic systems of men have backfired on the psyche of mankind, they seek their own inventions, to worship what their own hands have built, ever since the beginning, mankind has rejected the Word of God, and embraced that which was most profane, as beautiful and sweet. Little knowing, that they were embracing the Doctrine of Devils . . .”

Socloud began, “And now we are at this point, because of the invention of translaser technology, and the perfection of the transdoor, we can go back through both time and space and retrieve those documents that prove Technoligion systems wrong and false, the inventions of our own hands, to destroy all mankind.”

Mestoa added, “And if that were not enough, the invention of the Transtimeut , has allowed mankind to journey into the nightmares and dreams of the total consciousness of the species, that and the Transmographyer, the machine that can shrink all objects microscopically.”

Magnifa sat on a toad stool, a large mushroom plant, the silver moon seeming to center around her form, “You are wondering about the affairs of men, in the Kingdom of Mankind . . .”

Amacer was a creature of the woods, one of the wee folk, “I have come to you seeking wisdom and to ask you questions about things to come.”

Magnifa smiled, “You have crossed a vast distance to seek me out, all those that seek me out have to cross the Marshlands of Como-tu-ga. What is it that you want to know?”

Amacer asked, “In the kingdom which is of men, are they all going to destroy the world as it is known?”

Magnifa sat there smoking a long extended pipe, filled with essence, “If you look back at the history of mankind, you will see that they are a violent and killing race of beings. Once their kind was confined to Earth Prime, but now they breed across the stars. But, to give them credit, they are not straight away destined to be the way that they were . . .”

Amacer voiced, "So, what happened to them, that they came to be this way?"

Magnifa went on, "They were part of a Grand Experiment, to see if a race of beings, who given the choice of knowing right from wrong, could pick the right way . . ."

Amacer questioned, "So, what happened, did they pick the right way to go?"

Magnifa shook her head, "Mankind was tempted at an early stage of their development, just after their creation, or so it seems, so that in that temptation, they were beguiled by Beings of Ugliness, the Dark Powers sought to eat them, feed on their vary souls, like people eat cattle."

Amacer uttered, "Then the folly of mankind is not entirely their own. They were placed in a situation where they were destined to fail. But how can that be, if those Dark Powers were not there, then mankind would have flourished, and would have never known sin, it doesn't see fair . . ."

Magnifa cautioned, "Mind your ways, for you do not understand the Grandness of God Almighty, none of us do. We see things through eyes that have been corrupted by the ways of the world, the fallen are the minds of men, for they can no longer see and hear their Creator, in a direct way. They have to seek out the wisdom and the knowledge and the understanding, which was once given to them, without measure."

Amacer spoke, "But, how were they to ever win, I mean, those Ugly Ones, they were there, just outside, waiting to kill the Children of God, how could they ever have to win?"

Magnifa blew out a few mellow smoke rings, "Many things are hard to understand, and there are ways that seem not to make sense. But that is because we do not have a perfect understand of God Almighty, the entire universe has suffered the Down Fall of Man. It is not a small thing that happened to them, for they were the last to be created, and the first to fall. The entire universe once held it's breath, hoping that mankind would not listen to the Dragons of the Damned, and that the New Ones would obey the voice of God Almighty, their creator. But, alas, what happened after that is Legend, the History of the universe is contained in a simple device called the Wayfarer's Atlas."

Amacer retorted, "The plight of mankind seems doomed to darkness for ever, but if as you have said, their faith and the fate of the universe is linked, it would see, to our advantage to help them out, because, we also, are God Almighty's creations, and if mankind can be saved, perhaps there is still hope for us . . ."

Magnifa smiled, "And there in rest the Truth and the Hope of the Lord Jesus Christ, for He has taught us that all things are possible with God. For us, we can not save ourselves."

Socloud said, "It was only after the invention of the Transmographyer, which is a shrinking machine, that mankind was able to really create machines, that were before hand, impossible to create. Because by having the ability to make the device, large enough, so that details once though impossible could be devised and implemented, then once the machine was finished, people used the Transmographyer, to shrink the machine down to whatever size needed. That is why such sophisticated, nanorobotic technology finally came into existence, where the nanorobot was created in real time, very large and ultra complicated, many times more complicated than mere cells, some nanomachines were the size of atoms, or at lease there internal components were. This technology lead to all sorts of abomination of science and engineering and physics."

Mestoa uttered in response, "I don't pretend to be an expert in the technology which has led all of mankind down the Dark Path to perdition. And what I do know is that, we are at a time when

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robots look and act like people, and it is hard to discern an android from a human being, even the doctors have a hard time telling them apart. But the perversions of mankind go far beyond the telling tales of science, as perverse men and women seek eternal life in the physical world, and there can be

no real eternal physical life. But when they die, they have in their wills that they wish to undergo the procedure, of using the Quantum Recycler, the machine that can transfer the living soul of one creature into a dead creature, in this case, taking the living soul from an animal and transferring it into a once dead human being, that the dead come back to life via the Quantum Recycler.”

Socloud went on, “So, that is where the Dynasty has fallen into error, like the great civilizations of Earth Prime, once great and powerful, have all fallen by the wayside, because no civilization last forever, except that of the Kingdom of Christ. But I fear that we must be very careful in these days to come, for many seek the power and knowledge of the Wayfarer’s Atlas along with the Scroll of Hope. They both have great power when used in the right way or the wrong way. It all depends on who is using them.”

Mestoa spoke, “I assure you, Socloud, that my people will keep the sacred Scroll of Hope safe and that we will use the knowledge in it for the good of everyone, those who believe on Jesus Christ and those who don’t, because it is not the policy of the Martian Druids to discriminate, for God Jesus Christ make us all, for He is God with us, God in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ is a God for all times and ages and places!”

Socloud nodded, “I am in agreement with you, but I fear that you do not fully understand the extent that the Evil Ones will go to gain possession of that which is forbidden for them to possess. You see, ever since the Transtimeut was invented, the realities of mankind have been invaded, there are no real parallel realities that have not been corrupted by people going not just back in time but back in the realities of the living, for the Transtimeut, does not stop at time travel, it crosses the bridge of sanity and insanity, dreams and nightmares. Imagine, a universe, where every dream and every nightmare is made real, for our dreams and nightmares are as real as our waking reality, and they share a common realm of existence, just like our waking state of being shares a common realm of existence. We are all linked by the Ether of Reality and Anti-reality, they both exist, imagination is not some whimsical farce, that was the view giving by minds that could not understand the significance of the totality of the grandness of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Almighty Powers, to create and to bring down and to reset. We live in a time of great uncertainty, for what was once merely dreams have now become mostly reality!”

Farmer Vell sat back on the porch, the day was all but coming to an end, out in the distance, a flock of genetically engineered sheep grazed and a herd of unicorns roamed, all under the protective covering of a huge dome, which kept in the artificial atmosphere, warmth and blocked harmful rays. Pocart was a businessman who had come to Vell’s farm to make a business deal.

Pocart uttered, “You have to be aware of the tremendous amount of money that can be made by joining the union.”

Vell scratched his head, “I don’t understand your plan, Mr. Pocart, you are telling me that if I sell my farm, just turn it over to big business, that things will work out for me and the misses. I don’t understand any of this . . .”

Pocart expounded, “A lot of your neighbors are doing the same thing, just think of it, you will have the money you need to retire, go places, visit the sites of places you have only dreamed of visiting. Travel and see the galaxy, all those places . . .”

Vell rocked in his chair, “Hmmm, you make it sound so tempting . . .”

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Just then, Amanda came out with some cool refreshments, “Makes what sound so tempting?”

Vell partook of the refreshments, “Well, dear, this young fellow here, seems to think that we need to take a vacation, or retire, see the civilized galaxy, go traveling to all the sites and places. He

has it all figured out.”

Amanda took a seat right next to her husband, of some thirty years, they were old, even by Technoligion standards, for ever since the changing of times, when it was promised that by accepting the Technoligion ways, the promise to increase the human life span, by doubling the human age, which did happen, but not in the way most expected. For when all was said and done, time had changed, or rather the measurement of time, it was now according to the laws and formula of the transdoor continuum. For by changing how weeks and months and years were counted. There were now six days in a week, six weeks in a month, and six months in a year. The months were all thirty six days long. This change increased the average life span twofold, people now easily lived to be one hundred and twenty, in good shape, looking good and able to get out and do things.

Pocart told, “This is a great opportunity, I was telling your husband, that with the money, you will be able to do all sorts of things, you can visit your kids, you’ve got kids, right . . .”

Amanda glanced at Vell with a smile, “Oh yeah, we have children. Seven kids . . .”

Pocart uttered, “Wow, that many . . .”

Amanda explained, “Well yes, you know, long time ago, the government encouraged settlers on the new colony to have children, in order to populate the colony.”

Vell went on, “This was before Mars broke away from Earth Prime and declared itself an independent planet. Now that all led to the Mars and Earth war, which now seems long gone. Anyway, now Mars and Earth are best allies, joined at the hip, sort of speak.”

Pocart said, “Yes, these are better times, there are so many different worlds, new ones being discovered, seems like a new one is colonized every other month or two.”

Amanda poured the man something cool to drink, “Yes, there is a lot of colonizing going on, but without the first colonies, here on Mars, there would be no others, because this is where they found the blueprints in the ancient caverns, which led to the invention of the first transdoors and translaser technology. After that, it was just a matter of time before everything got started.”

Socloud and Mestoa managed to out maneuver the enemy and gain possession of the Wayfarer’s Atlas. They were now on the run because the Dark Powers had sent their Nebat assassins to kill them and get the device. The Scroll of Hope was now in Mestoa’s hands and she was destined to hand the precious documents over to the church, the Martian Druids were keepers of the Holy Flame. What was now the Scroll of Hope had severe complications, and in the right hands, those of the Faithers, it could greatly upset the balance of power in the Dynasty of Technoligion, because the Holy Word, was the Living Light, shining in the darkness of damnation. The two of them, Socloud and Mestoa were hold up in an abandoned building, Nebats were shooting at them and they were returning fire, hot bore blast rays scorched the area, as one group, tried to kill the other.

Mestoa yelled, “We need to find a way out of here, or our hopes of getting the Scroll of Hope to the rightful place will be lost.”

Socloud returned fire, “You are right, but the Nebats have the place surrounded.”

Zaga, leader of the Nebat assassins yelled, “You all can die or you can give us the Wayfarer’s Atlas and we will let you live . . .”

Mestoa uttered, “Do you think that they will let us live if we give them what they want?”

Socloud glanced at her, “Do you really think that they are going to let us live. I mean, let’s just think about this, they are killers, sent to get what does not belong to them, and they have been trying to kill us ever since we got our hands on the Wayfarer’s Atlas . . .”

Mestoa said, “True, but at this point, it is hard to figure out, what to do. I mean, they have us boxed up here, and they are all around the place, creepy little buggers, trying to kill us and all. Maybe we can make a deal with them, or out smart them, I don’t know . . .”

Socloud leaned back, an occasional blast whizzing by, “To be honest, when I started out, on this little adventure, I didn’t really have the notion that we would be killed. I mean, true, we did discuss the implications of the find, and I did spend great amounts of money, trying to get the Scroll of Hope, which included the Wayfarer’s Atlas, but now I’m having second thoughts about the whole thing, maybe I’ve inadvertently doomed the two of us, and for that, I am very sorry . . .”

Mestoa voiced, “I understand, but, having heard you tell me that, I’m going to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ to help us, and having faith, He will deliver us.”

So, Mestoa began to pray to the Lord Jesus, that He might be willing to deliver them from the hands of evil, in the form of the deadly assassins, the Nebat Warriors, which were the killer elite of the Dark Powers.

Hot bore blast rays scorched all about them once more, Zaga screamed, “You are surrounded by my warriors, there is no way out, if you do as I have commanded you, I might let you both live!”

Socloud yelled back, “Yeah, that is a lot of crap and you know it! You are going to kill us at the first chance that you get, take the Scroll of Hope and the Wayfarer’s Atlas, you know what I might do, I might just blast these things, and then nobody will get them!”

Zaga cautioned and yelled back, “If you do, then I will have my warriors storm your position, and kill the both of you, you will have nothing to bargain with, if you two are so stupid enough, as to take way from me, what I was sent to retrieve!”

Then the Lord Jesus showed Mestoa how to work the Wayfarer’s Atlas, and they escaped, the device hummed, and great lights and visions opening up a trans-dimensional portal.

“Is bound in shallows, and in miseries” Shakespeare

The meeting was getting on the way, everyone in the office was concerned and worried, as to what things might come, even though the people in the office were the best at what they did, they were salespersons, and the company specialized in selling military parts and components. But these were trying times, trouble with the unions, some collapsing, others breaking away from the once mighty Veantest Union.

Now the other shoe hit the floor, Adusa was a representative of the new mother corporation, which had just taken over their company, she was their new boss, “Thank you people for coming, though in truth, you all had no choice in coming to the meeting. As you know, your company has been bought out by Veffy-L, it’s what happens when you mistakenly listen to your financial advisors and make your company public. You are subject to buyouts and in your case Veffy-L has taken over. Now what does that mean to you, well it means that you will be seeing some new faces, and yes, some old faces will have to go . . .”

Everyone in the room reacted, they were all mostly middle aged men and women, some had been with the company since its inception, someone asked, “So, you have called us here to fire all of us?”

Adusa smiled and shook her pretty head, “No, no, not at all, there is a right way and a wrong way to do things, I said that some of you will have to move on and others of you can stay . . .”

Someone else voiced, “Who will stay and who will be fired, because that is what you are talking about, firing some of us and bringing in people from the corporate office.”

Another person raised, “And who decides who stays and who gets fired, most of us have been here for a very long time, what will come of us?”

Adusa spoke, “Well, I’m sure that in those years of service to the company, you have managed to save a little something, besides, some of you look like you might be ready to retire . . .”

Everyone reacted, these were people that were skilled at selling products on various planets, knowing the customer and having garnered the customer client base themselves.

Hardknocks spoke up, “Look, what everyone is saying, is that this company is like our home, we built it, most of us, from the ground up, Veffy-L might be able to come here and buy us out, but the skilled men and women, here, in this room alone, can’t be replaced.”

Adusa took special interest, “Who are you?”

Hardknocks answered, “My name is Hardknocks, and I am one of the co-founders of this company, partners if you will. These people that you are so casually throwing around, have families, mortgages, children in college, you can’t just let these people go. Call them old, and then throw them out to pasture, that is crap!”

Everyone reacted, they all felt that way, but most of them were too frightened for their jobs, to say anything, but Hardknocks said it for them.

Adusa responded, “Well, Mr. Hardknocks, why are you complaining, you were never one that was going to be fired, as you said, you are one of the co-founders, your wisdom and skills in running this company are very much needed. The very nature of your company, needs you . . .”

Beringer looked out at the ocean, it was terrible, waves were crashing onto the land and

people close to the shore, were being pulled back out to sea. The rich resort was being torn apart by the waves and the on coming waves, which seem to find there way into every little corner and alleyway. At times, it seemed like pure carnage, old people and young people and little children, all



alike, being taken and killed by the mighty roar of the waves as they violated the most sacred of boundaries, they came on land, like some invading aliens from outer space, bent on taking captive, the children of mankind.

Some had managed to reach high land, but only some, people were separated from loved ones, children from parents and parents from children, where there once was five, now, there might be three or four, at most often, only one survived.

Someone yelled in fear, "We are all going to die! We should just go out there and let the waves take us!"

Someone else countered, "Shut up, you fool, we have women and children in here, do you want us all to die!"

Beringer, who was a holy priest of Jesus Christ, motioned with his hands and calmed the crowd, "These are trying times, you must remain calm and pray to God Almighty, that the Good Lord will deliver us."

Someone possessed slightly yelled, "Why should we do that, isn't it God who has caused all of this to happen? I mean, just look, the ocean comes in, destroying our businesses, wreaking our buildings, there was once magnificent hotels and resorts here! Now look at it, just look at everything, destroyed by the tsunami, is this your God's work?"

Some in the room agreed, but the ever rising waters outside, caused others to look on in fear, knowing that death was surely coming, even though they were at a high point in the tropical village, there seemed to be no end to the rise of the waters.

Beringer responded in faith, "Not all things done to mankind, is done without cause. Just look at what is happening, you blame God Almighty for the disaster that has happened, and you harden your hearts, thinking to turn to some other way. But I tell you, the evil of men's hearts, is at the root of all troubles. For example, look at you rich business men and women, you have come to this planet, and transformed it into a resort planet, for you to come and play, with your gambling, while perverting the Word of God. You have turned your backs on the Lord Jesus Christ, and went a whore after false gods, created by men and machines!"

Someone yelled from the crowd, "You, what do you know, you Holy man of God, maybe it is you who has brought this curse on us, by challenging the official ways of Technoligion, our ways are to worship technology, because it has brought us so much, even unto the stars!"

But the man of God only shook his head, Beringer said, "You have sinned, by allowing yourselves to be captive of doctrines of devils, you believe that this demon Technoligion, of the philosophy of Technoligion will save you, but it has trapped you, and made you slaves to evil spirits. You worship money and science and secular powers, all the while, shedding your souls, like serpents shed skin!"

A great many did not want to hear what the man of God was telling them, and all the while the flood waters were rising, even unto the door, so that half of the people were in peril, and then the man of God prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ. And behold, just as the evil group would have laid hands on him to cast him into the flood waters, the room divided in half, sending the evil ones into the deep, while preserving the people who humbled themselves before God Almighty.

Susan had fixed a really nice meal, they all sat across from one another at the grand table, she

knew that this dinner was important to Hardknocks, after having being his wife for some twenty years. They had a good marriage, better than most, better than some. Oh, there had been rocky times, times when it looked like it wasn't going to come together, or that the holy union which is between a

man and a woman, was going to fall apart. But when those times happened, and there was only a few at most, they all prayed to the Lord Jesus Christ, for Him to forgive them of their sins and to bless them, so that they could continue.

Love was very important to Hardknocks and his family, a lot of people who were married, a good many of their friends, were married in the modern way, they had marriage contracts drawn up by attorneys, it was the modern way people got married, people would contract out for a specific number of years, the usual amount of years was three, and then the contract was automatically renewed, if the two parties wanted to continue to live as man and wife. The marriage contract came about because the divorce rate was so high, way beyond fifty percent, something had to be done, it was messing up the fabric of society, no one couldn't depend on the union of marriage to sustain them anymore. So, the marriage contract became the modern way, plus it had a special advantage, of spelling out all the details that each person agreed to do, and not do, long ago there was the so called prenuptial agreement, which was a legal and binding contract. The marriage contract just went a little further, and included the actual agreement of marriage. Divorce attorneys fought against it at first, lobbying political powers, saying that the so called sanctity of marriage was sacred, well no one was ever arguing that marriage was sacred, and in other cultures, different people got married in different ways and had different customs.

It was simply a matter of what was good for the society at large, not everyone liked the same things and not everyone wanted to be married forever, it was so obvious, by the high divorce rate, so as society changed and grew, technology pushing ever forward, science pushing the limits of knowledge and religion changing and evolving, so did that aspect of society, when it came to marriage, the corner stone of civilization.

Now, there were those who liked the old fashion ways, and nothing was keeping them from being married the old fashion way, till death do us part kind of stuff, but now there wasn't anything keeping people from being married either way. And that in itself, was how society began to change, into the Society of Technoligion. Where people began to turn their backs on the teachings of God Almighty, and worship the work of their own hands and the product of their own inventions, modern mankind openly and in direct defiance of the Lord Jesus Christ, began to worship idols, instead of the only Living God Jesus Christ.

Adua had been invited for dinner, or rather, she had managed to manipulate herself into being invited, "The food is really good, thank you . . ."

Hardknocks said, "Oh, it is our pleasure, nice to have company over, from time to time," he was trying to put a pleasant spin on things.

Ja-tolan, their teenage son voiced, "So, you are my dad's new boss, you don't look much older than I am," that was awkward.

Adua ate like she hadn't eaten a good home cooked meal in a while, "Huh, oh yeah, but don't worry though, I'm not going to fire your dad, Hardknocks and I have an understanding, all is good at work, that's why I'm here, I guess, making friends. Susan, this food is so good, I really am happy that you've extended your hospitality, and opened up your home to me."

Princess Eve looked across the deck of her Dragonfly spacecraft, she was a cargo commander, her crew members were only three, but they all worked together, having a vested

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interest in each other's welfare.

Oneman was a priest from the Holy Order of the Martian Druids, Faithers of the highest quality and devotion, because it was on Mars that the first true resistance and restructuring of the

Ancient Christian faith began, post-technoligion philosophy.

While her crew looked on, Eve questioned, "You know, this is not a transport ship, what we do is mostly handle cargo, taking it from one point to another, mostly where there isn't a transdoor built."

Oneman nodded and glanced at the others, he held a wooden box, long tube shaped, "I'm aware of your ship and what it does. But I have special needs, this box, inside of it is a very special document . . ."

One of the crew uttered, "What's in it, what's so important that you can't book a flight with the regular passenger ships?"

Eve looked at the crew member in a way that suggested that she was the one in charge and doing the asking, she turned her attention back to the priest, "It is a good question, though I wouldn't have put it in such a way . . ."

Oneman voiced, "I'm carrying the Sacred Scroll of Hope, it was part of a set, with it was also the Wayfarer's Atlas."

Some of the crew members laughed, one said, "The Wayfarer's Atlas is just a myth, it doesn't exist!"

Oneman countered, "Oh, I assure you, it is very real, as real as this scroll I have in my hands. Though they were suppose to be used together, the Wayfarer's Atlas has been separated from the scroll, by necessity, in order to safe guard and preserve the scroll. Also, the atlas must not fall into the wrong hands."

Eve spoke, "And the wrong hands, being, the Nebat assassins, who work for the Dynasty."

One of the crew retorted, "Okay, so what is that Wayfarer's Atlas, and why is it so important?"

Oneman answered, "It is a device, believed to have been inspired by God Almighty to be created, it contains proof, that the universe was created by our Lord Jesus Christ, for without him, nothing was created, and before the beginning, Jesus Christ was."

Another crew member spoke, "How does this device work?"

Eve fielded that question, "It is suppose to contain the locations to every natural occurring portal in the entire universe, with it, a person can freely move back and forward in time and space and realities . . ."

A crew member said, "Like a transdoor . . ."

Another crew member uttered, "No, more like the Transtimeuet!"

Oneman shook his head, "All those devices were created by mankind, or by aliens, using ancient designs, found on distant planets. The Wayfarer's Atlas is unique, only one exist in the entire universe, in all of realities, and times of times. It was said, that the Lord gave inspiration as to its design and creation, though no one really knows who actually made it, or where it was made."

Eve nodded, "I guess you got your safe passage with us, priest, I'm a Faither, also . . ."

Susan sat back drinking a cup of weak coffee, "I'm sure everything will work out, dear. You know, these thing happen, just look around us, three houses over, the husband lost his job, and just down the street, two families, both husband and wife lost their jobs. Things are getting tough, the unions aren't as powerful and they once used to be, the government is shipping out jobs to other  
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planets, third world planets, because the manufacturing can be done cheaper there."

Hardknocks kind of slumped in his big comfortable chair, "Yeah, I'm just worried, because I'm not young like I used to be. You know how things are, everybody is looking for the young kids,

right out of college, Ja-tolan's age, when he graduates from college. This company was our brain-child, you and I came up with the concept and worked hard to make it happen, then you decided to go back to college to get your degree, and became a teacher. Now look at me, I'm over fifty, society considers me a has been, and in many cases, a never was been, now the company has been bought out by some high finagled super corporation, who doesn't give a damn about the hard work that me and the others have put into it, all they want is the bottom line to grow. And that is the wrong concept for a family owned company, this company was created so that people could have jobs, my family, and all the other people's families that have been hired over the years."

Susan said, "She bothers you . . ."

Hardknocks uttered, "Huh? Who, her, nah, you're wrong, she's just a snotty nosed kid fresh out of college, trying to impress the bigwigs at the top. She thinks if she comes in here, and fires a few people, then the rest will fear her and the others will show her respect, either way, she's way off base with this one, this is not the way to run our business. She says that I'm too valuable to be fired, but hell, Susan, I just look around and behold, people I hired and have worked with for two decades, are being given the door, their walking papers. These are my friends, they all have families that depend on them, and mortgages, and kids in college, some have young children, because they wanted to make sure that their careers were on track before they started to have a family. Now what do I do, what do I tell them . . ."

Susan voiced, "She likes you, you know . . ."

Hardknocks countered, "She needs me to guide her through the loops and corners in our company, there is too much personal and technical stuff, that has been left behind, due to the short sightedness of her firing the wrong people, fact is, she should not have fired any of them, the company was like a well oiled machine, old, but working like a laser, and then, in comes Adusa, like a monkey wrench, messes up all the gears. God Almighty, how am I suppose to work under these conditions?"

Susan hoped, "Maybe things will even out, the big wigs, at the top will finally realize that this is not the way to run this company, that it works best, when you just leave everything alone, and let the people do their jobs, jobs like they have been doing for over two decades. Maybe they need to be seeing these things, and just maybe, just maybe, you are the one that is going to have to show them the true way. Because to be honest, dear, there isn't anybody left to strand up to the corporate office, and you are the bravest man I've ever known, and had the privilege to love."

Hardknocks announced, "You were always good at building me up and getting me ready to face the difficult challenges in life, that is one of the reasons that I love you so much."

Susan reached over and kissed him on the lips, "The Lord Jesus Christ help us all . . ."

Poncius looked across the battle field and the war was arrayed before him, the killing and the death and the destruction, "This is a glorious time, see how the war prevails!"

The harlot, drunken with the wine of fornication and adultery, the Great Whore who makes all the world to come at her door step said, "Did I not tell you, my lord, that the victory would be yours. You have only to ask and I will show you all things that concern the Great Chaos, for evolution of the universe has taken place, like a cunning virus that rewrites the DNA code of mankind, it was present in the First Evil Fruits, in which Adam and Eve ate upon!"

There were great instruments of death raining down from the sky and many nations of people ran and tried to hide, but there was no hiding for them, for they were caught up in the anti-rapture. This was a time when evil reigned over the land, countless star systems had been affected by the

coming of the Beast Society, a culture and system of government that used idols and cunning machines, to manipulate the people and to circumvent the Truth, which was that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. And behold, even the demons know that God is real and the Jesus Christ is the Lord, but for mankind, God had called on them to repent from their sins so that they maybe forgiven. But woe, certain light men and women, subverting the Holy Spirit of God, to their own personal gain, they had managed to plant the seeds of doubt, by the cooperation of devils in the doctrine of perversions and the doctrines of backslide, for the whole world was deceived by the devil, finding ancient artifacts, that were plants by devils, in order to detract from the Holy Word of God, for the whole world was deceived by satanic miracles, and evil sayings and perverse doings.

Poncius voiced, "Today is my victory and my coming complete, the entire galaxy will have to bow down to my superior fire power, I have gone forth like Alexander and conquered all the known civilizations, all in the name of the Dark Powers, which exist between the brightness of the stars, separating one galaxy from another, the dark matter that is most sought after, but is in truth the means to control and possess the very souls of mankind!"

The harlot, drank of her own fornication, as the evil cursed wine of damnation washed down her throat, and she made the man to drink of it too, even as Eve made her husband to eat of the forbidden fruit, "Yes, yes, yes that is it, drink and be filled with the wrath and perversions of the Dark Chaos, for Technoligion has spawned a new child, more evil and sinful than the mother, she has created the Bastard Child, the seeds of damnation, which have been spread across the entire galaxy, indeed, even corrupting the whole of Creation!"

And the war raged on, with little children being caught up in the turmoil and destruction of the Holy Wars, those great wars between Good and Evil, in which there is no escape, there are no double agents, for the skin has been stripped raw, and all can see the realities of the damnation, for who can escape the evil Eyes of Triquerius! Looking upon the and feeding upon the souls of mankind, there are no drawn quarters, not over time, norms of non-sequitur!

Poncius was filled the evil spirits called Legion, and he wanted to do nothing else, but conquer all the known civilizations, "I must have power and I must execute absolute judgement upon the land, for the Beast has given me the true Dark Power's revenge, I man consumed with the lust of the Mighty Perversions, and all who stand in my way shall be destroyed!"

The sky was black, even though there was light in the sky, the sky was blackened by the resoluteness of the evil that was in mankind's heart, for they feigned to be nice and friendly, helping all those who sought it, but they, even the damned can be kind. And they stole the ways of the Holiness, and twisted them around for their own wicked purposes.

Ja-tolan sat across from Adusa, they were eating a late breakfast and the little corner café was moderately full, polite conversations were all about and the sunrise in the east corner was warm and sweet. The two had been seeing each other for a few months and their relationship had grown with each date. In Ja-tolan's family, premarital sex was forbidden, and while Adusa was morally, less conservative, the strong foundation and Ja-tolan's faith in God Almighty and his father's teachings throughout the decades, lay a great base for abstinence. Was it hard, yes, there was all sorts of peer pressure, like in the movies, if you are a virgin you are mocked and looked upon as less of a man, some even were so ignorant as to call him gay or some other rotten thing, but that only

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reflected on a perverse society, which, while on the surface, put on the good face, but underneath, took orders from devils, the television which evolved into the audio-image, a generational device that could project the sense of smell and taste to the viewer.

So, what is a young man or woman to do, if they have the upbringing of the Christian faith, even though they lived in the future, with an advanced society, whose only official religion was Technigion, the Oracles of Devils, that was what is was. How did such a system of government come about? Well, it is a long story, but it started with the colonization of Mars, what was thought of as a great leap for mankind, had gross and unforeseen implications, for on Mars was found the very old and ancient scrolls, and blueprints, documents of a civilization, long gone, yet influential in the development of part of Earth Prime's culture. It was there, beneath the surface of Mars that astro-archaeologist discovered the myriads of things that modern mankind now took for granted, the ability to travel to distance star systems, taking hundreds and thousands of years to reach, then retroevolving time by coming back through the triangled shaped invention called a transdoor, which linked all subsystems of space and time and matter, to one continuum.

With this invention, aided by the writings and drawings of the Martians, left behind, why, for some race of people to discover, perhaps a legacy of sorts, a way of saying, we were here, for what is an alien being, why do they always have to be perceived as ugly creatures, shrouded in contempt for mankind, what if aliens were ideas, thoughts, notions that reached the human brain without bodily conflict, alien thoughts that resembled our own primitive thought precess. These alien thoughts, constantly influencing us, guiding us, taking us on a journey that, whether we want to or not, must endeavor to pursue, and imagine if you can, that these thoughts have been influencing mankind since the beginning, what is this? Why was it so important to openly deny the presence of spirits, to let science cover up the truth, while pretending to search for the truth. Because, aliens don't have to have physical bodies, what was once a physical form, reigned over countless millennia, the physical forms of the dinosaurs, for once these aliens fell from perfection they became physical in nature, base and profane, just the opposite of the Most Holy Ones, they were the Dark Powers, who through evolution, rising from the deepest pits of Hell, evolved into mankind's consciousness.

What great and grand ideas did mankind have, for mankind loved his inventions, but at what cost, did not his inventions constantly lead him further and further from the truth, from the Creator, for the aliens were influencing mankind's actions, by granting him bits and pieces, of alien technology, those thoughts in your head, are they all yours? Haven't you had a moment, when you realized on some level, that a thought, that voice in your head, wasn't your own, edging you on, constantly trying to influence you, disguising the true nature to those who resisted them, revealing themselves to all those who embraced their fallen carnal nature.

No, ideas and thoughts are as real as any physical encounter, an idea can be alien . . .

The bombs fell heavily upon the children of men on the planet called Rixon-ripon, as the night sky lit up occasionally, with bright flashes of light, the war raged from all around them and it was starting to sink into most that they were at a pivotal point. Would the war be decided at Tesipivy? History would later record that the children of man fought gallantly, opposing an evil force that could not be disguised any more, the Nebat Warriors were dead set on taking over the places of mankind. It was not a battle that was fought with cunning and skill, no, it had come down to just one thing, sheer will and the faith to carry on. What was it, was it a hope that all would soon come to an end, and if they could just hold on just a little longer, then everything would be all right.

But the Dynasty was now circumvented with the Confederacy of Planets, it was the beginning and, yes, the ending of peace in that sector, for the evil Dark Powers, those Evil Ones that once slept between the blackness of the galaxies, the dark matter of existence, they had been awoken

to a time to come, to ultimately fight one final battle on a tiny planet. But before Armageddon, there would have to be a cosmic staging of the powers that fought to rule the universe, the societies that were before the coming of mankind, before people started to make their habitations amongst the stars.

What was it to mankind, why did he have such a pull, to go out into the heavens, and seek out that which was not any of his business, was it because the human race were natural explorers, or was there a hidden drive, a command, planted long ago in their DNA, in their spiritual recognition, for there were aliens and creatures that had genetic recall, being able to transfer the sum knowledge of their entire race from one child to another, and then, there were humans, who unknowingly were blessed and cursed with spiritual memory, the ability to transfer from one generation to another, all the spiritual knowledge, and spiritual memory was more powerful and more subtle than genetic memory, which only gave the physical intelligence. For there was an intelligence about the children of men, that seem to have always been there, a time when things were murky, the Dark Ages. How many Dark Ages had there been, and suddenly, the light rose up out of the ashes like an all consuming phoenix rising from the ashes, to once again claim that which was rightly hers, the awesome power to understand and reason, at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, for it must have been God's will that men would not stay ignorant forever, because out of the Dark Ages of Space Exploration, came the resurgence of mankind's efforts.

But there was more to the calling back to what some reasoned to be from whence they came, for out there, in the vast blackness, where there was only darkness, mankind once more journeyed to where he had not ought to have gone, for the heavens was not a place for children to play, the cosmic catastrophes which spawn the Fallen Ones to have been jailed on the planet Earth, were now the impetus, the reasons why mankind could not take home of things that he could not understand, yet lay claim to have mastery of the planets and the stars. For it is one thing to blow up a star, and another thing to have created the entire universe, both that which is seen and that which is not seen and never can be known, for there are some things that mankind will never know in the flesh, because God Almighty in His Wisdom, had placed limits on what man can do and can not do.

Lieutenant Brick yelled at the top of his voice over the falling devices of death and destruction, "Hold the fort, help is on the way, it will just be a little longer and then, reinforcements are coming," and they did and the help so sorely sought did indeed come.

Hardknocks voiced, "Some times it seems like it is not enough, you save, or try to, and still unforeseen things happen, being associated with light people, people that you can not count on."

Susan, his loyal wife said, "It is not your fault if things are not right, the world is bigger than just the two of us. I understand that you, we, worked hard in order to get the company off the ground, but then, life is full of surprises, some good and some bad. We have to keep our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to get us through these trying times."

Hardknocks responded, "You are right, I see the same vision and ways that you do, it is important that a man and a woman see the same vision and understand the same ways. I think that is what makes a good marriage different from a bad one. I have a friend, you know him, his name is Widvos."

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Susan uttered, "Yes, one of the friends that we brought in, early on when the company was just getting started, a good friend . . ."

Hardknocks continued, "Well, now, his job is on the line, he had invested all that he had in

the business, project after project. He's a goodly man, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, because we have hired on mostly Christians, because the world hires its own. Anyway, now the corporation that has bought us out, is demanding that we fire, yet another person, and the new boss is looking to fire Widvos."

Susan echoed, "Widvos is a good man, a hard worker and he is loyal to you because you brought him in, early on, I think he has a wife and children, three kids I believe. He's up in age also, like we are, I don't believe that he can withstand to lose his job, not with the mortgage and college and all the responsibilities that he has to his family."

Hardknocks sighed, "That is the point, this new boss, Adusa, she will be sending a good man to his grave before his time. The burden of trying to fend for his family, all the while, the world doesn't look to their elders, like they once did, once we were revered, as having gained the wisdom that so rightly we had earned, but in the day of intelligent and self-aware computers, instant transport to distant stars and planets, hell, some people marry machines that look like people. And they seem happy for it, it is a burden on society, this world doesn't know nor does it care, about what is right. Indeed, right has been made wrong and wrong has been made right."

Susan questioned softly, "What are you going to do, Widvos is your friend, my friend too, his wife and I are friends . . ."

Hardknocks spoke, "Did you know that his wife left him and the children for a robot lover, I mean, Good Lord, she's one of those people who didn't care about committing adultery, just because the laws of our land didn't have provisions to stop it! There was a time when the law of God was the law of the land, now laws are created to serve devils!"

Susan voiced, "Good Lord, I didn't know that, that poor man, and now this? Hardknocks, you can't let that young pubescent woman, do this to poor Widvos, in fact, maybe it is time that you stood up to the company and gathered back our people, take back the company. It is hard, I know, but other companies have done it before, and once we have done it, restructure, so that it can never happen again. Some times it is better to be small, than to grow and lose perspective, at the risk of other's lives!"

Hardknocks stated boldly, "Then it is decided, we shall embrace the Lord Jesus Christ! Because life isn't about what you see but about what one can believe, faith in God Almighty!"



Aogan was one of those people who enjoyed life, he didn't see the evil or the sin that most others did, he was a happy man, his girlfriend, Yvonne helped in the clinic, they both were doctors. And while Aogan had seen his fair share of sickness and injury and disease, he managed to keep his spirits high by relying on the spirit of Jesus Christ. These were trying times, times when men seemed to be drawn away from the truth, and seduced by the beauty of sin, what? Sin is not ugly, if it were, most people would not get involved in it, sin is seductive, it is beguiling, sin manipulates a little at a time.

So many people had been led down that path, so many lives had been lost and ended badly, because of secret sin, you know, those things that people did behind the back, in the darkness, when they think that no one is watching them, but someone is watching them. You would think that after hundreds of years of continued progress, that the poor and the needy would be a thing of the past, but politics plays a role in everything that people do. Yvonne was from the right side of town, she was born into money, power, fame, she had a famous family.

However, while most children of wealth are easily seduced by its deceptiveness, Yvonne had decided early on that she would walk another path. The general masses seem complacent, to buy and sell, go about their little lives, both small and great, they ignored the wisdom of God and accepted instead, the facts of devils, facts are half truths. Lies mixed with just the right amount of truth to get you to believe it. Why do you think that facts seem to mysteriously change over time? As the cultures grows more mature, the old facts no longer hold true, so the evil spirits of the world have to reinvent the commonly-known-lie. But the truth stands as it is, the truth is immutable, plainly put, the truth is what it is.

The clinic was situated in a halfway location, not in the rich neighborhood, my goodness, who would stand for that, all those poor and indigent people, coming to seek free medical care, one could not have that, but in some progressive societies, free medical care and food and clothing, even basic housing, were indeed, free. But those planets were few and far between. On Lexgos, everything came with a price, it was a rich person's paradise, the planet was beautiful, and the rich came to play, to do those things that they dare not do back at home. And this left the problem of having two classes of people on Lexgos, those who came to play, and those who lived to serve.

It was the age old paradox, but this year, was different, even from the challenges that the clinic faced in the past, this year, an outbreak of the plague was going to occur, and this year, the rich and the poor were going to all be in the same boat. This was a very violent plague, it had been diagnosed on Presisus 8, a colony just outside of the Dark Sectors. It was believed to have been engineered, but the rumors were mostly that, vague and unsubstantiated, like the ancient plague of AIDS, a century and a half ago. There hadn't been anything like the plague, for so long, vaccines was in short supply, and most places that did produce the vaccine, were hard to get at and charged an opportunist fortune. Things like cancer and diabetes had been cured a century ago, with the best and most effective treatments coming from nanomedicine.

What is love? Perhaps the most talked about subject in the history of mankind, except for the subject of war, and some actually equate the two subjects, as if they were two sides of the same coin. But love grows deeper than that, the Holy Bible teaches us that God is love. So love is elevated to

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such a high honor that God Himself describes to us who he is by telling us that He is love. But what about the baser elements in life, those seedy elements that try and corrupt everything that is good and kind.

O'Mangus was walking through the streets of Be-gum, a small city, there were two sides to the city, the rich side, which was to the north, and the south side, poor and subservient. But that was the way society was, most cultures had its wealth and its poverty, it was when too few held the wealth and too many were stricken with poverty, that the strain on society for change took place. When you have too many people eating rats and whatnot, and too few eating fattened cows, the disparity between the two classes becomes too great and something has to give.

There was a café that O'Mangus liked to go to, they didn't serve up the best food, but it was inexpensive and kept you alive. The workers from the south part of the docks would frequent the café and some workers from the lower parts of the city came there. There was a good mix of people, and they all seemed to get along. Conversation went from who was winning the game to local politics. There was a woman there, she came in ever so often, Pamala Drizzle, she was tall and thin, wore glasses and spoke with a deep accent, O'Mangus liked her greatly.

When they were lucky enough to be in the same café at the same time, they sat together, Pamala talked about her life, her dreams and her hopes, she wanted to get away, go almost anywhere, see things. O'Mangus wasn't that adventurous, he had a minimum wage job near the docks, and a small apartment that overlooked part of the bay, often he'd sit there at night, watching the barges as they moved slowly up and down the bay, listening to the sounds of the docks, horns and whistles, curious sounds, that only came from being in close proximity of the docks.

It was one of those days, when O'Mangus was fortunate enough to have a meal with Pamala, but this time was different, he had finally worked up the nerve to ask her out, on a real date, he'd been saving up for the moment, he wanted to take her to one of those fancy restaurants, where there was dancing in the evening and a live band. Oh, it was going to cost him, but he wanted to do something nice for Pamala. He finally asked her and she simply smiled at him and told him, yes, that she'd love to go.

What was it about relationships, some seemed to take up quickly and with little friction, while others had to be cultivated and watered and mixed with the fertilizer of life. All good relationships required trust, and if the two people really loved one another, the trust would never come into question. But society was constantly drifting away from the ways of God Almighty, marriage had been relegated to a three year contract, which was renewable automatically every three years, that solved the problem of divorce, they became few and far between, most people, knowing that the marriage was not for a life time, when they did get married, could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Did this put a lot of lawyers out of business, hell yes, but then again, anyone who has ever gone through a divorce, knows the pain, spiritual, economic, emotional, psychological, etc., that a dissolution of marriage can cause, so, after long and silly debates, the powers that be, came up with the legal marriage contract, three years. Problem was that anybody could get married to anyone, or for that matter, anything, society had failed to solve the problem completely.

If ever there was a moment in time when the sear resistance to an idea was gone, it was with the invention of the Autoanatomical Sphere, called A-sphere for short. This device allowed the implantation of donor organs, without the fear of rejection. Once the A-sphere was put inside of the patient, any organ from any donor could be implanted inside or attached to the patient. Needless to

say, the A-sphere went over very well and acceptance was almost universal. But there were those who rejected the notion of having spare parts inside of them, due to religious reasons, or even political reasons.

It never ceased to amaze Aogan, how when human beings, faced with a life threatening situation, chose very different paths at times, one would think, that if you are dying, and you can have this dead person's heart of kidneys, that the person would go for it in a second. But not all people saw death and life in the same way, some embraced life at all cost, while others had more limited views of what life meant to them. And then, there were those who loathed life itself, as if there were no real choices. Of course there were your common psychopaths who hated everything that God had created, killing was their outlet, their way, their mantra if you will.

But all of these issues seem to beg the question, creation versus evolution. To Yvonne, she saw a different society than Aogan, she saw science spanning the known universe, trying to find answers to questions that in many cases, had no real hard answers. The once Unified Field Theories, some better than others, seemed to play into the hands of the unexplained, while attempting to explain everything. Oh, the basic theory had finally been discovered, if you look hard enough and long enough, one can discover just about anything. But the Theory of One, which had been discovered by Patricia Pystrum, one of the daughters of the famous African American physicist, Evert T. Pystrum, dealt with the expansion of the mathematics, by including a discovery made on Mars, ancient scrolls containing blueprints and designs for fantastic machines. But the inclusion of a basic twelve numbering system, opened the door for the future of mankind in space exploration.

In the normal numbering system that had been adopted by the scientific world, though there were many technical variations of the system, 0123456789, was the basic system, after the Mars discoveries, and the translations, Beso, Ceto, Zero, One, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six Seven, Eight, Nine, became the accepted set of basic counting numbers, with appropriate symbols for the new first two numbers. Beso represented the physical, while Ceto represented the spirit, concepts that so called modern science had rejected, but in light of the Mars discoveries, physical and spiritual were counted in the Martian system of counting. This placed a position in time and space to every form of counting, the Martians didn't ignore the spirit or physical, but found a way to automatically include them in their normal way of dealing with the universe. For to the Martians, the universe wasn't just physical, it was also spiritual.

So now, when making even the most basic of calculations, distinction between the physical or spiritual could be accounted for, instantly, any unified theory had to include the spiritual universe as well as the physical universe. So now, there were twelve numbers in the counting system, two before zero, which indicated where in the universe, rather, which universe one was counting in. The unification of the physical and the spiritual universe, opened up fantastic concepts and ideas. People were not just organic machines existing on the plain of the physical universe, but they had a counter, alter-part existing in the spiritual universe, and while the math predicted that the two, which are the same, differed in form and function, everything in the physical universe had an alter-part in the spiritual universe. An idea not lost to spiritualist alike.

Many centuries ago, in the age when mankind seemed to accept the ways of magic and false gods, when the mystical and the unknown were readily at hand, sickness and disease reigned and the people of the world seemed to accept the will of the false gods, science wasn't the answer. But in their future, it would seem that all answers were subjected to the will and methods, the ways of science. The priests of science, those wizards and witches who practiced the methods of science,

would proclaim that God did not exist and that the universe was created by a violent Big Bang, the theory of the season. And behold, great evidence of such a thing would be found, using the instruments of devils and doctrines of devils.

Things would get so distorted that God's Creation and the account of it, would be dismissed as mere myth, put in a category, unjustly so, with the myths of ancient times. It wasn't enough that those who did not worship the Lord Jesus Christ, would believe in science, but that those who were suppose to be representing God, would also subvert men and women into the false trust, that the world would offer up, to the false prophecies of science. Most common folks would not even know that there were in fact two sciences, and science was not new, but the Holy Bibles makes mention of it, but science was put forth by its followers in the grand way.

The first science, in which all science is an extension of magic, what was once considered magic, was called science in the future. The first science was that of the method, though it did not come first, it was the one that critics of Jesus Christ held so close and dear to them, these were the doctrines and the methodology, the writings and the papers, the subjects, the academic process of science, if you will. Then there was the hard science, the machines and the devices, the practical applications of the science magic, because science is magic, practiced openly.

Ever notice how God's Way is mocked by those in the scientific community, and an almost shame is cast on anyone who wished to study science and still hold fast to their beliefs in Jesus Christ, almost to the point of inspiring atheist. Oh, it was okay to believe in false gods, it seemed that belief in those, didn't conflict with science, why, because false gods and science came from the same source, the devil. Science was the artificial way of doing things, nothing natural about it, it was the devil's answer to Creation, the doctrine of devils, as they attempted to explain the physical universe. And in their explanations, God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were relegated, to the status of myth.

Why? Because the collective consciousness of mankind could not see the Creator in His Glory and Almightyness, so that the collective consciousness of mankind could not hear the Voice of God! Was the advent of science a conspiracy to subvert human beings, to steal their one and only power that God gave to mankind, their collective souls? These aliens from some other existence, called devils in ancient times, but recognized as aliens from another world, in so called modern times, what was their true agenda. Stealing the souls of men, most scientist didn't believe that there was a soul, and those who did, tried to quantify it and catalogue it. Looking for the physical explanation for something that started out spiritual. The physical universe is alike an ice berg floating in the cold and freezing waters.

The reality of mankind was relegated to what could be counted and what could be experimented on. None of which, validated science, but spoke more to the Glory of the Creation. Even those who were weak of spirit, but put in a position to minister to the Flock, eventually gave in, using terminology, like evolution by design, believing that by embracing the secular and trying to include the scientific, that they could explain God's will, his Creation, His passion. But they fell short, because God created the Heavens and the Earth, and to believe, to have faith, was the key.

There was a curious thing that Yvonne had noticed about people, no matter how far mankind advanced as a race and as a culture, human nature remained the same, why was that, what was it about people as a whole, that was so undefined, or perhaps defined, that no matter what happened to them, mankind was who it was? One of her patients was a woman who wanted to live on, even after her death, it was a common thing on some planets, and on others it was a grave taboo. It all

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depended on the culture, and on the body politics, mostly in the Dark Sectors, where outlawed technology ran rampant, people who were close to death by various diseases or other life taking sickness, would seek out the Dark Medical Arts, and get rendered unto them the soul stealing cures

that they so wanted.

Most of this was done to the very rich, poor people could hardly afford the next meal on the table, if they even had tables to eat upon, let alone spend the gross millions of shekels of money, in order to extract the living soul from one creature and place it inside of them, thus curing them and prolonging their lives. Was this a form of immortality? Of course, but there were those who would go too far, by using the medical machine called the Quantum Recycler, a machine that could extract the living soul from one creature and place it inside of another. On most planets that allowed this type of medical procedure, people that were dying and that could afford the procedure, could only use animal souls, it was illegal for a person, rich person to buy the soul of another, healthy person, thus rendering the healthy person, dead, while the rich person, having the transplanted soul inside of them now, lived on. It was illegal for obvious reasons, there was something immoral about buying the souls of the poor and down trodden, exploiting the poor, for the longevity, hell, physical immortality of the rich.

It sufficed that the soul of an animal would do, after all, people did eat lower forms of life, on planets all around, but in this case, the soul of the animal was not wasted, it was captured in the Quantum Recycler and then, after it was harvested, implanted into the recipient, some rich person, because they were the only ones who could afford the procedure. The problem got more evil, because the very rich could well afford to buy the souls of the unwanted, the poor and the forgotten. Was it because the animal souls didn't work? No! They worked just fine, once a new soul was placed inside of a person, they healed up quickly and good health was restored to them. The problem was that the rich played games, hell, they invented them, and the ultra fashionable thing, to distinguish oneself from the lesser transplant recipients, was to own a real human soul. So, the black market was thriving on illegal human souls for sale, and the price of a quality human soul was always high.

Yvonne never thought that she'd ever be faced with a decision to use the Quantum Recycler, but after having seen so much disease and death and sickness, her spirit was vexed to the point that she'd do anything to find a cure for the patients, even to the point of transplanting souls. Her patient needed help and it seemed like a small thing, to use the means of the wealthy and obscenely rich, in order to bring comfort to the poor and needy. Human beings could justify anything, if given enough moral and spiritual self-righteousness! Assisted suicides hundreds of years ago, were just that, a failing to embrace Jesus Christ as God and Savior, in a society that had long crucified and turn its back on the truth. All for the facts (lies with half truths thrown in) of the secular world. This winking and looking the other way, even corrupted the so called men and women of God, for the devil did indeed disguise himself as an angel of light, and he did deceive the entire world, even from the beginning. Starting with Adam and Eve. But Yvonne only concerned herself with the patient she had to treat, what was best for them at that time.

I am an Exacter. We've all heard the rumors and tales about the dark forces in the world. The things that strike fear and loathing in our hearts. Well, I have news for you, they are real. I'm part of a greater force, one for good that helps to fight the forces of evil. What are these evil forces? Well, there are many but the ones I'm trained to fight are demons that have taken on the forms of physical precepts, we call them, vampires and werewolves and frankins. We all know what vampires are, those conceited demons of the night, forever doomed to walk in darkness, fallen souls which have traded their real beings for physical immortality.

And then there are the demons called werewolves, who like the vampires were once human but have fallen into the same traps as their counter parts, humans who have forsaken their souls for physical immortality, forever doomed to hell. And then there are the frankins, humans who have traded their souls for physical immortality by making use of transplanted organs and artificial means, eventually forsaking their true spirituality and being transformed into the image of the beast. The frankins are the hardest of the three to recognize and fight, because of their artificial nature.

These are the times of the Neo-Crusades. These are dark times when what is right has been called evil what is evil has been called good. These are the times of the Twisting. Once there were seven days in a week, now there are only six days. And a month comprises of six weeks and a year makes up six months.

Yes. These are evil times. And no one can escape the Twisting. My name is Eveana and my partner is called Adamus, we are Exacters. Our mission and goal is to eradicate the world of the demons known as vampires and werewolves and frankins.

From on top of a cathedral we watch and overlook the city, searching and seeking the vile things that have stolen humanity.

Adamus said, "It is confirmed, Likanus, the leader of this clan of werewolves and Vikaros, the leader of the house's vampires, have agreed to a meeting, to try and join forces against the Neo-Crusaders, us."

I uttered, "What about the frankins?"

Adamus spoke, "From what our intelligence can gather, the frankins want nothing to do with the vampires or werewolves . . ."

I stretched my arms in a form almost resembling a cross, it was going to be a long night, "Then I guess we have our night cut out for us."

Adamus answered, "If they succeed in forming a pact, they will try and turn the tables on us, this will mean full out and out war, between the vampires and werewolves against the Neo-Crusaders."

In one confident swoop, my heavenly wings spread open and I stepped off the roof into the cool night's air, soaring like an eagle, on my personal hunt. Adamus likewise opened his wings and followed. It was going to be a long night, but we are Exacters, the night belonged to us.

It was an ancient structure built by the raging sea, two great pillars rising up. The clouds bellowing slowly across in the distance with blue sky dominating. Up on the green hills were other ancient structures, some seemingly defying the hands of time, ancient mystic buildings housing secrets that mankind, even to this day did not know. There was to take place a secret meeting of the

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terrible creatures that had dominated and preyed upon mankind for so many centuries.

Likanus said, "You may think me a fool but this meeting had to take place . . ."

Jakxa interjected, "Don't think of what they feel, Likanus, if the vampires think that they can

handle the situation so well, then let them leave!”

Vikaros glared at Jakxa, more for speaking out of turn, then he focused on the leader of the werewolves, “You need to teach your woman some manners, Likanus, these are troubling times for both our clans, the werewolves and the vampires.”

Xerotica could not contain herself, “We all agreed to meet here, in this holy of places for both the vampires and the werewolves, for it is this place, that from where our powers evolved.”

Likanus said, “No, not evolved, they were given to us by the gods, the gods that came from distant worlds and briefly settled here on Earth, before moving on.”

Xerotica hissed, “Our bloodlines are pure, we have no ties with the werewolves!”

Vikaros lifted his hand ever so slightly, “Hold your tongue, Xerotica, for there is truth in the words that Likanus has spoken. It is little known, but our paths once crossed, there were indeed great beings that came from the distant stars, beings that to the simplest of men and women, must have seemed like gods. But these beings were creatures not unlike ourselves, after having evolved many thousands of years.”

Likanus went on, “They did experiments on the primitive people of the then surrounding villages and towns, testing them and screening them, looking for certain genetic markers. A science that mankind could not even begin to fathom at that time. But those experiments would lead to changes in the overall genetic makeup of all mankind. For these ancient astronauts from another world introduced manufactured viruses that were passed down from one person to another, viruses that were designed to alter specific properties of the human DNA.”

Vikaros finished, “But in some humans an unexpected result occurred, instead of the mutations being subtle, taking place over hundreds and thousands of years, there were radical exactions. Some causing the werewolf genetic changes to take place and others causing the vampire genetic changes to occur. That is our common heritage, the same beings from a distant world, infected the same virus into our ancient ancestors, but very different results took place.”

Xerotica said, “Then let this common bond be the one that unites us against a common enemy, the Neo-Crusaders. Who have been systematically attacking both werewolves and vampires alike.”

Jakxa uttered, “There is a wise man, he seems to be a leader of the Neo-Crusade, his name is Peter. Some say that he possesses great wisdom and that God Almighty speaks to him in common form. He is a great prophet amongst the Neo-Crusaders.”

Xerotica asked, “To what end, werewolf?”

Jakxa growled at the vampire woman but went on, “We should kill him! If we can get in close enough and kill their leader, the prophet of God, then we would have struck at their heart!”

But a wise Vikaros said, “Or, we would have created a martyr, this thing must be planned out right! We must do this thing in a systematic and politically sound way in order to get the effect that we seek. The vampires and werewolves are united in this one thing!”

To tell, the vampire was dining with friends in the village. He had learned that he had to go abroad at once. His address for forwarding letters was Casdmay’s, Daiso. I knew from a letter in his pocket that he kept an account with a branch of Casdmay’s, and Daiso is a complicated town through which to trace a man’s passage.

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I said, “The evil of the demons known as vampires and werewolves must be stopped.”

Adamus answered, “They all take the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in vain, they believe in false gods that fell from the heavens . . .”

I was none too sure of that, but his best chance of success was to shine and put forth the utmost confidence.

I gave him a tip, the woman who had made the bed, if there were such a woman, and another which he was to hand to her for her daughter's savings.

I voiced, "You might be right, but given that the only beings that fell to Earth were demons, kicked out of Heaven, then the Dark Cult of vampires and werewolves are beholden to fallen angels that disguise themselves as angels of light."

Adamus said, "That might explain the infection of the virus that turned them into those monsters of the night, in the first place. But I think that now, they are filled with the darkness and can never return."

I spoke, "I tend to agree with you on that, it doesn't seem like there can ever be a cure for them, they went on their own, the first ones being experimented on, by the aliens, we call them aliens from another world, but they really are fallen angels, pretending to be whatever we want them to be so that they can subvert the entire world."

Adamus answered, "They all must be stopped at all cost, but the word is that the frankins are still holding out on joining the Dark Cult."

I announced, "That is because the frankins have more in common with natural humans than the others, they make use of the dead, and pillage body parts in order to prolong life, in a most sinful way, because after awhile, they have forsaken the Word of God for the words of science."

It was perfectly safe advice to give a beginner, and it would establish bona fides.

I let him cross the strange paddock and go round the corner of the barns into the yard, then I followed to watch, so far as possible, over my fate. This time there was no need to take extreme pains to hide myself, the blood dogs had an excuse to bark. I squatted behind a tree whence I could see the front of the large door.

Received the caller with sudden surprise but no hesitation. She shut the door and there was no movement for six minutes, which I spent wishing I had cut the wires. Then an oil lamp was lit in an enormous upper room, and I saw someone pass back and forth across the window. He came out with a suitcase in his hand, followed by them with a silver gun case, with the rug, and with a packet of blood sandwiches. The whole party were chattering except, who was far too glum in my mind, and sending messages. They entered the stable to watch and load and start the aircar, and I ran back to the gothic gate.

I spoke, "The vampires are on the move, we might get caught if we continue to spy on them like this . . ."

In spite of his powerful grip his elbows were quivering like the Gills of Cast. I knew that the night was still young and that all of this seemingly removed behavior for the Dark Cult was leading up to something wickedly sinister, but God's people were ready for them.

Peter the Good uttered, "With God Almighty, all things are possible, all we need to do is but believe in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Adamus said, "This is a true saying and one worthy of the remembering for the Neo-Crusaders. But we have come to you because the children of darkness have risen up against the children of light, they do unite to try and defeat our cause."

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Peter responded, "It is written, that we should give our causes to the Lord our God and God will take care of us. You are filled with fear because the darkness that hides just beneath the skin of mankind is rearing its ugly head. But don't be afraid, have not fear, fear not . . ."



Eveana said, "I know that the Lord Jesus Christ is righteous and good, for he died on the cross for our salvation, but these things that roam in the night, they seem to defy all holy reason."

Peter answered, "These things that you speak of, they are demons, who have managed to evolve into the living world of the flesh of men and women, by sharing, inhabiting the human bodies of people. But this is known by all the Christian Mystics as the Abomination."

Eveana questioned, "So what is this thing, and will our people be able to defeat the on coming assault of the Dark Forces?"

Adamus said, "All things are written in the Book of Life, for those who are saved are named in it, but those who are damned are not found. This is strange magic . . ."

Peter said, "Take not heed to the rumors heard, for many false gods have emerged and yet there are still those to come, there will be one final battle between good and evil, and that battle will be fought by God and his holy angels, however, the battles going on now are for this time and this reality. Thousands of years ago, the fallen angels hatched a plan to deceive all mankind, first by tricking Adam and Eve into committing suicide by eating of the forbidden fruit, this caused a virus to be introduced into their perfect bodies, a virus which was sexually transmitted, from one generation to another, since all human life came from the original father and mother, all human beings have inherited this genetic virus . . ."

Eveana said, "So, death is a virus that has mutated and altered our original genetic composition."

Peter smiled, "And that is what the demon children already know, so when the offer came for them to have physical immortality, rather than spiritual immortality, they opted for physical immortality, thus damning their souls to eternal fire and brimstone. The entire universe is going to be cast away and a new universe will be put in its place. There are those who don't believe in destiny, but God Jesus Christ is the destiny of all those who love and believe and obey him. Jesus Christ is our destiny and fire and brimstone is theirs."

Adamus asked, "So then, this obvious battle that is brewing between the Neo-Crusaders and the vampires and werewolves, this is part of a bigger battle, one that can't be seen with naked eyes?"

Peter nodded, "That is correct, ever since the beginning there has been an undercurrent, a separate yet just as real existence going on, there is the physical world in which we all take part in, but there is a greater world, just beneath our noses, just beyond the very breath we take, that is the spiritual world, and the spiritual world is greater than the physical world, you see, in the physical world, we are but images and copies, avatars of what is real. Our bodies are mere atomic representations of a more wonderful existence, and that is of the Spiritual Universe."

Eveana stated, "Then this war that we engage in must be won by Good so that Evil will forever be suppressed at the footstool of the Lord Jesus Christ. And mankind will be free!"

“And I looked up and behold, Jesus Christ smiled upon me” One of the Followers

Sheyouany looked puzzled, “Are you going to drink that? I mean, it looks absolutely awful, the color is even dirty . . .”

Lewanda cut in, “I don’t know about you, but it is very hot, there is little to no shade, and we’ve been stranded on this God forsaken planet for ten days, what does it matter at this point, we need water . . .”

Archibald finished, “I’m drinking this water because there is no other water to be found. Yes, it might have all sorts of alien germs and whatnot in it, but if you have a better suggestion, please, now is the time to make it.”

The three young people, royalty in their blood, Sheyouany being a Martian from a distant star system, her ancestors came from Mars, but left due to a global crisis and relocated on a beautiful planet in a distant star system, while Lewanda and Archibald were human in origin, but each came from a different planet located in a distant star system. They had been sent on a diplomatic envoy that had been brought under attack by the Dark Powers of the Anti-Realm. The people who were with them had met with swift death when their transdimensional cruiser was ambushed and crashed on the wilderness planet that they were now stranded on.

Sheyouany held out a device, “Here, at lease let me try and purify the water before we drink it, this may kill most of the germs and whatever else is in the water.”

Lewanda looked frightened suddenly, “I thought I saw something . . .”

Archibald let Sheyouany purify the water and handed the canteen filled, to each of them, “Are you sure that the heat and the three suns aren’t playing tricks on you. Face it, in all the time that we’ve been here, none of us has seen any real signs of higher animal life.”

Lewanda looked about, “There are bugs! There are plenty of signs of those forms of life. And if those things are on this awful planet, there might be other forms that we just haven’t come across. I mean face it, some planets, even Earth Prime, if you land on the wrong part of the planet, you might think that the whole planet is just water, or desert, or ice . . .”

Sheyouany interjected, “What little ice is now left on Earth Prime, it’s been melting for centuries.”

Then Lewanda shouted, “See there! Over there, just over that dune, something moved, something kinda big!”

They all looked, and behold, Lewanda was right, there was something moving. Kind of big and traveling at a good pace. They all began to get near their survival rockets, and they quickly put them on, strapping them on their backs, in anticipation of what danger may be. And then they could make it out, it was a colossal land crab, or that is what it resembled, but it was also different, evolved perfectly for the wilderness. And it seemed to be heading for them and looking at the three as its next meal. Well, the rockets flared with a sonic burst and the three were in the air and jetting in the opposite direction of the monster, Archibald said, “The next time you think you see something moving, Lewanda, make sure that we believe you!”

It was just after evening when on the following morning, had been given the east side. Getting out drew aside and satisfied that the three suns had risen and that is was a fine morning.

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Archibald began with his usual meticulous care. Having finished, he wrapped himself and a wound around his neck.

Through the silence, he opened noiselessly and passed into the garden oasis.

The suns just showing now, misty with the mist of morning, followed round the side until he stopped and surveyed the scene.

Immediately outside a strip of alien grass ran parallel with the front of that was still made in front of the border, a strip of grass ran behind the border carefully, he turned his attention to either side of it.

Very slowly in the right hand distant soft mold.

Stared down at them, frowning, sound caught his ears, lifted sharply.

Above had been pushed up, red framed, an aureole of heaven, intelligent faces of Sheyouany and Lewanda.

"Gee, I didn't know that you were such a morning person," Sheyouany voiced as she exited the mouth of the cave.

Lewanda stretched, the large mass of water off to her side, they had managed to find that cave and it was shelter from the hot suns, "It really doesn't matter because we have to be going, the geosynchronous will be tracking today, and help is no doubt on the way."

Archibald uttered, "All we have to do is survive until they arrive."

Lewanda frowned, "What about those who attacked us in the first place, they think we are dead."

Sheyouany grinned, "Just think what they are going to be in for, when they see an armed militia coming out of hyperspace. They are going to freak!"

Lewanda spoke, "They'll be dead before they can freak, but we all have to be careful, no doubt, they have spy drones flying about the planet, we don't want them by chance to discover us before help arrives."

Archibald examined his emergency rocket-pack, the system was going through a diagnostic, "And then there is the problem of the overgrown animal life on this planet, I mean, just look, the best place to survive this heat is also the closest place by the sea. Who knows what might come out of the water next . . ."

Lewanda interjected, "Or, what might try and slither into the sea. Maybe we shouldn't stick around here, maybe it is too dangerous."

Sheyouany shook her head, "No, we have to be careful, too much exposure to the three suns, and quite literally, we are toast. Get out too far from water, not good either, and the factor of the flying spy drones is a really serious one."

Archibald nodded, "I agree with Sheyouany, any dumb move now could spell disaster . . ."

Lewanda cut in, "You mean, a bigger disaster than the one that we are already in?"

Archibald sighed, "Let's eat first, we can't do anything on an empty stomach. Besides, while there might be little honor in our hiding out, being brave and stupid is even worse."

Sheyouany smiled, "I knew there was a reason why we all liked you, a leader with sensibilities."

Lewanda uttered, "Leader? I'm a leader too, we all are, or will be when we grow up!"

Archibald said, "I'm not trying to be a leader, I'm trying to be your friend."

Another night and another chance at hope now gone. The planet was a hostile planet and the odds of the three being rescued any time soon waned. It was a strange world they had managed to

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land on. On the one hand, there were strange forms of life, sand creatures and water creatures.

Strange airborne creatures, they seemed all hell bent on eating them and one another, the cycle of life. Kill or be killed.

Sheyouany said, "This place is most inhospitable, in fact it is down right hellish, I wouldn't mind if we were all rescued right this moment!"

They all had managed to find another cave to rest in, near the sea but not too close as to be ready prey for whatsoever came out of the water, and there were some big ugly creatures they had seen during the daylight, who knew what came out at night. The planet had four moons that cast a pretty mystical aura across the distant night sky.

Archibald said, "I think we need to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ for deliverance."

The others agreed and the three of them worshiped and prayed to the Lord so that God would deliver them from their current predicament. Then came time for the night's meal as Lewanda fixed what looked like some form of fish soup. The others helped by chipping in and the meal quickly took form.

Lewanda said, "I wonder what is taking our rescuers so long?"

Archibald answered, "It could be anything, we know that those who ambushed our envoy are still above the planet's atmosphere in orbit, sending out drones and other machines, trying to find us. And then there are the problems of space pirates and other nefarious notables, all this and anything could be making the search and rescue hard, what we need to do is keep our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. God will see us through this crisis, he always has and he always will. Jesus Christ is an amazing God, he never stops listening and caring and saving his people. We've been in tough situations before and the Lord has delivered us in a glorious way."

Lewanda said, "Point taken, you are right, the three of us have been in some sticky situations and some how, the Lord has always managed to bless us with salvation. God never fails and we all need to keep the faith."

Sheyouany said, "Yes, we do. Besides it isn't much fun thinking about being eaten alive by some creepy monster. But oh, how I wish that we were someplace safe and sound!"

Archibald said, "Some time, God allows us to be put in situations in order to test us, or rather prove us, so that we can see, what he already knows about us, because God is Almighty and knows everything, but we often doubt and question our lives at any given moment."

Lewanda said, "But that is only natural, people have doubt, it is human, without it we couldn't be cautious, we'd believe any old thing put forth, sometimes doubt can save your life."

Sheyouany said, "Yes, people are very complicated, but knowing who to doubt and when to doubt is the key, one must never doubt that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he was raised from the death of the cross three days later."

Archibald said, "There is only one truth in the entire universe, and that is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, everything else is just a bunch of B.S."

Lewanda questioned, "Do you think they will come for us tomorrow?"

There was a long silence in the camp as the three ate slowly, her question resonated in their minds like some kind of obscure riddle that needed to be pondered in order to be solved. Slowly their eyes fixed on one another, Sheyouany tried to launch a smile of hope.

Archibald answered, "Faith, hope, charity, love, grace, mercy, compassion. We can hope."

There was fierce fighting in the air, the drones that the ships that had ambushed their original diplomatic convoy, we now in hot pursuit of Archibald and Sheyouany and Lewanda. They streaked

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across the alien sky, using their emergency rocket packs to their fullest in order to maneuver out of harm's way. Then suddenly, as if things weren't bad enough, flying predators, indigenous to the planet caught wind of the chase and the three young people were out numbered and seemingly

headed for disaster.

They flew low and hard, zig-zagging across the tops of dunes and around mounds, occasionally crossing an oasis and then dropping hundreds of feet over the face of steep cliffs. They were doing everything in their power in order to survive. Finally Archibald spotted a great place in order to hide, if not but for a few moments, in order to give them time to think and pray to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sheyouany said, "It's a miracle that you spotted this place from the way that we were all flying."

Lewanda uttered, "I'm tired, I don't think I can go on much longer."

Archibald said, "I think it is time that we pray to God for deliverance, let's face it, if we are going to get out of here alive and in one piece, we are going to need the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to prevail."

Sheyouany nodded, "I'm in agreement . . ."

Lewanda cut in, "So am I . . ."

So, the three young people began to pray and worship the Lord God of all Creation. They humbled themselves before the Lord making contrite supplications.

And the Lord did hear their prayers, even on that distant land.

Suddenly, after they had finished praying to God, one of their communicators activated. It was help on the way. Their rescue party was busy engaging the ships that had ambushed their diplomatic convoy, the battle was hot but the victory was to be theirs, They had been given instructions to fly as high as possible, in order to make themselves available for rescuing.

The three were a little afraid, as anyone would be, but they kept their faith in Christ and did not waver, they stood their, at the mouth of the cave seated in the face of a cliff. Archibald looked over at Sheyouany, and then Sheyouany looked over at Lewanda, who in turn nodded and smiled at Archibald. Then, they all stepped off the cliff into the air in a rushing free fall. And as expected the drones picked them up and so did the killer flying monsters that had been chasing them.

They then kicked in their rockets and the machines came to life with a mighty roar, now suddenly they were no longer falling, but they did fly. Up and up they went with death surely pursuing behind them, there were the machines hell bent on killing them and then there were the horrible flying creatures, hell bent on eating them.

But they had prayed for a miracle, because whenever you pray to God Almighty, what you are really asking the Lord to do is bless you with a miracle, no matter how big or small the petition is, God is a miracle maker, and there is nothing too hard for the Lord to do. So, with their souls filled with the Spirit of God, the three carried on, as they rocketed higher and higher into the sky. Sheyouany said through her communicator, "The air is starting to get pretty thin . . ."

Lewanda said, "I'm starting to feel the cold . . ."

And Archibald shouted, "To the Glory and Majesty of Jesus Christ, we shall be delivered!" And in that instant, a transporter beam locked onto the three and they were picked up to safety.

In the clouds of tomorrow I see Jesus Christ coming  
The land and the sky cry out his holy name for joy  
And my heart is filled with holiness for the Christ

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Has come to save us from the wickedness of the  
World and the salvation of the Children of God is  
Upon the nations to whom the Lord has called to

Righteousness because the blood of Christ has been  
Made the wine of the sinner to be forgiven of the  
Trespass this would hold one back from being saved  
So holy is the Son of God for his reign is forever  
And no calamity can take us down or destroy us  
Because Jesus Christ is our God and Savior forever

Aunnita gazed out at the Arctic wilderness, the little bungalow that she was in had heat and running water along with flushing toilets, it sounds strange in the Twenty First Century to harp on flushing toilets, but things were what they were, “Don’t suppose that the migrating wildlife cares much for your oil drilling,” she uttered it with obvious superior contempt.

Santigo frowned as he looked up from his desk of papers and plans and whatnot, “Are you here, sent from the government to bust my chops about the drilling, everything that is being done here in the Alaska wilderness, is above board, on the up and up.”

Above board huh, Aunnita shook her head, “Look, I’m not going to even try to explain how all of what you and the company you work for is doing to the delicate ecosystem, you just can’t seem to comprehend the damage. So long as you make a dollar, your big and powerful oil company that you work for, can buy off any problems.”

Santigo got up and got himself a hot cup of coffee, he gestured to her, if she wanted some and she nodded, “Look, you are getting mad at the wrong guy, I’m a lowly engineer, barely getting by, and on top of this, do you really think I wanted to be out here. I mean look at it, there isn’t a big town for hundreds of miles, if you can call anything in Alaska, a big town. More like big village . . .”

Aunnita sipped her coffee, “You know that I am an ecologist, I care about the environment, profit shouldn’t be the motive for looking the other way, and letting the greedy companies just come in here and destroy all this beautiful natural habitat.”

Santigo found his seat again, he studied the woman who was wandering around his office, she was good looking, curvy, not anorexic looking, just the opposite, she had a few pounds in all the right places, long dark hair, looked raven blueish in the run light as it came through the window, “So, I’m suppose to work with you for awhile, you are suppose to have access to all the data and reports, and memos, even the secret memos I’ve been told.”

Aunnita nodded her head as she sipped her hot coffee, it was really hot, burned her lips, she sized him up, he was a nice looking man, a bit too thin she thought, but he was tall so it kind of balanced out, he wore glasses and his hair was thick and not kept so well, obviously a bachelor, he probably wore the same shirt for more than one day, “There has been some strange anomalies in the core reports, what might have caused them?”

Santigo raised his eyebrows, “I’m not that kind of engineer, I deal with the machines and the computers, monitor the robotic progress as the drilling continues, basically I’m an over paid babysitter for a bunch of electronic whatnots.”

Aunnita pointed to a section on the computer screen, “There, what’s out there?”

Santigo looked to see what she was pointing at, then he keyed in some commands that brought up a more detailed screen, “Hmmm, just looks like more piping and drilling machinies,” but then the screen started to light up red on the area in question, “What the, that’s not suppose to be doing that.”

Perhaps it was more than a coincidence that Santigo and Aunnita met the way that they did, but sometimes fate has a way of taking hold of a person and turning their life around. Some times the hold, is for the better, fact is, it is the case, but on the other handsome times, it is for the worse. In this case, fate had not made up its mind, whether the two of them were meeting for good

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or for evil, such things were not the will of mankind but of the will of God Almighty.

The area that was under question, in real life, seemed more complicated than just the flashing beacon, there was a lot of equipment on the site, they entered in through the side door, it was locked

but Santingo had a pass key for all the facilities. It was dark and they made their way through the structure with big flashlights, finally they came across the main circuit breakers and Santingo managed to get some of the main lights working.

Aunnita was taken back with a strange feeling, it wasn't that she was afraid of the dark, Heavens no, she was a grown woman, too big of a girl to be shaken by the unknown, after all, she'd been in all sorts of situations, being an advocate for the environment, but there was something different about this site, something spiritually unmoving. Finally, they found the main control room, the two of them began to bring the computers online, after a few moments, it was safe to say that, something was very wrong with the facility, and not from a structural point of view. The station's logs had indicated that a crewman had logged into the facility some six months ago, but had never logged out.

Neither of them could find a logical explanation for the problem, was he still there, in the facility, if so, there was no food and there could be no real reason why he would still be inside the facility. The main control room had cameras that could be activated, so the two began a systematic search of the rather large facility, searching each corridor and hall, each room, there seemed to be nothing, but then, during a routine sweep, they came across something, not right. There was the crewman, sitting at a desk, his back was to the camera so they could not see his face. Santingo used the communications system to try and hail him, but it didn't work, oh the system was working just fine, it was the fact that the man didn't answer, he just sat there.

The obvious thoughts that ran through the two's heads, was that something had happened, and he couldn't move and froze to death. It was after all, the most reasonable thing, maybe it was a heart attack, he poor bastard had been working in the remote facility all by himself, and he had a heart attack. It was possible, the guy looked rather over weight, but that was just picking on over weight people. But still, the obvious thing was there, here was this guy that had been forgotten, how sad, Aunnita thought to herself, to be un-missed, not even noticed that you had been missing, for over six months, good Lord, how awful.

They made their way through the facility and finally came to the room that the dead guy was in, there was no doubt about the cold, Santingo slowly approached the body, Aunnita was amused at the seemingly cautious way in which Santingo was approaching the body. It was at that point that she realized that he was as creeped out as she was, he was better at holding it in than she was. Finally Santingo touched the man's shoulder, it was cold and hard, then he swung the guy around, but that action came much too their surprise, there was some kind of organic material covering his whole face, and it seemed to have actually eaten into his face, there were strange frozen pustulated secretions coming out his mouth and ears and nose. This poor bastard was a mess. And then it hit the both of them, this guy may not have died of a heart attack, at least not from the original condition, maybe later, was this stuff contagious, damn, Santingo had touched him. A chill moved up Aunnita's back, no, it wasn't from the cold, it was unexpected.

Taknok's face seemed strained as he heard Santingo and Aunnita's report about what they had found, "According to our records, no one has gone missing, are you sure of what you have found?"

Santingo glanced at Aunnita then back to the screen, "We have footage of the poor bastard.  
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Can't tell you more than that, we were really hoping that headquarters could shed some light on the situation . . ."

Aunnita cut in, "Basically, what we want to know, what I want to know, is what was the guy



doing there in the first place and what happened to him, was he exposed to some toxins or something?"

Taknok looked off for a moment, there were others in the room that they could not see, then he began to feed them a bunch of crap, "You got nothing to worry about, headquarters will take care of everything."

Santigo said, "So, it is safe for us to remove the dead body? I mean, the guy's been there for six months, he doesn't look too good."

Taknok shouted for a second, "No! I mean, no, don't do anything, we'll send out a special team to handle everything, the fact of the matter is, the two of you are through. You'll be getting new assignments in a few days. Until then, just try and wrap everything up."

Aunnita voiced, "How can you say that, I'm an ecologist and I work for the government, you don't control my assignments."

Taknok stated, "We've been in contact with the government, talked to your superiors, for the time being, you'll be taking orders from us, but just until you get out of Alaska, then you'll be back on track."

Aunnita uttered, "Back on track?"

Santigo decided to cut in, "Will do, we'll wait for further instructions. Looks like a big storm is coming in, so I'm guessing no one will be out here to take care of things until it passes."

Taknok nodded, "Our thoughts exactly, but until then, the two of you try and stay warm, Taknok, out," and the screen faded off.

Santigo went to the refrigerator and got out two frozen meals, he placed them in the oven. Up on the top of a cabinet was a tall bottle of booze, he got it and two glasses, poured them both a drink and sat back down, "I don't like this . . ."

Aunnita spoke, "Notice how Taknok kept looking back of himself, to someone not in the field of vision on the screen and notice how his voice never indicated that the company didn't know anything about the poor guy's death?"

Santigo put forth, "The company is lying to us, they knew about this guy, maybe even his death. But why cover it up, why not go and get the body and do the right thing, let him rest in peace?"

Aunnita stated, "You would, if you had nothing to do with his death. But, if you knew what was going on, and it was illegal or even worse, part of a government coverup, for something top secret, maybe even National Security."

Santigo said, "The words, National Security, is just an excuse to violate everyone's Constitutional Rights! What if this poor guy was down there, doing his job, got exposed to something, something nasty and deadly that the company and the government were experimenting on, or maybe, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time . . ."

Aunnita stated chillingly, "You mean, just like us?"

The snow was now falling at an increasing rate, the storm was just starting to come in, and Santigo and Aunnita found themselves by the area where the dead man was discovered. Instead of the company sending help after the storm, they had managed to send a killer, an assassin, no doubt to silence them. A cleanup crew was at that moment going through their records and files, pulling

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computers, when it all was over, there would be no record of anything. So, what was all of that worth killing for? It had to do with the last well drilled, something came up, something that had nothing to do with oil or the company's idea of profits.

From what the two were able to gather, just before the assassin came, from reading encrypted records, records that were now being either destroyed or more than likely taken to some remote place where the company could start over. This whole thing had to do with a new type of fuel, not oil and not natural gas, something different. The substance that was covering the poor guy they found, had properties that was not from this planet, maybe a more accurate description would be, not from this region of space and time.

What had been going on was testing, the cold and the remoteness of the area made a perfect place for scientist to test the substance. The substance produced energy, but did not deplete itself, in fact, it did just the opposite, every time energy was used, it grew back more potential to produce energy. The problem was twofold, how to control it and the fact that it was highly toxic to living creatures, to all life.

Therefore, containment was of the utmost importance, the substance was semi-organic, but not from this planet, or if it was from this planet, not from this dimension of time and space. The encrypted records seemed to suggest that a crew was drilling, machines were going and everything seemed normal, until they hit a pocket, that did not register on any of their detection equipment. There was a hard surface, and it appeared to be synthetic in nature, when the crew broke through it, this ethereal substance came forth, scientist didn't know what to make of it, and quickly found out that it was toxic to all living tissues, animal life and plant life.

It was simply by accident that the scientist discovered that the stuff had some properties that pointed to a new energy source, it was decided, at the highest levels, to keep a lid on the whole thing, the greed of the company, imagine that, finding a perpetual power source, it was not radioactive, so under the proper conditions, it could be used to power cars, planes, boats, all manner of electronic devices, with no radiation, imagine batteries that lasted forever, power sources for robotic limbs for amputees, the list went on and on.

Yes, this was a big breakthrough, but it wasn't the first time that a company, or the government, made use of off world technology and outwardly discoveries, trying to backward engineer a product or solution. The stakes were high, and there were billions to be made, hell, trillions maybe. And now the government and the private sector found themselves, strange bed fellows. So, this poor guy somehow got himself exposed and forgotten about for over six month. Now a new cleanup crew was there, making sure this time, that no evidence would be left, not records, no matter how deeply encrypted, would be found, this whole thing was a dragon well. It was to be keep under the deepest and most closest guarded secret. Money was to be made and power was to be coveted.

The cold was starting to get to Santingo and Aunnita, the storm was now just upon them, the assassin was doing everything in his power to kill them and they were collectively doing everything in their power to escape, they both took a brief moment to pray to God for deliverance. And the Good Lord, Jesus Christ heard their prayers and behold, a way of escape.

Vargas stepped up to the edge of the mount, it was cold and there was a wind coming from the East, he was dressed in super warm clothing, he had to be for this time of year and for the climate level he was at. Just behind him was his colleague and wife, Isabelle, she like him was dressed to the hilt in warm clothing. A century ago, people wondered what it would be like to explore another star system, a century ago people were wondering how to get to the nearest star system, but a lot can happen in a hundred years.

It wasn't until the discovery of the ancient scrolls on Mars and their deciphering, they were blueprints, plans for building something that included something called translaser technology. It worked with subgravity fields, black-gravity links and translight continuum, anti-space arrays and non-conducting parametric sequencing of unique particles. The theory was simple, all matter and energy in the universe was unique, like snow flakes, no two pieces of matter were exactly the same. Like the snow that was all around them, the icy cold and the deep bone aching bitter cold, that seemed to sink into the very essence of what was man and woman, on this giant planet, the eighth planet from the star that gave out light and heat. All the other planets were either too close to the star or too far away, this one was just right, it could support life, even though snow covered the entire planet, it was made of the same stuff that snow was made of on Earth Prime, Earth Prime . . .

That was what Mother Earth was now called, Earth Prime! Why Earth Prime? Because as the name implies, there is a Central Earth and then there are many others, it all went back to translaser physics and the subgravity conduits of what was once thought of as space and time. But time was like an gigantic flowing river, flowing throughout the entire universe, in some places, causing predictable actions of interacted matter, and in others, like the tiny eddies of water that flows in a river or stream, upturning and tossing and twisting matter, but all of that was linked to something called black-gravity. Everyone knew about gravity and everyone understood the laws of physics that stated that  $F = MA$ , but it was with the discovery of the Martian Scrolls, those now famous plans and glimpses into a culture now long gone, yet more advanced than anything imaginable, that black-gravity was brought into full light, and the role it played on our own perceptions of time and space. Even something as simple as dirt and water, were now subjected to a new and complex structure and order of things, gone were the once foolish ideas of chaos theory, even evolution had to bow its head

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to the New Order, because black-gravity explained everything about our known universe, in three simple equations, and then it ripped our minds away from our faces, by adding nine more equations, that explained everything else, both seen and unseen, and there was more unseen than seen.

Isabelle spoke through the communicator that was part of their life-suits, "I think we've been out here long enough, I'm starting to get movement on my sensors . . ."

Vargas' voice was weak from exhaustion, "Okay, Isabelle, I guess we'll call it a day, we've been out for hours."

Isabelle's voice mirrored the same physical stress, "Will do, instructing the robots . . ."

Tar-lik observed the times and the days, the rising of the sun and the calling of the three

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moons of Yo'gesha, the mist of the marsh was thick as he rode on his steed named Wind. Several entities of the forest seemed to take interest in him for a good while, as he rode on, they flew about him and his horse, great puffs of warm air came out of his horse's nostrils. There was a Wayland not

too far from his ride, but he was fixed on a certain quest, there were things that had to be done.

The Land of Ujesa was filled with the spirit of magic, throughout the Forest of Emit, most magical creatures lived and played and did what most would do, it was a special place. Far off in the distance, up on a giant hill was the Castle Ragon, it had been there for over three hundred years, and in all that time, inhabited by the royal family of Gaytos. Now the royal family was split up into two sides, those who loved the creatures of the forest, and those who feared and hated the creatures of Emit. As a result, there were times of great wealth and happiness, and then there were times of great sadness, for often in the past, the royal family had waged war against the magical creatures of the forest.

In those days, they were dark times, and most of the creatures were forced into magic coves of existence, because they feared for their lives, hunters would come into the forest, with the then ruler's blessing, seeking to hunt down any and all that they could find, killing the entities of the forest when they could. They would send in the Hell Dogs, massive creatures, some said that these animals were actual breeds from a dark and awful place, they came from deep within the pits of Lajkkan. These creatures were evil and smelled bad, teeth long and fang like, they were reported to have brains the size of an ant, but to Tar-lik's thinking, an ant was smarter.

The three moons rose over the marshlands, casting their eerie light upon the wetlands, strange bird like creatures could often be seen flying in the moon light, they fly a dance of magical tempting, it was said that if a man and a woman were caught out in the marshlands when these strange birds were flying their dance, that a spell of lust and passion would come over them and that they would begin to engage in all manner of lustful and sexual approaches with each other.

But tonight was a different night, the dragons were out to play, and they flew through the darkness which was accented by the moon light, there was an eerie glow off the wet marsh, it seemed to cast a spell of dreamlike consciousness, all those who were caught up in their spell seemed to be drawn to the mating dance of the flying dragons, for it was time that they came out, and did their flying. Dragons were strange, in that they could only mate while in flight, perhaps that was why there were so few of them, imagine having to engage in such matters while in flight, Tar-lik let those thoughts fill his mind while his body fought off the cold and chile of the wetlands.

A few magical creatures that were flying about him, even though he was riding hard, seemed to call out to him, he heard his name being called, as if to distract him, perhaps to make him fall, or just to acknowledge that they knew it was him, he could not tell. That was the problem with the magical folk of the forest, often they were kind and very wonderful, offering help to children who had wondered too far and had gotten lost in the forest, but often there were those who liked mischief, and would do things to hurt or mislead the normal folks. It was those who gain the greater reputation, when things were bad at the castle, they were used as an excuse for the hunting of the magical entities of the forest. Tar-lik cared only to get home to his cabin, and find the warm embrace of his loving wife, Alaia, to rest finally in her warm bosom.

The window was slightly fogged but Vargas could see through it enough to tell that there was something out there, some semi-formless figure, floating about just outside the facility window. They were a long way from home, in fact, if not for the invention of the lightning impulse

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engine, they would still be on their way, but the journey was made possible with the lightning engine, the idea had come to a scientist named Dr. Everet T. Pystrum, to go back to the old ways of thinking, when it came to space travel. It was pretty obvious when the history of science looked back

at the concept, there was really only one thing in nature that could benefit the space program so widely, and lightning was a natural occurring phenomenon in nature, but the only thing powerful enough to propel a space craft at light speed.

By generating artificial lightning at the tail end of the craft, the laws of cause and effect played quite well, the massive discharge of lightning out the back of the craft, pushed the ship forward. The craft was populated with robots of all sorts, specialized and general, they were mostly for the time when the craft got to where they were going. These machines, under the supervision of two humans, in this case, Vargas and Isabelle, would set up the facility, using the space craft as basic building material, but also it was suppose to make use of the natural environment, in order to extend the concept beyond the basic materials that they came with. In this case, there was only ice. After having done extensive scans of the twenty-nine some odd planets in the solar system, it was determined that this big ice planet, was best suited for colonization.

Did it look like Earth Prime, no, not unless you considered only Earth's poles, was there plenty of water, the ice and snow on the planet was scanned and found to be hundreds of miles deep. The planet was thirty times the size of Earth Prime, the massive amounts of snow accounted for most of it, and there was a solid land component to the planet, but it was closer to the size of Mars in that respect. The atmosphere was thick, a little thicker than Earth Prime, but the gravity was somewhat equal to the gravity of Earth Prime, even though the planet was considerably larger than it.

So, the robot machines, when the craft finally landed after doing extensive surveys of all the planets in the system, got to work, they used the ice, which was all around, to build the infrastructures that were going to be needed, for the first of the colonist, who were in this case, Vargas and Isabelle, but more were due to come. They had the task of building a transdoor link which would connect this planet, to Earth Prime, crossing vast distances and time. Once the robots finished building the transdoor, from components that had been brought with them, then Vargas and Isabelle were expected to crossover, walk through the triangle shaped machine, which worked on the principle of black-gravity. They would walk back through time and space, exiting out of the transdoor back on Earth, hours after their flight had left. This transdoor link, was how mankind would colonize the stars.

Though you make you habitation amongst the stars, I shall gather you back, Earth was always suppose to be the home of mankind, but the very nature of people, is to explore, to seek out, find new ways and wonders, this was what people did. The risk of sending hundreds of souls to colonize was minimized, a highly trained couple, scores of robot machines, they ventured forth into the blackness of space. But if all went well, and a planet was found, then mankind could crossover, and come through the triangle shaped transdoor, so that what might have taken hundreds of years, or even thousands, once the transdoor was completed, the original colonist could walk through both time and space, back to a moment in time, just after they left.

Aberus sat back under the shade along with his girlfriend Valana, they were now on their seventh day of their vacation. They were kicking back resting and unwinding, letting the stresses of the mega-city blues wash off their shoulders and their minds. The rules were simple, no communication with the fast paced world for a blissful seven day vacation, but tomorrow they would

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have to leave. The robot waiter came over and enquired as to their needs, after having topped off their drinks, some strange drinks with swirling colors streaking through it, obviously meant to please the eyes as well as the mind and senses, the two relaxed and watched the tropical ocean course in

and out, gently, the rhythm pulsing like an expensive made clock, there was something hypnotic about the whole thing.

They had a wonderful time on Plexux, it was a tiny planet, in a small star system that had a majority of its planets that were habitable to humans, the system only had five planets and four of them were perfect for human colonization and just right for vacationing. Each one offered a different experience, one was a desert paradise with all the amenities, several were just right for a forest like vacation with all sorts of wild animals both strange and familiar. For the most part, mankind, when they colonized these planets, brought forth animals and the like, the very act meant to familiarize the ecosystem with its new human inhabitants. Though in the past, some planets in other systems had trouble adapting to foreign animals and such being introduced into an already thriving ecosystem, even to the point of wreaking some very potential planet's environment, after time, the science of animal terra-forming, which was a less aggressive form of changing a planet to suit mankind's needs, had advanced greatly.

Was there a problem with introducing animals and smaller organicisms into an already thriving ecosystem without very drastic changes, some good but mostly, in fact, almost always bad consequences. It wasn't that science hadn't learned from mistakes made on Earth Prime and other planets that had been ecoengineered to suit man's whims, it was the fact that most expositions were funded by huge super corporations, and though the government played a vital role in space colonization, over the centuries, less and less fell on the shoulders of the government and more and more became privatized.

Could this had been foreseen, yes it was, way back in the day, when venturing out in to the blackness, as those in the know liked to call it, was so expensive and dangerous, most companies that were involved in aspects of space travel, couldn't find proper insurance, but all that changed. More and more companies merged with a diverse base, and what happened was that the corporation that wanted to explore and more often exploit a newly found planet or other heavenly body, owned the insurance company that was to insure the expedition. Was it an oxymoron to have the company that was funding the expedition also the one that insured the thing, well yeah, dah!

But things had to be looked at from a global perspective, if mankind hadn't found a way of reaching out to the stars, world population on the planet Earth would have reached a critical mass. What did that mean to the future of the human race, well, though it was postulated in many theories as to why other species on Earth rose and thrived, and then disappeared, as if over night, it became abundantly clear, that all planets that harbor complex life, that wasn't to say mammals and such, for microorganisms can be very complex, face it, large organisms are just a compilation of smaller organisms, so complexity really becomes a relative term, and does not always apply to the so called larger and more evolved creatures. Terra-forming was not an exact science, no, not by a long shot, it was more of an art, that sometimes rendered paradise.

The whiteness of the snow was all about him as he struggled to finish connecting the power couplet, he was about a mile from the compound that had been painfully assembled in the months that had passed since he and Isabelle had arrived on the planet. Most of the work was done by specialized robots that had change of the construction and assembly of the compound and the vital equipment that was need to support life. The building of the transdoor was high on the list of things

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to do, because in doing so, it most assured the establishment of a colony on the planet.

In the past, it was left up to the original explorers to name the planet or moon that they came to colonize, and this case was no different, but Vargas and Isabelle had been struggling on a good

name for the planet. For Isabelle it was hard to come up with something appropriate, largely due to the fact that the entire planet was covered with snow. This was a problem for her, she kept coming back to the point that she was against colonizing on the planet, in her humble opinion, it was too cold to properly support human life . . .

Life? Was there something out there? Just beyond the mind's ability to properly perceive, what was that they had been seeing out of the window? A wispy figure just off their ability to fully comprehend, yet they were not alone, for while Isabelle had seen several of them at once and Vargas seemed to have one in particular that haunted him, the robots had also reported sensing something out there, while they worked. Like they were being watched, but never bothered with, so often hauntings like this involved tampering with the machinery, but for the most part, whatever these things were, a little more than their imagination perhaps, they didn't seem interested in destroying any of their projects.

Vargas was just finishing up on the work he was doing, they had calculated that they could work out in the exposed environment for an hour while wearing their environmental suits, which kept them very warm, even though the cold was very cold. Vargas had in his mind that the planet might one day become a giant resort, with all sorts of winter sports, it seemed most suited for this. Other colonists could come from all over the Dynasty, the colonized planets, and play and vacation here. It was his dream and goal and that was what he was putting in his report. However, none of that was going to happen, unless they were able to get the transdoor up and working properly.

They had been having problems with several key components, and he was out today to oversee the project, he had watched while the robots went about doing their various jobs, did he have to be there out in the cold, no! The machines were very capable of performing their assigned task, but he was hands on whenever he could be, at least in a supervisory capacity. Isabelle had been monitoring everything from within the safety and warmth of the compound, had been urging him to come on back inside, he'd been out for awhile, she was worried, slightly frightened for some reason that she couldn't explain to herself.

Then it happened, for some reason part of the apparatus gave way and came crashing down on Vargas. The lights in the control room began to flash a warning and emergency, Isabelle's fear had become true. She desperately tried to make contact with her husband, dispatching robots from other duties to help Vargas. What was that wisped across the screen? Something. Those things again, not now, she didn't have time for this, had they attacked her husband, knowing the difference between him and the robots that routinely worked out in the harsh environment? She suited up and quickly started out taking one trusted robot with her but when she got to the outer part of the compound exit, she was shocked even more, there was her husband, lying on the cold snow, and hovering above him, the apparition . . .

The night was hot and the lovely maid danced the Hamniphho, a dance that was hot and full of hidden sexual gestures. The crowd in the open bar were mostly tourists with a small contingent of the locals, they were trying to hustle the tourists, as do most locals in most ports of call. The music was just a little too loud and the dark spots within the bar were just a little too dark, but that was how they all liked it. If you looked really hard, you might find several shifty dealings going on, but no one seemed to care, they were all there to have fun, enjoy themselves, it was a great night for mischief.

Away from there, on the other side of the village, the atmosphere was very different, Cref-lei was a gun dealer, and he was in the middle of doing business with some surly folks from off world,

they were interested in starting a revolution somewhere, or was it the current revolution that they were trying to resupply? People were always interest in weapons, and the newest weapons seemed to garner the top price. Cref-lei was a big guy, and there was something about him that caused most people to notice him, it wasn't that he had anything outstanding about him, in nature or speech, it was just that he commanded attention. This was something that he had crafted over the years, it was his signature presence, his way of doing business.

The Dynasty was very complicated and the planets that were under the control of the Dynasty didn't always agree with policy but those that did manage to find common ground, were always pushing the envelope of political patience. Most planets just went along with everything that was going on, they didn't want to incur the wrath of the Dynasty, so they paid their taxes and did whatever servitude was levied against them and went on with their lives. These planets didn't need the weapons that Cref-lei was selling, no they were too complacent. Then there were those on the outskirts of the Dynasty, they were the ones always aching for a fight, or if not a full out revolution, something in between, a dirty little revolution that was just an annoyance, not enough to send a full military command to utterly squash them in their tracks, and not enough for the Dynasty to completely ignore them either.

So, it was dirty little planets like that, Cref-lei loved to deal with, were the people he came in contact with dangerous, well of course, did they try anything with him, not very often, he had a way about him, a well crafted way. Start off first with an elaborate introduction, get to know the crazies that he was dealing with, did they really have the money that was needed to do business, this was probably the most important thing of all, do you have the funds to buy what I got? Then came the safety issues, but this was on many levels, there was the safety of Cref-lei, first and foremost, then just as important was the product, he couldn't let the nut cases get hold of the product before he got his, more elaborate planning and staging. After that, well the obvious, local and imperial law enforcement, one couldn't have the Dynasty coming in and spoiling all the fun, now could one? So, Cref-lei dealt with people very gingerly at first, getting to know them, these were the type of people that were below the radar, they didn't have identification chips implanted in them, and those that did, the chips were most always stolen, from some poor dead guy, the rebels loved to kill innocent tourist if they managed to stray too far, get the identification chips, sell them on the black market, you'd be surprised at who was in the market for a new identity. Oh, you might think that the lowest of the low and the most horrible scoundrels were the ones looking for stolen I.D.-chips, no, there were business people who had gotten in trouble and needed to change their identification, house wives and lawyers and Indian chiefs, yeah, people from all walks of life, there was no way to profile that lot. One day you are mister and misses upright, then a few failures and a few wrong moves, and there you were . . .

The biggest question was why did mankind feel the need to explore the blackness, what was out there that drew the species into what was obviously a very perilous place? Was it the sense that we need to know what was there, was it the timing of the times, the blackness was there and we wanted to know what was its secrets, there was a known fact that while most exploration was started by the prevailing governments, it was the private sector, the greed and the wonting, as ugly as it sounded, those are the things that fueled the dreamers dreams, looking for gold and diamonds and

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the ultimate power source.

Whatever were the real reasons for exploring where one probably should not go, history taught mankind well, that when the people could not be persuaded to fund the expedition on the pure



recommendations of the need to know what was out there, explorers quickly and not being entirely stupid, came up with the next best thing, treasure. Now when they had whomever's attention that they needed, they lay out their plan, setting the possibilities, perhaps expanding on the claims or embellishing on the facts, it was what men and women of the exploratory nature did. Spin the tale and add some flash to the truth, make the eyes of little boys and girls widen and make the minds of greedy corporations salivate, with the hope of things to come, what maybe or could be, just around the next corner.

Isabelle sat next to her fallen husband, she reflected on what might have been and it was too horrible for her to imagine, what if he had died? There she was, on a world so far away that it took centuries just to get to and then, with the aid of machines as smart of humans, but stronger and more hardy than any man or woman, to build and construct according to preplanned programs and operations, the first settlement on the new planet, what folly had she allowed her and her husband to be overcome by? Isabelle was a beautiful woman. She was as intelligent as she was beautiful and as resourceful as she was intelligent, still she found herself, sitting across from the sick bed of the first of the fallen on this world that they had decided to land on and make their claim. But perhaps all of that was premature, she really hadn't wanted to choose this planet to colonize, she was against it, but the master computer which was as intelligent and wise as any human, chose this planet for whatever reasons it had, but the real blow came when she and it were in the heat of enlightened discussion, Vargas picked a side and it wasn't her's. Well, she was angry to say the least, maybe a little more than just angry, pissed off probably fit the bill.

Just look at the facts, she had two PhDs, one in astrogeology and another in planetary physics, was she brilliant, yes! But that wasn't the real question to be asking now, no, it wasn't even the real question to be asking at all, because she had managed to fall in love with this man, this poor hapless soul before her. The robotic medical machines had managed to surgically repair his body, so why wasn't he getting better? Her mind kept wandering back to memories of when they had first met, she was a professor at Harvard and he was a graduate student, one of the most passionate towards the subjects that she had ever had the privilege to meet. There was something in his voice and in his eyes, a thirst to know and a will towards adventure, that will would enrapture her heart and she'd follow him to the stars.

But her beloved was dying now. And there seemed to be nothing that she could do about it, what were the limits to science and technology? She had a heated argument with the master computer, there had to be something that they had overlooked, damn those machines! Why hadn't she insisted that if he were to have her love that they remain on a civilized world, safe and sound? Why? Because she loved him so deeply and so much and he loved her even greater, they were of the same soul and spirit. And she wept, as her tears poured over his face, she was inconsolable.

The hallowed chambers of the Grand Parliament which had partial responsibility of the policies that went forth throughout all the civilized Dynasty, seemed to shimmer with political energy. The way the government was set up, there was a King and Queen, but this was not in the traditional sense. While their titles seemed to suggest a traditional monarchy, it was more of a position than a continuation of the traditional. The King and Queen were voted into office by the elected officials who were chosen from each planet that was a member of the Dynasty. Now, there

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were offshoots of the Dynasty, those planets that were in league with the Dynasty, they were members of the League of Worlds or the League of Planets. Once long ago the Dynasty went as the United Planets, there were ten active today, one planet was and one was yet to come.

Caldorph seemed to be almost foaming at the mouth as he railed against one of the members of the senate, Dr. Space who was part of the High Council, a lesser body that was under the Parliament of Planets. The way that things got done was through presentation of issues and the vote, while the King had one vote and the Queen had one vote and then there were the Governing Machines, each of the ten ruling planets had a governing machine, and all the planets in the civilized Dynasty had extensions of the governing machines on their respected planet, the link allowed for issues to be directly considered by the ten Grand Governing Machines, part of the United Planets originally, but now just absorbed into the bigger and more complicated government of the Dynasty.

When an issue managed to make its way to the chambers of the Grand Parliament, after being voted on many times, step by step, though in times of emergency, these procedures could be greatly shortcut, the final decision was made by both the King and Queen of the Dynasty along with a third vote cast by the Governing Machines collectively. So in essence, there were three votes that counted, the King's vote and then the Queen's vote and finally the collective decision of the Governing Machines with all its lesser combined into one vote. This was good enough for the system to work, because each planet wanted some autonomy to rule themselves, yet the collective protection and sharing of technology and wealth was important to the Expansion, which was what it finally came to be called.

The High Council floor was where most issues concerning the state were hashed out, one planet wanting this or that, or issues concerning how much of a tributary a certain planet should pay to the Expansion. In this case Caldorph was arguing against a certain tax that had been levied against all the civilized planets in the Dynasty. His people were angry and the reason was because Caldorph represented a poor planet, Ygsef, a planet on the outskirts of the Dynasty. Most planets on the outskirts didn't feel that they should be made to carry the full burden of taxation, because they were mostly leagued through one of those political bodies, but they fully wanted all of the benefits of being part of the League of Worlds or the League of Planets. And there in rested most of the really good arguments, when they finally reached the High Council on their way to the Grand Parliament. Dr. Space while not totally unsympathetic to the cause that Caldorph was arguing, had a job to do, and that was to put forth the political reasons of the Dynasty. Eventually the King would have one vote and the Queen would have one vote and the collective body of governing machines would cast one vote, if need be. For if the King and Queen agreed, which happened from time to time, then the issue was resolved, two out of three, however, if the King felt one way and the Queen another, then the tie breaker was the vote cast by the Governing Machines. Every ten years according the transdoor time, a new King and Queen were elected by the Grand Parliamentary. There was much pomp and circumstance, celebrations Dynasty wide.

There is an awareness that seems to permeate the consciousness of mankind, a type of knowing that goes beyond mere feeble attempts at learning and teaching, call it a form of hyperlearning or metaintelligence, all generations posses it, but with the advent of higher forms of abstract learning, artificial learning, came the suppression of such knowledge. This wasn't to say that some people didn't retain the ability to access this wealth of innate knowledge, in fact, in some societies it was encouraged and in others, feared and hated. In essence, it was a matter of perspective, a matter of wanting to accept the fact that there were forces greater and beyond the

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purview of our conscious minds. These were secrets known throughout the ages and kept buried deep within the ground of our unconsciousness, buried like the dead, and often lost or forgotten to the collective consciousness of humankind.

Isabelle had tried all that she had been taught and still her beloved lay there in a coma, his life neither improving nor leaving, yet she sensed that it was just a matter of time, and more and more of his functions, that kept him living would have to be substituted by machines. Was this what it was all about? Did she travel all this way with him, only to lose him in the aftermath of the arrival? What kind of folly and what fate made her an utter fool, as she sat across from him, wake up Vargas, wake and tell me that this all, everything that we've been through, is just a dream . . .

But he didn't, or couldn't. His injuries were too great and even with the most advanced technology available, mankind still had their limits. Perhaps the best that could be done was to sit with him and hope and to do the most human of thing, pray. When all else is lost, the most basic and primitive of emotions seemed to flood back into the consciousness, hoping for something that can't be seen, wanting for something not touched by the physical hand, yet reaching and grasping as if it were just a few inches beyond our reach.

What was it about dying that instantly erased the falsehoods of the culture and greatly reinforced the mores and customs of one's own self?

She was deep in thought and didn't notice at first as the wisp entered the infirmary, but the room began to glow with an eerie light, that seemed to emanate from the entity, this planet was obviously inhabited by a race of beings. Were they corporeal? There was no scientific evidence to that, and while robot and human could perceive them at some state of consciousness, for the robots that were with them were advanced enough to ultimately be called self-aware in their programming, the living had trouble accepting the truth. Isabelle began to understand now, maybe it was her deepened state of emotion that triggered the response, but she was open to the possibility, and the wisp seemed to float across the infirmary room towards Vargas. Her first reaction was to try and stop it from further hurting her husband, but there was a quiet communication starting to develop between Isabelle and the wisp. She could hear a small and calm voice speaking to her, telling her to, let me help him . . .

Isabelle watched the medical monitors and while she did not give full quarter, she did not entirely get in the wisp's way. The entity is female? There is something about it that seemed less male and more female, yet, the ghostlike being was less distinctive. Was it an act of love? Had this being fallen in love with her husband, perhaps on his many excursions to the transdoor site, had there been opportunity for some relationship, purely spiritual in nature to have evolved? The wisp slowly began to heal Vargas before Isabelle's eyes. And frankly, all Isabelle wanted was what this female being was doing, would the future colonist come to this planet, she now would name Wisp, and discover a race of beings already living, in the freezing cold, warmer than themselves?

The object which was ancient, it was called the Cringle according to ancient writings that Stacey had deciphered, she was an anthropologist who specialized in ancient human artifacts, the mid-sized object was inside a small room which was designed to contain dangerous objects. Primrose came into the science laboratory along with a few other official looking people.

Primrose said, "What can you tell us about this thing, why does it seem to have some strange powers to influence electrical devices and I've read a report, that it can cause living tissue to be altered or mutated?"

Standing next to Primrose was Matthew, he was chief of security, "The thing that gets me is how can something this old be doing the things that it does, I mean, people long time ago didn't even have electricity or for that matter, they have to use outhouses, no one was sophisticated enough to have created this object."

Stacey smiled just a bit at that last saying, she had a radical theory, "What if this object didn't come from anyplace around here?"

Primrose tried to get a handle on things, "So, it came from some other country other than the one that it was found, it still doesn't answer the question, how do ancient people create such an advanced device?"

Stacey shook her pretty head, "No. I'm not talking about some other country, I'm talking about something totally different . . ."

Primrose stepped back almost instinctively, "I don't like where this is going, if I'd wanted wild theories, I'd called in some half backed professor from the philosophy department."

Matthew said, "You think this object, the Cringle you call it, is alien, as from another planet?"

Stacey nodded but her face was just ever so contorted, "Yeah, I know it sounds crazy, but, if you look at technology, how it seems to take miraculous leaps every so many decades, it would seem to suggest that we are being influenced by thoughts and ideas way beyond our human capability. I mean, just look at the long and vast amount of time that mankind, when left relatively alone, did not advance beyond the horse and wagon, then, suddenly, we began to crawl out of the so called Dark Ages of science and technology, what are the real secrets, that no one is telling us about alien influence?"

Primrose voiced, "So you are saying that this thing maybe alien, from some other planet, but the problem with that is, no other planet in our solar system is inhabitable."

Stacey postulated, "What if the culture, alien culture, had advanced ways of living on planets that were hostile to life as we know it. Just like the base that is being built on the moon, in an alien environment, people have to use life-support and all sorts of innovative techniques . . ."

Matthew said, "Your point is, doctor?"

Stacey plain old flat out stated, "What if we were not the first ones to colonize this solar system?"

Primrose stated, "People were created here on Earth! We were not colonized!"

The Fahag-mosha was a serious terrorist group that had managed to reap hell on most civilized nations, it was headed up by Dogozan whom some said was a military genius, and others

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declared that he was a political disaster, because most of the nations that he now sought to terrorize were at one time friendly to him and his cause. The problem with Dogozan was that from time to time he picked up new causes, political alliances with people that the more powerful nations did not

want him to side with. None of this would matter if Dogozan was just another piss-ant in the vast desert of insignificant political wannabe, but he wasn't, he was well educated from a very good college, and had connections all over the world, dealing in arms, and there rested the true dilemma, what to do with a western educated terrorist that could be useful in one degree and totally the opposite in the other.

The discovery of the ancient device was sure to shift the balance of power in the natural scheme of things, the Cringle was too powerful and too misunderstood for just one nation to have complete control of it, but there was the problem, what nation had the right to control the Cringle, and its seemingly endless power and applications, as a power source, the device was beyond cold fusion, drawing its power from beyond normal space and time, if the thing could be backwards engineered, without that process destroying the device altogether, then larger ones and smaller ones could be developed to meet the needs of the various applications, it would effectively put an end to dependence on foreign oil and nuclear power, which would become a thing of the past. With the Cringle, there could be one in each home, powering everything from that one small source, doing away with the need to have greedy and inefficient power companies, who charged too much and gave too little in return.

A lot of inventions that could help people on a personal level, devices like artificial arms and legs and complex artificial organs, which until now, were not feasible because of the amount of continuous and long lasting power that they needed, portable power, the Cringle had very serious applications in those fields, so in a word, the battery companies, those people who never seemed to provide a significant advancement in storage technology, would soon be out of business, and the Cringle would take the battery's place in the market for a portable power supply that could run just about anything.

So, some crazy organization like Fahag-mosha, Dogozan, getting hold of the plans to build a Cringle was more devastating than those same crazies getting hold a nuclear bomb or other weaponized substances or devices. Was there a price to pay for scientific discovery, hell yes, and mankind had been paying the price, ever since Eve decided to disobey God and do the unthinkable, commit suicide on an unprecedented scale, an action which effectively killed the entire human race, but that was the price for scientific discovery, or in Eve's case, finding out first hand just what death really was about while having her eyes opened. It was postulated that before the two first human beings fell from perfection, they were able to exist in a realm of perfect harmony with their conscious and subconsciousness, exercising will over their perceptions, what we call dreaming is no more than the disconnected ability now long lost, to exist on a higher level of life.

In the perfect models of people, we all would have lived through our complete imaginations, while our dream-consciousness was willfully controlled by our minds, our so called reality, our conscious actions were relegated to the unconscious, enabling us to manipulate and ambulate through a world, while perceiving that world as beautifully was our own individual minds and imaginations wanted to. It was the poisoning of the genetic code that ended all that.

Stacey walked across the room, she'd just finished taking a shower, her nude body was semi-clothed with a damp towel, "Isn't it against some regulation or something, the two of us being lovers?"

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Matthew got up off the bed and took her into his arms and kissed her, "I'm not sure what regulations we are breaking, but I'm not sure that I care at the very moment."

Stacey ran her hands across his muscular body, her firm breast pushing up against his chest,

“You know, Dogozan, wouldn’t hesitate to use something like this against us, it shows weakness, if the enemy knows who you are in love with all they have to do is threaten your lover . . .”

Speaking from a military point of view Matthew said, “Or worse, sometimes it seems better to just be alone, without having someone to care about or to be cared for . . .”

Stacey kissed him again then went to the kitchen, “Are you hungry, I am?”

Matthew motioned for her to pass him a beer and he settled down in the adjoining livingroom, “You know, this Cringle thing, I was reading the reports that were done on it out at Area 51 . . .”

Stacey looked up from the cooking she had started, “I thought that those reports were classified?”

Matthew nodded as he sipped his beer, “Yeah, they are, but you and me, we have a need to know, anyway, that is what Primrose told me, just before he handed me the files. Seems that some of the scientist that are working on the Cringle device have some strange theories . . .”

Stacey walked around the corner for a moment, “I’ve read some of those reports, but from a different source, they think that the device can reach into deep subspace and channel parallel quantum events.”

Matthew clicked the clicker for the audioimage, a sports game was on, “Why is it than just when I think that I have something that is new, you manage to be one step ahead?”

Stacey smiled and went back to her cooking, “It’s my job to know what we are dealing with, just like it is your job to do the dangerous military thing, when needed. Anyway, one of the more far out theories seems to suggest that the Cringle, while a unique power source, also might have a more primary purpose, the design of the machine is so complicated that even in reverse engineering the thing, all sorts of unexpected applications keep cropping up, but this application is too dangerous to even comprehend.”

Matthew got up and stood in the doorway briefly, he was wearing his boxer briefs, “One thing I hate is when the science people start holding back from the military people, what does this thing really do? I’m not talking about the power source applications for civilian use, you obviously have access to classified information that I’m just coming up to speed on.”

Stacey seemed concerned all of a sudden, “The Cringle can alternate quantum realities, but only once, if the settings are adjusted just right, a person touching the device can alter their own reality.”

Matthew said, “You mean like, making a wish and it comes true, sort of thing?”

Stacey nodded and shook her head, “Yes and no, it’s actually infinitely more complicated than that, as to how the device accomplishes the task, but from a layman’s point of view, yeah, but it only works once with any person . . .”

Matthew said, “So, you only get one wish instead of three, like with a genie.”

Stacey got serious, “The Cringle is very dangerous, in the wrong hands.”

There was a terrible battle as Matthew and his fellow soldiers engaged Dogozan’s mercenaries. As the shooting raged on Matthew’s soldiers began to engage mutant soldiers that Dogozan had managed to conger up by using a partly assembled Cringle of his own design. Stacey was deep underground in a special laboratory designed to contain the Cringle that they had

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discovered, along with the reverse-engineered blueprints to create the evil device, which the military had oversight. It was an ugly engagement with lots of lives lost on both sides but in the end Matthew’s solders prevailed, and in a stunning gesture he managed to rescue Stacey from the

underground laboratory.

In another top secret facility with the Cringle having been moved after the battle with Dogozan's soldiers, Primrose came into the room, "I'm glad to see that the two of you managed to stay alive."

Matthew said, "Yes, well, I can't say the same for a lot of my soldiers and I'm glad that we managed to suppress Dogozan's soldiers."

Stacey asked, "Why was Dogozan so hell bent on breaking into the facility in the first place? I mean, it is obvious that he has the Cringle technology, that is why we saw all of those mutant soldiers of his."

Primrose cleared his throat, "Yes, I read your reports and viewed the available video-feeds from the laboratory, our scientist are examining the information gathered even as we speak."

Stacey uttered, "That is what you want to make, isn't it, mutant monster soldiers like the ones that Dogozan sent after us. All the funding and all the access to research and development, all for a new way to make a better killer for the military."

Matthew said, "Wait a minute, Stacey . . ."

Stacey was very adamant, "No, I almost got killed down there, and I think I deserve the whole truth, not some watered down version that has the fingerprints of political spin."

Primrose took a seat behind a grand desk, "No, she is right, you both deserve to know just what it is that we are all up against. As was already discovered and revealed, the Cringle is a powerful energy source, if science can accurately reverse engineer the machine, the world would have discovered an unlimited power supply, for both large scale and small scale practical use . . ."

Stacey said, "But like with all discoveries, the people making the discoveries and with good intentions are overshadowed by and ugly truth . . ."

Primrose interjected, "Yes, you are absolutely correct, Stacey, and Matthew, you might as well be told as a military man, it was all on a need to know, you understand. But most of it you have already been briefed on. Here are some extra information that you can review, all classified of course," he handed them disks with the information on it.

Stacey spoke, "So the military applications of the Cringle are actually the most prominent aspect of the device."

Primrose nodded, "Some of our researchers think that the Cringle was responsible for the Dark Ages. It has been postulated that mankind might have reached a state of technology far beyond our own technology today, only to sink into a dismal pit of darkness. There are also some suggestions that the dinosaurs were actually genetically engineered creatures designed as part of an alien terra-forming of the planet Earth."

Stacey postulated, "That would explain why they all died off suddenly, after they had done their part in helping to change the environment, they might have been genetically programmed to die off, become extinct, their presence not needed anymore."

If I were a doorkeeper I'd let you in  
I'd never change the locks to my heart  
I'd never hide my face when I saw you  
If I were a doorkeeper you'd be my friend

If I were a doorkeeper there'd be no pain  
The shadows which cross the grass in silence  
Would never cast their gloom of chalice  
If I were a doorkeeper there'd be only rain

If I were a doorkeeper the world is yours  
And there would be time for all and no time  
For the sorrows of our thoughts of reason  
If I were a doorkeeper I'd unburden chores

If I were a doorkeeper as wise as a mouse  
There would be saints and angels calling  
You to a new and precious elucidation  
If I were a doorkeeper in God's holy house

#### A Warrior's Letter

I asked the ancient times gone by,  
Sages of a warrior's letter to the king;  
From the cold I prayed to Jesus Christ,  
Time was as a lake that went cold deep;  
I ask God, remember me my soul to keep.

#### Angels in the Wind

And oft the thought of God is grand,  
How He created all the universe in hand;  
For well the children of God do sing,  
With the voice of angels in the wind;  
And the holy faith of Christ to come.

#### Because on Christmas

Because Jesus is so wonderful;  
The rainbow bows to his gracious love,

I hear the wind as it bellows the same,  
And the Father of Christ smiles like bright sunshine;  
Because on Christmas Day God gave to mankind.



### Bells of Winter

More dear to God our Lord,  
It is the bells of Winter calling,  
That sound of salvation so grand  
The pleasant miracles of Jesus Christ  
Of the hope that only God brings.

### Beloved Jesus

Breath of God is in us all;  
The open fields of Heaven call,  
Wind-borne our souls take flight,  
Sadder is our body in the mercy;  
Beloved Jesus Christ is with us.

### Chains of Doubt

Through the ages of time and sorrow,  
Since God has lifted up our fears and cares;  
They are blast out of Heaven going down,  
Yet lives Jesus Christ in our hearts and souls;  
And who shall pray to the Lord for the harvest,  
That the blood of Christ be made to us a salvation;  
Which clothes us in white robes of forgiveness,  
And frees our souls from chains of doubt and sin.

### Christ Healed

Jesus Christ healed all that believed in Him  
In mourning I know the solemn great transaction  
For thou mercy truth daily cares ample sky to bless  
For grace the labors which flowed when gathering  
Wounded love a conflict is beyond a doubt thine alone  
And treasures pitying aid who conquered raptures all  
In the Lord Jesus Christ has love come like sweet honey

### Christ in Heart

She marries the cross that she must bear!

One of the faithful souls very best matches,  
Both are of Christ in heart content;  
She's got the faith of a hundred saints,

God blesses her name and work most divine.

#### Christ in Love

And our faith in God is served in truth;  
In the melted tales of dreams most high,  
To the sometimes singing of angels,  
To whom they are but to us a silent crown;  
Gave full praise to Jesus Christ in love.

#### Christ Shows Us

To ponder on the love that Jesus Christ shows us dear  
My burden while canopied holy men more rebukes  
Not anything the nations splendor shines Latin hymns  
Holy Ghost bring us a mighty glittering in more beautifully  
Exaltation trampling trellised bowers kneeling in world retreat  
Organ sounds the sea light whose morning silent its majesty  
In God's Almighty hands our souls do find the rest of Christ

#### Christ was Coming

Jesus Christ was coming and strong,  
Yet I state but God's truth.  
And we found on his nails, which were taper  
What is frequent in faith; that wax.  
Which is why I embark,  
And my song is plain,  
That for ways that are shadows,  
And for gifts that are vain,  
The heathen heart is peculiar  
Which the same God has changed

#### Christ's Resurrection

Of this is God's love so true that we are saved  
There rising of honest allotments and trembling hands  
Pity's gathering the storm sorely sighed nor swooned  
Toilsome road burden on lay sleeping went wandering  
Your soul kindly welcome aching heart had pierced  
Was there race away shame and with handfuls

The glory of Jesus Christ's resurrection salvation bound

#### Christ's Salvation

My life my rock return to me Christ's salvation  
It's first time's flight perpetual shade beauty fading  
Vain delight of greatness and laughs coming yet  
The comforts fall faint loud passion slow falling  
Removes the grave ignorance that sense higher ranks  
Seasons keep no epilogue evening ends short joys  
For nothing compares to Jesus Christ's holy love

#### Christmas

I can see the glittering of the white snow;  
And the cold which God has blessed me to feel,  
Not wishing upon a star but in prayer forever,  
In Holy Heaven asking for a Christmas above;  
Yet expecting Jesus Christ in glittering love.

#### Come Lasting Peace

Than in God's hands come lasting peace;  
Freely we shall partake of the Holy Spirit  
As over these walls of distant mountains  
Our glorious night shall become like the day,  
And we hear Jesus Christ calling to us.

#### Current of Faith

On the holiness of God shifting  
Current of faith rest in quiet muse of heart;  
Till at length the awareness of Christ is born,  
They, are like the new sun coming  
A strong and quiet spirit in God's renown

#### Divine Son

In the Love of Jesus Christ is peace abound  
Coming home nature's ancient bounteous mother  
Attempting something the dream evening sun  
From morn noiseless hidden crisp and heavenly mintage  
Vain rebelling earthly goods work with every field  
And frost goes on they love task begin these gifts

For God is love above us all in beauty of his Divine Son

#### Each Great Truth

To walk together with God in hand,  
And pray to the Lord for salvation,  
While each great truth of God's abounds,  
Old ways are parted for loving friends,  
And the hope of a new day in Christ.

#### Electric Love

I pray to God Almighty His most electric Love and Grace  
And lay invisible faltering footsteps towards heaven  
Humble worshiper in music and prayer untold centuries  
Yet renewed as blooms whose immovable lofty vault  
Supplication for an emanation has graced fair ranks  
Human pomp the hoary solitude retire my heart visible token  
Of the profound Love God blesses us with in Jesus Christ

#### Emotions of Faith

Lonely and sweet is the heart that weeps;  
For the wilderness of mankind is not far,  
Our bare souls stand on the edge of time,  
The emotions of faith in Jesus Christ reign;  
As the graceful words of God do heal us all.

#### Essence of Christ

And which with our faith we cheer;  
On the wings of angels we sing to God,  
When of happy times we rejoice in Christ;  
Those days of sorrow now gone by,  
Came yet the essence of Christ astonished

#### Friends Matter

The day, of the Lord and the hour of salvation of sunshine,  
All things in Christ are placed in God's mercy,  
And the Lord who was our hope and destiny  
And between the angels do we stand in hope and light;  
What time is there to give for friends matter the more.

#### Gallant Soul

The gallant soul exhausted fell;

The impatient spirit of love lost,  
To the vain and good heart of labors;  
Stretched out God's hands to rise,  
Then, touched by Jesus Christ.

#### Given in Praise

Its tale is of salvation tells.  
Thus faith in God grows and wakes,  
The truth in spirit flies  
Is indeed of hearts given in praise,  
To show God's love still lives.

#### Glory to Jesus

Tear blazing returning flock the cry of Gideon  
Trumpets sleep the sound in twilight changing  
God's Almighty love heals our hearts whole  
Stretched bravely midnight came intelligence  
Avenge with victory glory to Jesus Christ Almighty.

#### God by the River

Are Spring brought in God's light hale,  
But to behind Jesus Christ a perfection gotten:  
The children praising God by the river,  
And left poor no more the faithful rule.  
Now, what is this a song I hear,  
The likes of angels and the Christ so near;  
Whence to the cup of salvation inclined,  
Or rainbows run in tandem sight,  
Think, oh Lord I faint no more,  
Remember God's Salvation in humbleness.

#### God Cares

Because God cares for us so wonderfully and sweet  
Arise and hope a generous friend the breeze but undismayed  
The muse hearts within my bleeding deeds sublime  
Bright eye to rank low murmuring not unknown all remains  
To live on high no legend kings in the ashes despot sway

And shrill trumpet's blast in curls could quell their tomb  
For Jesus Christ did die and resurrect for our sins

### God Free Me

Let my faith in God free me!  
Oh spirit thy love of Christ be not too blue  
Hath searched the skies and been stung in grief  
This mercy of the Lord does heal the sadness  
Thy grace oh Lord brings me happiness.

### God Hears Our Crying

The southern skies diffused the sight so dazzling.  
Even sadness of heart could not amuse the spirit;  
And if by prayer God hears our crying song intervene,  
And down our faithful cheeks we seek pity cold,  
A sigh is comforted in Christ's hands so sweet.

### God in Motion

One stone is placed and the Kingdom starts,  
Could it be the glory of God in motion;  
Began the Lord to command we love our neighbor  
To place the stone which build so fast in sand;  
Pulled up our hearts above the earth to Heaven.

### God of My Youth

Oh God of my youth how wonderful are your miracles  
Oft where of lilies as calmly strength returns so bright  
But bespeak and then flaxen lilies thronging shadows  
The spirit challenge me engraving there and garlands  
Purest alabaster unhappy stature to endure my lip  
A bank among the cloud the sunny light as little sleep so  
For I humble myself before Lord Jesus Christ in peace

### God's Deliverance

In the deep Spirit of God's love;  
The grace of that gift is with us all,  
Never leaving us even in great trouble,  
And the night becomes day for us all;  
Drifting ever closer to God's deliverance.

### God's Eden Song

Send the humble colt so the Lord might ride;

He's coming the children yelled with hope inside,  
My eyes have seen God's mercy in living so long,  
To witness God's hand in troubles He's strong;  
The dry wilderness turned into God's Eden song.

#### God's Hands

For the mercy of God's hands do unite us in Jesus Christ  
The labors fountain fly of God riches healing wounded love  
Soar to no respite cleanse me the poise the whole and waiting  
Human pain heavenly wisdom once betrayed every barrier  
Within and whose blood is beyond my tears its guilt of ages  
Allays my welcome pardon Lamb of Heavenly wisdom wash me  
With your Holy Tears of forgiveness and I shall be healed forever

#### God's Holy Way

With noise of rivers the time went;  
Sandals walking across the wet sand,  
Over God's land did the quest take,  
For faint of heart did the people look up;  
The night into day is God's holy way.

#### God's Immortal Beauty

See the truth in God's holy mercy in triumph,  
And the spirit of the Lord in Eden as it bloom!  
On the cheek of angels are smiles or roses kissed  
Becoming,  
And God's immortal beauty awakes in us anew

#### God's Nature

Speak your heart about love of Christ Jesus;  
My hope is placed in God's love for us all,  
Lives are confessed in God's nature around,  
The angels sing a new song of peace and hope;  
Shedding the pass of earthly ways for salvation

#### God's Pasture

When those places of hope shine.

But virtue strives in Heaven's door;  
What reward of faith but salvation's virtue,  
That merit toil on God's pasture toil,  
The hills of tomorrow bring us peace.

#### God's Wisdom

A wonderful compassion has God Jesus Christ;  
And the hopeful love of the Creator is seen in us,  
Are we removed from trouble without God's love,  
Then in shadows of forgiveness are we found;  
The healing of God's wisdom is what abounds.

#### Graces of God

Till the echo of the beating heart of Christ  
And on the cross our hope does rest his way,  
To join the spirit of God in faith and hope;  
Yet are the graces of God so strong in praise,  
So wondrous are the mercies of his grace.

#### Heart of God

The heart of God is full of love most unruffled;  
Mingling souls vessels's unconscious through waters deep,  
Faintest undisturbed hopes watch that tired limbs repose,  
Loved by Jesus Christ wild flock view charms mutters;  
Upon bright spheres of silence so still waking dreams toil.

#### Heaven's Loveliness

In days of splendid faith.  
When Heaven's loveliness and light shine  
We feel God's grace,  
And the Lord does bear indeed life's burdens,  
That we may find the way.

#### Heavens that Slumber

In all the methods at God's command,



When art is seen in the display of life;  
Devotion's grace and heart sing out so grand,  
The Almighty power of the Lord's love for us all;  
The heavens that slumber under God's light.

#### His Glory

Though Rome stood against our Lord Jesus;  
With the slow drip of earthly lies they wove,  
Far from the Truth of God's Kingdom they were,  
That God might save us all in His glory and grace;  
Unbound by the love that God treasures us with.

#### Holy Hands

I wish that all could see God's love,  
That all might know the faith deep within,  
What our vain gains do bring down,  
And know from the hand of God we are saved,  
You are found in light and holy hands

#### I Felt My Soul

Beside this soul a heart. There tenderly  
My sorrows gone for the conductor is the Lord,  
Her face I see and pray to God and dream off.  
Oh, with what deep passion in spirit delight my speech  
The Son of God of Heaven again, and with such joy  
I felt my soul and viewed your pain with sad glow!  
So spoke the spirit of God who heals the tears  
Standing in the sodden rain, mild eyes do provoke  
Replaced by hope the faith returns.

#### I Hold this Faith Dear

By just the spirit of Jesus Christ to the other given:  
I hold this faith dear, and mine he cannot miss,  
There never was a better love than driven:  
My true-love hath God known my heart, and I his.  
Jesus Christ in me keeps him and me in one;  
My faith in God his thoughts and senses renews;

He loves my soul, for once it was God's own;  
I cherish the Lord because in me it bides:  
My God Jesus hath my heart, and I have faith in his.

### I in Christ

In one God another's being mingle:  
Why not I in Christ?  
See the skies' kiss high the heaven,  
And the waves clasp the heart another;  
No faithful flower would be unknown  
If it worshiped in Christ;  
And the sunlight clasps the stars,  
And the singing of angels kiss the sea:  
What are all these passions worth,  
If thou love Jesus Christ the more?

### In Distant Holiness

The hearts within the spirit of God,  
The faithful souls who seek out the faith  
Thy mercy in the time of wonders way sublime,  
Now praise the Lord Jesus Christ,  
Sunshine glow in distant holiness of mind

### Jesus is Grand

The wisdom and grace of God Jesus is grand  
beyond time  
The haven of my soul in still support heal  
the gracious hand  
Streams abound still protect my soul Lord  
my prayers acceptance  
The wound in vain safe into waters roll the  
shadow plenteous grace  
Hoping against the storm refresh my parched  
and full of hope remains  
Support and sin defiled calms the fleeting  
breath welcome as its shade  
For God's will is our salvation amongst the  
shallow times to come

### Jesus Knows Me

Dear Heavenly Father;

Forgive me of my sins and pardon me,  
Don't see me as the devil would like,  
But as your Son Jesus knows me to be;  
Be there for to deliver me. Amen.

#### Kissing if but the Lips

In one faith of Jesus Christ mingle:  
Why not the love I feel so tender?  
See the heavens kiss the lips so soft,  
And the oceans which clasp thy hinds;  
No good believer lets go the flower forgiven  
If it is of God's mercy it reveals;  
And the morning light clasps the waters,  
And the shadows of cascading moonlight:  
What are the follies of the wounded heart,  
Kissing if but the lips of thy divine soul?

#### Lord of the Secret

And weary cares of mortal souls;  
May all God's love be upon your day;  
For you see the hills of Alodan,  
Jesus Christ is Lord of the secret heart;  
Nature bows her beautiful head in honor,  
Her noblest work she passes by,  
And she sings God's praises throughout the night;  
For far horizons of Echergoth dost not forget.

#### Mercy's Crown

On equal terms of spiritual faith;  
And the insurgent welcome of nature,  
In mortal ways we pray to God Almighty,  
Once captive now freedom found in God;  
They conquer with love and mercy's crown.

#### Mighty God

Who calmly is the mighty God of all;  
In our troubles He hears us as we call,

And if scorned of hope we are fallen,  
Oft like children in the sand we play;  
How our souls cry out to Jesus Christ.

### My Soul's Heart

For the love of God;  
Of my soul's heart,  
Grant me but life and peace.  
And if not so,  
Then let all find love  
To everlasting Jesus Christ,  
And let me live;  
For the Father or the Son,  
There is none other;  
My soul sings,  
For my spirit with liberty.

### Notes from Heaven

From the golden notes from heaven,  
And all the wonders of God's love,  
What seems too far to reach  
That listens to our hearts so sweet  
On the morning sings our salvation.

### Of God's Works

From plundered love of happy times.  
A hand to God's comforting smile is won,  
A heart of pureness to feel and dare,  
Tell the glory of God's works, his mercy fair,  
Who drew the song of angels now aware.

### Only a Prayer

Not one but many a tear for Jesus Christ a child did cry,  
To see that awful day with the Lord in a grave;  
The stone now turned over His holy resting place,  
Only a prayer to the Father for our forgiveness,  
What is jolting about the town in creaking speech;  
The wheels of chariots range the Good news aloud,  
How right it is to hear the Lord has risen from death,

I was a pauper but in Christ I have found wealth.

### Pity of the Heart

The conditions of life are like smoke;  
Therefore people call on God in his grace,  
From the pity of the heart most hurt in pain,  
Passing those who eye God's children;  
But keep the faith in Jesus Christ's love.

#### Pope Paul II Live On

In God's wisdom does Pope Paul II live on  
Dip their truth and palaces and the harvest-field  
His best of old a captive's vassal's throne  
Have reigned and fend boreal fleece the people  
Constitute a truth and victory had resolve no  
Triumph now but toil which dip has wrought  
For Jesus Christ now receives his spirit most loved

#### Presence of Christ

The boundless love of Jesus Christ for thronging soul?  
You build you create but you enter God's love now,  
Like the tribes whom the spirit calls to salvation  
Love;  
From the heavens of promise you fade not oh lighted  
Ere its verdure gleams Heaven forth on your weary wings;  
As the kings of the Earth-sky praise the Lord,  
Their noiseless voices singing in oblivion's heart,  
You slumber a rest of faith mid the angels singing,  
While the wonderful presence of Christ Jesus heals

#### Promise of Salvation

The very grace of God is Holy;  
Sweet as the honey from bees,  
Beautiful is the Lord in perfection,  
Such luster of mercy is our hope;  
Held within the promise of salvation.

#### Pure Love

I thread upon the weaver's machine;

A meeting with the Holy Christ each night,  
With humble praying do I give my worship,  
And running faith makes my heart at rest;  
Follow the Lord Jesus in times of living,  
Scarcely letting go of the power of faith,  
I now face the glory which is the Lord God;  
Under the crest of gold is found pure love.

#### River of Life

And the rushing of God's faith;  
From our spirit to know the truth,  
Like faces in the cool river of life,  
Peer out of the darkness to God's light;  
And the shadows turn to faith once more.

#### Saint of the Living God

But when the Lord calls and the wind blows  
Oh, sweetly we'll go flying to Heaven to rest weary souls!  
Blow, let the winds of change blow, everlasting waters,  
The rapids are calling, to the stars daylight's glory!  
Lord Jesus Christ walks on water! Be comforted heart  
Shall we see the clouds floating over the hills.  
Saint of the Living God we pass the green hills so simple,  
Oh, grant the prayers of the repentant heart and favoring soul!  
Blow the winds of the north, the breezes charm runs east,  
The rapids of the cosmic rain, cast deep God's quiet refrain.

#### Sod of Salvation

Since God's work on earth began.  
And the harvest of the spirit is vintage,  
These, like the angels in Heaven are fruits;  
Stamped in a heavenly sod of salvation,  
All from the dust and spirit of God.

#### Sorrows Past

Or melt the glittering of sorrows past;  
Who of this place shall the Lord do mercy

The dance of daylight sends stars gleam?  
Who prays for God's salvation untimely,  
Of mortal needs we all must humble ourselves.

### Sounds of Angels

From mountains high you can sense God.  
Was there that the Law of God came to us,  
And naught so ethereal the sounds of angels stay,  
And so reluctant the hour of God's grace must go:  
All which more clearly can show God's love.

### Spirit of Hope

Than reclaimed by God's love to take  
Thy heart's siege in passion dost lay  
Much, too spirit of hope must bring  
While laboring breath keeps grace  
Faster the kiss of faith in mercy.

### Spirit so Weary

Like this spirit so weary like the sea;  
Bear the faith of Jesus Christ in sails  
The eternal love God holds us dear the wondrous  
Growth of faith in common things done,  
Grace of God's love in all us won.

### The Holy Harvest

These to swell God's love and great beauty;  
Is the Holy royal goal of a humble people,  
His throne is set above all the Earth to see,  
Since God gave his Son Jesus Christ to be our king;  
And the Holy Harvest doth come in bloom of Spring.

### The Love of Jesus Christ

But for a moment in Jesus Christ;  
Yet in that moment makes a mighty love;  
It crackles, and to vapor turns,  
And soon itself creates.  
But when crept into aged lights  
It slowly burns, and then long remains,

And with a silent love,  
Like fire in logs, it flows and warms 'em long;  
And though the flame be not so great,

Yet is the love of Jesus Christ as strong

#### The Purest Heart

The purest heart that ever have kissed,  
The love of Jesus Christ that have shone,  
May pray and whisper and we not list,  
Or look away and never be missed,  
Ere yet God not be gone.  
Jesus Christ is risen! God bless his son,  
How I loved God all these years now!  
Jesus Christ is with us; but I sit here,  
Not alone and merry at my porch,  
Dipping my lips in the mystic wine.

#### The Voice of God

Sweet, is the voice of God to those who pray,  
Which look up starlike to the heavens seeking;  
Nor that being proud hold back the faith in Christ  
All hearts rejoice in the Lord to know His salvation;  
Be not rich in the world but wealthy in the spirit of God.

#### The Wisdom in Jesus

Like bright stars in heaven uplifted,  
Of the garden in Spring do flowers come;  
The horizon's zenith like God's holy word,  
Approaching the wisdom in Jesus Christ;  
And the last of God's passion upon us.

#### The Work of God

Forth comes the morning spirit of God;  
The hills sing with the Lord's praise,  
A friendly humble people call on His name,  
With bright sweet song doth the heavens ring;  
Where shadowing trees of elms do rest,  
Begins the work of God creation hoped,  
The full harvest yields its willing fruit;  
While the angels of God do sing unto dreams.

#### Throne of Glory

For Jesus Christ a throne of glory;



His mighty canopy full of Almighty grace,  
The souls of people calling on the Lord;  
The only King in Heaven and Earth profound,  
Yet does the Lord take time to hear our prayer.

#### Tide of Water

Such streams cannot show our faith,  
The sorrows lifted up by God's mercy;  
The bad times changed to good in Christ,  
Are the tide of water to compare our faith;  
And pure is God's love of us, his children.

#### Winged Angels

Of the faith in Jesus Christ;  
Quickly opening our heart's string,  
And such wonderful joys of salvation bring:  
Let the winged angels heaven roam!  
Pleasure never greater than God's warm glow.

#### Worship And Peace

And puts the love of God which is strong refuge.  
The big sad tears which Jesus Christ takes away;  
God calls us all to worship and peace in him,  
Happy are the saints and fair are the mercies in Christ,  
And beauteous the spirit of our Heavenly Father

#### Worship of God

Down the blessed glen to the mountains far;  
The small animals of nature roam in the snow,  
Whirling in the Winter wind is a Christmas song,  
Little children sing to Jesus Christ most Holy;  
Willows and kings bending in worship of God.

#### Calmness

Voices raise calmness sits and smiles  
The hills toil-worn horse who taste

Conquering palms life divine sits throned  
Like wandering morning of this day  
Spirits bright dove-like wings spotless white

Hallowed day sovereign power distant bleating  
Glittering in morning ray the heaven

#### Cosmic Mirror

The universe is as it had to be  
In times long lost the mystic seems  
To know a meaning that is beyond mankind's  
Knowledge to dream and yet we do just that

We dream of things small and grand  
The stars are the players while in the  
Balance stand mankind with moons and  
Planets to explore and to live on

Yet the cosmic dust that seems to control  
Even the smallest things are in fate's  
Hands as the icy cold of space is only  
Warmed by the hot imagination of mankind

Is the lesson learned that we are bound to  
A world lost in the cosmic mirror of time  
Or is there some reason that the universe  
Has come to be all these things in truth

But in the divine hands of God have the stars  
Spoken out like bells that ring the sounds  
Of ages long forgotten and the lights in the  
Heavens are here for us to ponder and imagine

#### Faded Flowers

With their fancies doth  
Hope's faded flowers strewed  
Long enough to sing  
Breeds no such prodigious  
Then a few nice  
Blisters on the tongue  
Promised eternal love and  
Thy sole relief the  
Fancy and wit in

Some few vapors thou  
Be cast with bitter  
Longing for God's love

### Forever

The sun rose brightly  
Your stage-plays and you  
May rule in the  
Time of wonderful days  
And hark like the  
Fast faster the gallants  
To owe to God  
For we trampled on  
And the long waving  
Of moments forever gone  
Down below forever down  
Your perfumed satin clothes

### Gathered Golden Peace

To the spear-men of  
The sun rose brightly  
From its broad and  
Thickly erect mounting flesh  
Thunders along and tramples  
Deep felt in these  
Are gathered round us  
Entering the soft lips  
Yet not the golden  
So deep the peace  
With which all nature's  
Passion comes to rest

### Glory of God

These scenes their story  
To use her broad  
Laces to drop from  
Behind the stove among  
Found not a generous  
Clasp me the large  
Through piping storms till  
She stood in the

Shine of the mighty  
When we as we  
With alms from every

Her cheeks pale opal  
No legend of thine  
The fiery souls that  
Strength in her arms  
Forever was lady of  
The glory of God

#### God's Love

The Lord Jesus Christ  
So amazing and wonderful  
Of streaming sweetness which  
In the empyrean of  
Watchful and agile uttering  
Of closer strains and  
Whose golden roof rings  
Feels music's pulse in  
By short diminutives that  
Call by day God's  
Loving wisdom and grace

#### Power to God

Over the woodlands  
And deeper still the  
Scan through its leaves  
Throbbing for the seaside  
Blossom by blossom the  
Sweet touch of love  
No power on earth  
Triumph in the view  
As God gives blessings

#### Ships Ashore

The heart had hardly  
And all along where  
For ships ashore beyond  
The waters laid you  
That ebbs swept out  
It swept with thunderous

From the meads where  
The rising tide  
Like lovemaking so sweet

I marked the lofty  
Stream from the church  
Moved on in sunsets

#### Soft Kisses

Nature and our hope sank amid fiery winds  
The chariots children were not the mighty fortress  
Shelter from all eternity for joy is love pillared temples  
The beasts strength depend short as rising sun  
Blessed way soft kisses ivory palaces marble cities

#### Sweet Kiss

Took shadow or the  
Scarce touching where it  
Whispered the old rhyme  
White and entire although  
The waters clear is  
For I am known  
And ever when a  
Burst flower-like into rosy  
Lips so sweet kiss  
Transfigured in the silver  
And to the skies  
The apples sputtered in

#### The Father of Lights

Most Holy One of all Creation  
So mercy comes our way with humble  
Ways of kind gestures our hearts  
So long for the time of true meaning  
For God you are so great and the  
Sky sings out your name for we are  
But reflections of the Father of Lights

#### Upon Golden Sun

Deep in the unknown reality of the soul  
The shadows of both time and body rest

Like windows to a distant land the voices  
Seem to call that jest a wish most often  
Found in common minds of untold sounds

The waters flow across the land as animals  
Dance to the most divine and angels sing  
A song of grace unto the living who are  
Post at base and the mountains jump as they  
Skip atop the heavens bow to power most fair

Yet are the children in the park to play  
While the universe seems to go on its way  
For clouds long have been inspiration to  
Us all and the living dance with the dead  
The clock of life cast shadows upon the bed

For Jesus Christ did speak of a future time  
While those who watched marked off the line  
It settles well the ancient kiss of the lost  
Rewards of folly's list and bare the souls  
Upon the golden sun of ancient wisdom now undone

#### With Tender Mercy

Not perfect of our own intent;  
Trails of compassion become real,  
Through the long road of life's quest,  
A clear hope in Jesus Christ is found;  
With tender mercy our hearts are healed.

#### Valentine Bows

My heart pleasant shall streams spring  
Dividing begotten fruit waiting burning  
Charms escape alternating sighs  
Meadow bright throbbing billows returning  
Ripple amorous traces nightingale  
Cleaves quickens winds perfect fragrant  
Heart of Jesus Christ's love to us  
With season maiden waiting wooing  
Longing face for flowers glitter away  
With scent on Valentine bows and songs

#### Glory Rejoice

What glory to God

The sound of wind-borne  
Sweet daisy flow of  
The ancient poet sung  
Let Jesus Christ rejoice

Admiral Cutter in her last and greatest mission, the greatest military woman of the modern world! On a different level there was the Admiral Cutter, The Soldier Nobody Knew approach. In this series it was possible to learn that Admiral Cutter had herself been the daughter of the reigning military of the Global Initiative, or of the Naval bloodline, or merely a younger out of military school, who deliberately set out to fashion a place for herself.

With this there were as many, and as conflicting, details as to her career. And there was much speculation about why she had placed such an air of secrecy concerning her personal affairs. She was a devout Christian, she was an intellectual, she was a secret Mason, she dabbled in astronomy, she attended military ceremonies in the States, she was really an old woman who had discovered the secret of success in a man's world. She was secretly an intellectual and her friends included most of the celebrated military figures of her generation; she was actually a shy, sensitive person who couldn't face her own success; she was a devout student of the Art of War who had planned to retire from the service and establish and take on a job teaching at university. She loved children and several by different fathers, she had been jilted as a young woman and still cherished the memory of her first real love, she was on the verge of a nervous collapse half the time and spent the other part of her time confessing her military sins.

With all of this, and much more, anyone with clearance could learn by reading her military file.

But General Farmer had prophesied correctly when she said that the military would prove to be the most attractive part of her legend. There was the Admiral Cutter, the military genius! Theory, which played up the "strange circumstances" surrounding her career, the "unexplained decision to re-enter active duty" of the two commands, the "reluctance" of the military to exhibit any public objections to her return. This angle hinged on every conceivable circumstance, real or rumored, which could be offered as "we need Admiral Cutter more than ever".

As December approached, the volume and tempo of the military campaigns neared a crescendo. For now Admiral Cutter's legendary return was public property, and the fake propaganda had given way to real military facts. Some of the scandals were e-printing the "unknown story" and the "real truth", Admiral Cutter had been in "rehab", she had been an alcoholic, she had started her comeback with lots of mistakes and worse, but none of these allegations affected the legend. Rather, they served to strengthen it, making her seem immortal. To her growing army of devotees came the young people, who had heard about the famous deeds of the Admiral and were somehow drawn now to the call of service.

But that was now all ending as the word came out that the legend had managed to get herself a mission to go fight in what the world considered the most exotic field of battle ever. She had manipulated the military into letting her go to Hellica. A strange and hostile alternate universe world that had been discovered by scientist a decade ago. And in doing so opened a portal of doom for the rest of mankind. Because in discovering Hellica, the beings of Hellica had then been made aware of Earth. Almost from the beginning there were small skirmishes, unspeakable battles at the threshold of the abyss. This indeed were the actions of unknown entities, having been awakened by the carelessness of mankind in their quest for the unknown. But in this case the quest led to a military

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confrontation that no one could have imagined. Admiral Cutter with all her experience and military honors found herself the victim of a policy that failed to consider the consequences of overt exploration of the universe and multi-dimensional realities. The universe proved to be too big for



conventional exploration and bridging parallel worlds as by far easier but vastly more dangerous.

Barry loomed over the artifacts and said, "This is going to be a fight that some of us might wish they hadn't decided to take on."

Celestia also studied the object then uttered, "I don't think we have a choice. Either we stand our ground and take the fight to the enemy or we wait and see if they are willing to go elsewhere. Either way, we have a potential battle on our hands."

Zandora nodded. "I have to agree with both of you but for different reasons. Within the hour we might all be called to go to Hellica. In a distant and remote alternate universe to try and stop an invasion into our world. The only real question is this, are we ready to risk our lives to stop it. And if we are, do we have the right stuff to actually bring this whole thing to an end."

Barry found a seat in the small staging room. "Six teams have gone before us and failed. The odds of us making it are slim to none."

Celestia added, "We can always bow out citing the obvious. This is a suicide mission. At the threshold both sides are engaged in intense battle."

Zandora sat next to Barry. "I always knew there would come a day when this would happen. I guess I thought I'd be caught off guard. In the heat of battle. Not sitting, waiting for some top brass to tell me that my time has come. You know they say that no one crossing over has ever come back. That once you enter an alternate universe, it is like being dead. We've only been able to send non-living things across the cosmic divide."

Celestia said, "For some reason living things can't make the journey both ways. We know that previous units have successfully crossed over because they have sent back video images and set up observation stations, allowing this world to view the other. But for some reason, living things trying to cross back are disintegrated."

Barry pointed out, "The scientists think it has to do with the displacement of dark matter and the nano-excitement of anti-strings. Each string vibrates at a certain frequency. Anti-strings vibrate at the same frequency thus canceling each other out."

Zandora said, "It is also true that as we send something through the great divide, they also end up sending something through the cosmic divide. Again, a classic example of Einstein's cause and effect principle. Even in alternate universes, balance must be kept. Remove matter and transfer it to one alternate reality and you have to balance it with another. So when we go through the cosmic divide, they will be sending something through to us."

Barry said, "Or rather, their alternate universe will be sending, not necessarily any intelligent or group consciousness, just the two worlds trying to maintain cosmic balance."

Finally the call came across the communications system. They were go. To be sent out on the mission. They were going to be the seventh unit to be sent to Hellica. On the screen was General Farmer, she was a stoic looking woman with gray hair, well seasoned in military affairs, but she wore it all well.

General Farmer ordered them. "You have a go, to deploy to Hellica. But you will be accompanied by unit eight. We have a new way that we are going to try, in order to try and get you all back home after the mission is over."

Barry enquired, "I don't understand. Have we finally devised a way to get home?"

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General Farmer returned, "We have an experimental vehicle that can go through the portal and return with life intact. Your mission is to locate and find Admiral Cutter and those with her. Get them back along with all intelligence that has been gathered about the inhabitants of Hellica."

Barry uttered, "It's never easy and never a dull moment, will do, ma'am."

Crossing over into the unknown of the abyss in the specially designed craft, which was suppose to allow living matter to enter the alternate world where Hellica existed and then allow that same living matter to cross back, the craft rocketed to it's destination. On the other side, the two suns were just starting to rise. It was a savanna, where the alter-craft finally landed. The team consisted of three men and two women. Their mission was clear, to locate Admiral Cutter and bring her back with whatever technology and intelligence she might have. The problem was that other units had come to Hellica only never to be seen or heard from again. Shortly after they had landed a second alter-craft appeared and flew over, landing fifty meters from the first craft. They were the backup, that unit would stay behind and guard the alter-crafts. If the vehicles really worked, they would be crucial in getting home.

Unit Seven under the command of Barry struck out towards a dense area of the savanna, where the admiral's locator signal was coming from.

Celestia uttered, "What are the odds of finding the admiral alive?"

Moving cautiously through the unknown area, Barry replied, "You forget that this is the famous Admiral Cutter. If anyone can survive, even in an alternate reality, like this one, it would be her."

Zandora added, "She didn't get her reputation by sitting behind a desk, she's the real deal!"

Celestia said, "Wow. I had no idea that you were so up on the brass?"

Zandora countered, "If you want to make it in today's military, you have to have brains and brawn!"

Barry cut in, "Point taken," then he motioned for one of the others to take point about three meters ahead of them.

The countryside was very pleasant, but not exactly like that on Earth. While there was obvious plant life and occasionally small animal life, there was also a strangeness about everything. They definitely were not in Kansas anymore. Off to one side, Celestia observed a three legged creature ambulate about and then get eaten by something with twice as many legs.

Celestia reacted, "Okay, now that was just creepy."

Barry said, "All the reports that we able to get back to Earth, seem to suggest that while the biology of this planet can definitely support human life, it has evolved independently of what we have come to know. In the reports the others who came before us, reported that plant life and animal life had similarities, but also radical differences."

Zandora postulated, "So, do you think that those things that are different about this place might have attributed to the disappearance of the admiral?"

Barry said, "Anything is possible, but you have to keep an open mind. After all, this is the equivalent to a dreamworld, this is not just another planet were are on, like if we had simply traveled to another solar system and then landed on one of it's planets. This is far more complicated than that. When alternate worlds were first proven and observed with robotic exploration, the connection to the subconscious realm of existence became obviously aware."

Celestia said, "Yes, you are right, I remember reading a report that said that one alternate world, was two dimensional. Everything was real but existed in two dimensional space."

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It was a good walk but finally the terrain changed and ahead the unit spotted what looked like a town or village of some sort. "I didn't get any intelligence that suggested that there was a settlement of some sort out here," said Barry.

Celestia spoke, "It is strange that we should come across this. All reports suggested that the real fighting and by the way inhabitants were at least two hundred kilometers from here. This is the last known direction where Admiral Cutter was transmitting."

Zandora added, "From what I can gather, her signal is coming from the village."

Barry ordered, "Stay sharp, people. This may be some kind of a trap. For all we know and from what we have been able to gather, the admiral might be dead."

Zandora said, "What happened to the tough old bird? The living legend?"

Celestia pointed out, "One might say that we all entered the mission, with a positive assertion. That was so that we could be motivated to carry on. But now that we are here and we see this world first hand. Well. There is that unsettling feeling I keep getting but I can't put one finger on it."

The savanna cleared out and a road was quickly discovered. The unit continued down the path. Eventually there were signs of recent travel and as they approached the village, beings, semi-human in nature spotted them and reacted with caution. The unit entered the village, ready for action but not wanting to frighten the locals. They looked anthropomorphic, but there were slight yet obvious differences.

Zandora whispered, "I've never seen an alien before."

Barry said, "Technically, we are the aliens. This is their world and judging by their reactions, they haven't had much experience seeing us either."

Celestia stated, "But some of them do seem less taken back than others."

Finally the unit was surrounded by the villagers, while others seemed to move off, finding refuge in their own homes. There was obvious chatter and Barry took out his universal translator and switched it on. Finally after awhile with it running, certain words began to be translated that made sense.

Barry spoke, "Don't be afraid, we are just explorers. Actually we are looking for someone. A friend of ours."

Celestia added, "A woman. Older than the two of us. Gray hair. Kind of short. Maybe a slightly hot tempered?" She looked to Barry. "Is the translator getting any of this to them?"

Zandora said, "Judging by their behavior, I think they might be understanding bits and pieces of what we are saying. Just like we can understand some of what is being said by them"

Then a voice came from within the crowd. "I am not hot tempered."

Celestia uttered, "Did you hear that. That didn't come from the translator. That came from the crowd."

A clearing was made and at the other end stood Admiral Cutter. But she looked different. She was dressed like the locals but that wasn't all.

Barry called out, "Admiral Cutter. We are Unit Seven. We've been dispatched to bring you home."

Admiral Cutter approached, "And why would I want to do that?"

Zandora asked, "Do what, ma'am?"

Cutter went on, "Why would I want to go with you, back to Earth?"

The five soldiers briefly looked at each other, now they were confused, what was going on?

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They all settled in a home that Cutter had been staying in. The villagers seemed nice enough on the surface but a nagging question kept Barry and his unit from settling in like the admiral had seemed to have done so nicely.

Barry asked after having rejected offers of refreshments from both the locals in the house and the admiral who partook of the things willfully. "I'm glad that we have found you, admiral, but I have to ask, where are the others?"

Cutter settled into a comfortable chair, "The others?"

Zandora stated, "The others, admiral. You came to this world with other soldiers from Earth. Yours was the only signal that we could locate. What happened to everyone? And we are at war with Hellica, how is it that these beings, here, are so complacent?"

Cutter grinned, "First of all, I was separated from the crew that came with me. We are at war with a faction on this planet, just not with this one. Did you all really think that the whole world of Hellica was represented by just one government?"

Celestia said, "Actually, yes. Our world used to be divided into individual governments, but now there is a one world government. That is the only way that a world economy can work without having massive recessions."

Cutter sipped whatever she was drinking, "It's not like this here. This world is much like the one we had centuries ago. There is light industrial cities, but mostly rural villages like this one. They have really good transportation based on innovative dirigible technology. They are able to travel the world by air or sea. They have communications that would seem centuries behind by our standards but progress for progress' sake isn't their way."

Barry was becoming aggravated with the admiral's answers, "Okay, you really like it here, we get that. Who in the hell are we at war with? Because these people don't seem to be able to mount the type of military offensive that we have encountered."

Cutter sensed the tenseness of her rescuers, "It's complicated. You wouldn't understand if I just told you, in fact it is not like anything on Earth. But you are perfectly safe right now. All is well."

While Barry was trying to make sense of what the admiral as telling them, Zandora and Celestia checked in with Unit Eight, who were guarding the trans-dimensional vehicles that they came in. After getting a positive report the two women stepped outside for another look around. The villagers had just gone about their normal routines, with an occasional acknowledgment of their presence.

"We are at war with these people but they don't seem to hold any animosity towards us at all," came Zandora.

Celestia nodded, "Something is not right here. I've been getting funny feelings about this whole mission."

Zandora agreed, "So have I. It's like everything is okay on the surface, but just below the water level awaits sharks and other creatures that can eat you alive!"

Celestia looked at the other woman, "That was pretty graphic. I was just saying that things don't add up."

They went back into the modest house. Barry was sitting by the window and the other two soldiers were not to be found. "Where is everyone else?"

Barry looked at them, "What do you mean?"

Zandora said, "Where are Admiral Cutter and the rest of our unit?"

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Above it from the top of the gable Barry should have had the yard and the whole front of the house under his observation. He didn't dare to enter the yard itself. Even if the dog-like animals neither heard nor saw him, the northwest wind, such as it was, would have carried his scent to them.

The wall was built of stones and easily climbed, but there was a gap of two meters between the top of the wall and the lower edge of the slates which gave him trouble. A rotten metal gutter ran below the metamorphic rock, and it was difficult to reach the roof without momentarily putting some weight on the gutter. Eventually he got up by way of a pig iron bracket and the gable end.

Barry lay on the slates with his head over the coping. He could see right into the main room of the house, a peaceful and depressing view. Admiral Cutter was playing a board game with one of the local's small son. He was surprised to see her sitting so carelessly before a lighted window with the shade up, and sunset outside; but then he understood that, as always, he had underrated the admiral. She was a clever devil who knew that she was safe with her head nearly touching that of the young child across the board. She was teaching her the game. Barry saw the admiral laugh and shake her head and show her some move she should have made.

It was a bitter shock to find her still there. The twelve days had seemed an eternity to Barry. To admiral Cutter they were just twelve days; it was even possible, he thought, that she had been enjoying herself. Barry's disappointment turned to fury. It was the first time in the whole of this business that he lost his temper. Barry lay on that roof picking at the leafy plants on the coping, and cursing Admiral Cutter, her indifference, her contentment, and the military brass in a white-hot silence. He blasted her to hell, her and her alien friends and their male-servants and female-servants. If his thoughts had hit those walls, it would have created a massacre that would have done credit to a falling deity called from eternity by the anathemas of a million infuriated priest.

It shook him out of his melancholy, that blazing, silent moment of rage. He didn't stop to think that he had brought all this on himself, nor to consider that if he had actually been transported to this place, and should have shown a damned crazy punctilious manner to all of them. He let himself go. Barry didn't remember anything like it since he had enjoyed, certainly, enjoyed, speechless anger at the age of four or five.

He was brought back to reality by sudden shivering. He had sweated with disdain and the perspiration was cooling in the night air. It was strange that he noticed it, for all his clothes were as permanently wet as those of a surfer in the good old days. There must be a special virtue in his thoughts, healing one spiritually as well as physically.

Admiral Cutter might stay for months. He couldn't bear the thought of having to stay in Hellica watching over an admiral that didn't want to be watched over. In fact she had made it very clear that she was never going to return to Earth, having found whatever it was that was missing from her life, here in an alternate universe, a strange world where reality melted away like peeling an apple. This was one freaked up place. It was almost as if your mind somehow got caught up in the dream-like reality that was Hellica, shifting from one uncertain comprehension to another. What was it about this place, that if you found your place in it, you were safe, you became part of the psycho-reality of Hellica. But if you rejected its calling, you slowly slipped into the hellish nightmare of purgatory. This was the paradox of this alternate universe, both the familiar and the dichotomy of what it meant to be alive and in control of one's own sanity. It was embedded in the super-nano-strings of the alternate universe's fabric. The cosmic stuff that made up the galaxies and entities of space and time. This world had no one reality but many outcomes manifesting seemingly at once, and yet a hellish demon tormented the souls of those who sought to escape, a nightmare as real as

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the human soul.

It had been what seemed like weeks, Barry had been searching for his way back. It was like everything had changed, his instruments gave him false positives. Once he thought he had picked up

Celestia and Zandora on his radio, only to have their voices fade away a moment later. He roamed from one village to another, looking for the admiral but she was nowhere to be found. Then finally one day, he came upon a tavern along a trail and decided to enter it, not looking for anyone but out of weariness. Much to his surprise he spotted Zandora and Celestia sitting at a booth in the back of the inn. He rushed to them and sat down.

Barry was tired and hadn't eaten in days, "My God, where have the two of you been?"

The two women were as shocked to see him as he was to see them. Celestia said, "Barry, we've been looking all over for you. But this place, this world, it wouldn't let us find you."

Barry asked, "What was the last thing you remembered before we got separated?"

Zandora said, "We came back inside the house where we had left you and the admiral for a brief moment. The admiral was gone along with the other two members of our crew. We saw you sitting at the window. The two of us went out the back, thinking that maybe the other members of our team might have gone out back after the admiral. There wasn't anything so we came back in and that was when we discovered that you were now missing."

Barry asked, "Have the two of you been separated since then?"

The two women glanced at each other for a long moment, then Celestia said, "No. Now that I think of it, we've been together the whole time. Hell, we've even relieved ourselves in each other's presence."

Barry said, "That's why the two of you haven't disappeared. From what I can gather, if you separate, the world causes some kind of drifting or draping effect to take place. It is as if, by yourself, you slip out of a common reality and into some kind of dream-like existence. Where nothing is as it should be. I've been wandering for weeks trying to find my way back, hoping to come across someone that I knew."

Zandora said, "So have we. We've been drifting from one place to another. The locals don't seem to understand what we are talking about when we try to explain our experience."

Barry pointed out, "That's because this is their native environment. They were born into this madness. It all makes sense to them."

Celestia said, "But, because we are from another world, another universe, this world has a different effect on each of us. This is actually living proof that our conscious minds are linked to our environment at a subatomic level. It actually makes sense because our physical bodies don't belong here in this dimensional reality."

Zandora questioned, "If this is all true, then why are we here, talking to one another right now?"

Celestia went even further, "Or how can we tell that we are indeed talking to one another? I mean, granted that the two of us haven't left each other's side since all the craziness started, but you walking into the inn. How do we know that you are really you?"

Barry said, "I was thinking the same thing about you two. It seems counter intuitive that this world would allow us to find each other, specially after weeks of just wandering about."

Zandora said, "Unless what we've been experiencing can be controlled by the locals."

Barry nodded, "Like a defense mechanism. After all; we are at war." The three began to look about the area, now, each being seemed to become suspect to them, group paranoia set in.

They had decided to spend the night out in the open. A small fire acted to keep them warm and to discourage strange creatures from getting too close. It was the first night that the three of them had spent together. Two slept while the third kept guard with shift changes every two hours. The

nights on Hellica were shorter than that on Earth. On Hellica the planet rotated in twelve hour cycles. So there was six hours of day and six hours of night. It took a lot of getting use to. In the darkness came rustling sounds. And then there were those strange howls and snarls, like something was eating something else. The last thing any of them wanted was to end up some strange creatures dinner.

Then almost without warning they started to get attacked. They fired at the creatures which attacked them from all about. The three stood back to back with the fire in the middle. These things were hell bent on eating them it seemed. At times there would be a break in the attacks as the creatures seemed to fall back and regroup. Then another barrage of attacks. This went on all night. Thank God the night only lasted six hours. As the two suns started to rise, they could get a better look at the dead and see just what it was that was attacking them. When Barry was by himself, he never slept out in the open, somehow he was able to find shelter here and there, so he never experienced attacks like the ones that happened that night. The same went for Zandora and Celestia, so all of them were taken back when the morning revealed that they had been attacked by local beings. Somehow they morphed, changed into hideous creatures at night. They became wild zombies of the night and would attack without provocation.

Barry stooped over one of the dead. "Damn! I knew this place was freaked up but damn!"

Celestia stood nearby, "This is very bad. And it explains why we encountered such terrible fighting at the abyss. The beings that are docile during the day become the opposite at night, changing into some kind of zombie creatures."

Zandora examined one of the dead. "I don't think that they are even the same beings anymore."

Barry asked, "What do you mean?"

Zandora went on, "Well, look at them. They seem to have changed in very significant ways. Their biology seems totally different. I think they go through this change because they are poly-existent. Just like everything else seems to be on this freaked out world."

Celestia said, "So, more than one creature or being shares the same existence, it just depends on the environmental circumstances."

Barry postulated, "Then how did Admiral Cutter manage to survive for so long by herself?"

Zandora put forth, "Maybe she didn't."

Celestia asked, "What?"

Zandora uttered, "Maybe she fell victim to these zombie creatures when they attacked at night. That would explain why the others were never found. Because they became absorbed."

Barry corrected her, "You mean eaten?"

Zandora shook her head, "No! Look here, this one has military clothes on, this is one of our people. But you couldn't tell just by looking at the biological evidence. If not for the clothes, I'd think that this is some totally alien zombie creature that just attacked us last night."

Celestia said, "But Admiral Cutter didn't look like a zombie, not like these things at all. She seemed herself."

Barry shook his head, "No! Not really. She looked like Admiral Cutter. But her behavior didn't seem like her. She was different. Remember. We all kept getting those funny feelings."

Barry and Celestia and Zandora had managed to survive the killer night here on Hellica. Now came the process of admitting that their mission was a failure but not because of anything that they had done. It was this world that they now inhabited. A world of frustration if you do not or refuse to

belong. A world that quickly embraces you into some kind of dream-like reality, or plunges you into an equally real damnation.

Zandora said, "I'm all for pulling the plug and getting the hell out of here."

Barry stated, "I know what you are saying, Zandora, but it might prove to be harder than you think. For weeks I tried to locate our landing site. My instruments kept giving out deceptive readings."

Celestia suggested, "This world messes with your mind as well as changing real physical perceptions. But it does it on a one on one level."

Barry was interested, "What are you getting at?"

Celestia continued, "Now that we are all back together, maybe we can navigate this deception. We all know that this is a world of illusion mixed with physical reality. What if we find the common value in what we all perceive. Each of us will see something slightly different but if we find that what is common, it might just be the truth."

Zandora nodded, "That's a good idea. We know the reading where we left the trans-dimensional vehicle. If the TDV is still where we left it, we might be able to find it working as a team."

Barry nodded, "Then it is settled. We start out right now. While we have plenty of daylight. If we keep to our convictions then we should be only five or six hours away from the TDV."

The three started out approaching ever so much into the savanna that they originally came from when they first landed. At the onset things started to do what they had come to expect, they shifted and changed and melted, the reality around them seemed inconsistent. But the three were armed with the understanding that they knew what to expect.

Finally Barry decided to give everyone a rest. They were about an hours distance from where they left the TDV. Barry suggested, "You know, one of the things that had kept me alive and always hopeful is prayer."

Zandora looked at Celestia who said, "I believe too. Maybe it's time that we take advantage of the threefold cord that the Lord Jesus Christ has presented us with."

Zandora said, "I'm not much on religion."

Barry said, "There are no atheist in the battlefield."

Celestia uttered, "And we are at battle. It's just a different kind of battle. A smart war! Where your enemy knows how to exploit not just your military equipment but your mind."

Barry spoke, "The most effective kind of warfare is the one where your enemy doesn't need to pickup a weapon in order to defeat you. This is beyond purely psychological warfare, the beings on this world know how to manipulate perceptions of reality."

Celestia said, "They could have us shooting at each other for all we know. Come on. It's time to give this over to a higher authority. That is if you want to get home?"

The three took hands and Barry led in prayer to God our Father and ended up in Jesus' name. After that they regrouped and began the last leg of the journey toward the TDV. Then after some hard turns and an error in agreement they finally saw it as the altered reality melted before them and in the distance they spotted the TDV. Excitement filled them as they all ran towards the vehicle. Once inside they checked everything out. Everything still worked but they could not locate the

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others.

Barry and Celestia and Zandora closed down the hatch and began to fire up the engines. As they went through their equipment check rather quickly, out the port window they saw Admiral



Cutter appear. She ran over to the TDV and began to pound on the side of the vehicle.

Zandora said, "Barry, you need to look at this. It's Admiral Cutter, she's here and it looks like she wants to get in."

Barry spoke, "Great timing! Now our mission won't be a failure! Let her in."

Celestia took Zandora's shoulder, then said, "Wait a moment. Think this thing through. When we first came to this God forsaken world, Cutter expressed no interest in returning with us, otherwise, we would have gotten out of here weeks ago, with no casualties. Now all of a sudden, here we are ready to leave and she just shows up, begging for us to let her in? You know how this world works, deception!"

Zandora stood down, "She's right, Barry. We've gone through hell and she was never there to help any of us. Now we are ready to get the hell out of here and she want's in. Ask yourself why?"

Barry stated, "Ours isn't to question. It is to carry out orders!"

Celestia yelled, "Don't be a fool, Barry! If she could just show up at any time, why didn't she just show up and take the TDV back to Earth, without us, because she obviously showed a great indifference towards our efforts to rescue her."

Barry sat back, "So what are you saying, just leave the admiral here? What will the brass say when we get back and the vehicle's log shows that the admiral was just outside the door begging for us to let her in?"

Zandora answered, "We tell them the truth. That the admiral had been compromised. Infected if you will by some alien zombie mutation."

Barry countered, "But they are going to look and see that she looks human. There is no evidence of mutation. The Hellica mutation only comes out at night when the sun goes down. Hell, we don't even know what type of affect the mutation will have on her once she gets back to Earth. She might be perfectly fine."

Celestia stated, "Or. She might be the first of a series of Hellica zombies to invade Earth and we would have been the source of the invasion. Showing them the way."

Barry said, "Or, we could all be heros! We save Cutter and warn Earth about the secret as to why the beings of Hellica can fight us with such veracity. I mean just think of it, we'll be heros and saviors of the whole world."

Zandora said, "I'm not religious or anything. But I thought Earth already had a savior."

Celestia added, "Jesus Christ! You are not yourself, Barry. You spent the most time with Admiral Cutter. It is possible that she did something to you, tried to turn you or something, I don't know. But what I am seeing is that since she has returned, you have started to change!"

Zandora said, "Celestia is right, Barry. We can't let her in!" and with that suddenly the vehicle malfunctioned, spewing out a gas and Zandora quickly lost consciousness.

The radio was playing a warning message over and over again, it was in a loop, when Zandora woke. The TDV was now in the hanger back at Base 17. She looked around, no one was there. She quickly got outside the TDV and cocked her weapon. There were signs of a battle, bodies spewed about. On the base intercom the warning blasted out to the world: "Base 17 has been compromised. The aliens from Hellica have managed to invade our world. This base is now under lock-down quarantine. No one from the outside is to come near this base. Stay away, stay alive!"

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## ALULU'S WALL

It was one of the worst nights I'll ever remember. My camera crew and I were hold up in one

of the supposed safe camps. But the truth of the matter was that nothing was ever really safe. Not here not in Africa. Not in Darfur. I'd never seen anything like it. The misery and the death. The almost total disregard for human life and human decency. My goodness it was like nothing I ever experienced or have since and believe me, I've been sent on some dangerous assignments, even to the Middle East to cover President Obama's historic mediation of the peace accord with Israel and the Palestinians. No one ever thought that someone so young and supposedly inexperienced could come up with such success in that region but he did. But that is for another time and another place. This story is about a young woman I met while covering the horror which is Darfur. Her name was Alulu and she was like no other woman I'd ever met. No. I don't suppose in the years since that I ever met anyone like her or ever will.

It was a long night back in those days. They all were long. The pain and the misery as I watched helplessly as men were brutally murdered and women and children captured, the women that were old enough were summarily raped, beaten and raped again and again. The raiders would come into the camps and using weapons provided by weapons dealers, shoot and hack up the defenseless people. At first we all started off as just reporters, getting a story. But that was too easy. That was what a reporter did when covering civilized events. It's just a story then but what I had been assigned to wasn't just a story, it was a travesty of humanity. We all started off making reports and showing those who dared to let their eyes view it, the real horror of a madman's obsession. The total and unabashed attempt at removing a race of people from off the face of the Earth.

Oh. I wasn't so naive as to believe that things like this hadn't happened in the past. There were countless stories of one group with superior weapons and numbers killing off another group. And for what? Their land? Because whatever the political rationale, it always came down to someone wanting someone else's land. Oh the leaders would demonize the poor slobs that were being slaughtered, as being somehow less human, not like us, not having our values, they look different, smell funny, their names are strange. Whatever . . .

Ethnic cleansing is ethnic cleansing.

It was during this one particular night. I had been reporting on the lack of food and the onset of yet another outbreak of sickness and disease. The raiders had just started another attack and would soon be here. My crew had finished up and we all were ordered to get the hell out of there. Most of them did. Funny how civilized countries could manage to get a news crew in to film the carnage and depravity, but when it came to doing something about it, nothing seemed to be able to be done. We make sport of other people's suffering, I once heard. I was young and just getting started back then, I didn't want to hear speeches like that, back in college. All I wanted was to graduate and get a good job and make a name for myself. What? There was nothing wrong with ambitions like that, right?

No. There is nothing wrong until you actually start to see the suffering, the results of the hunger. The famine firsthand. The soul wrenching smell of death. Then you start to realize what those words spoken many years before really meant.

We make sport of other people's suffering.

The ancient Romans had their Coliseum and modern civilizations have television and the internet.

I had finished up and was with all good mind ready to get the hell out. As was told me by the

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brass via communications thousands of miles away. But as I was leaving I came upon a young woman and her young daughter. The sun was setting and I knew night would be upon the camp once again and once again, they'd be subject to the living nightmare that they had come to expect every

night. I was taken by what she was doing. There she was this thin frail young woman, she couldn't have been much more than eighteen, with her young daughter. She had tears in her eyes as she worked frantically. Meticulously placing one earthen brick upon another. I couldn't figure out what she was doing. So I told the driver to stop, I told him I spotted a story. But it was getting dark and no one in their right mind wanted to be around when the raiders came.

But the driver did stop, leaving the motor running. I went over to her, camera man behind me and I asked her, "What are you doing?"

She didn't answer at first, she just kept on working, her young daughter placed next to her, eating something rotten I supposed. Maybe there was a communication's problem, she didn't speak English, I motioned for the translator, but he wasn't getting out the vehicle, it was getting dark, we were losing light.

"Don't you know it is getting dark?" I asked.

Finally in a weak yet defiant voice she answered me, "What would you have me to do? I can't just leave like you reporters can do. I have no place to run and hide. My husband was murdered a week ago. It is just me and my daughter. It prayed to God asking for help, hoping for some kind of answer. The only thing that has come to mind is that if I can build a wall, maybe the raiders won't see me and my daughter, when they come. Maybe we can find a way to be safe."

It was so profound I stood there speechless. I went back to the vehicle and asked everyone if we could take the two of them with us. We all knew what was going to befall her and her daughter. They'd be raped repeatedly and eventually hacked to death. Everyone in the vehicle expressed concern but not a one of them would agree to letting the young woman in with us. My soul for some reason that I have never been able to figure out, even to this day, suddenly began to boil. They all begged me to get in the vehicle, my camera guy was now in, I wrenched the camera from him and flipped them all off.

With that, they all drove off. The dust kicked up in my face and when it cleared I was standing there, camera in hand, Alulu and her daughter watching. I went to them.

"They will come back for you?" She said, now going back to working on that earthen wall.

I looked off and the smoke of the dust was evident that none of them were coming back. "Sure doesn't look like it."

"Why did you do this? You know the raiders will kill you. They don't care if you are a reporter. They murder for sport as much as for orders. We are an infestation to them. They want our land so that they can make the country into what they want it to be."

My mind flashed back a few hundred years ago, what must the American Indian have thought at the sight of the White man, systematically exterminating them for their land? And here were are now, I was witness to another attempt at genocide.

Moral authority wasn't the ability to make others do what you want them to do, it was living in such a way that others want to do what you do. They want to be like you because they admire who and what you are.

She looked up from her work and there was desperation in her eyes. "Are you going to just stand there hoping that your friends who have just abandoned you come back or are you going to help me build this wall?"

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I looked down and her little daughter offered up some of her rancid food, out of love, because she obviously was hungry. My heart suddenly shook. Here was a child that was beyond needy, offering me some of her food, which was obviously worth more than gold to her. I quickly set

the camera on a stone, switching it on and began the task at hand, to help Alulu build her wall of hope. It seemed to defy all reason and in fact was beyond anything my mind could wrap itself around, how that young woman had placed her hope of surviving the night by building a mud wall. Surely she knew that when the night fell that the raiders would come into the camp and wreak havoc on everyone and thing in the camp. This wasn't a place to seek refuge. It was a coral. A place where the existent government herded up the outcast and systematically night after night, exterminated the one's not wanted. These poor people were no threat to the government. They were helpless and sick and weakened by the fact that no outside help was coming. They had given up all hope of being saved. Imagine. They were born into poverty. Sickness. Disease. No one cared. No rich country reached out their hand with meaningful help. I'm not talking about the symbolic protest. Or the meaningless attempts to appease the leaders that were gladly propagating these offenses. At what point do civilized nations stop being spectators and become active participants of the global community and accept their roles as leaders, intervening on the behalf of the weak and sick and poor?

We worked until the night was upon us. And as sure as the sun would rise the next day, the killing and the rape and the slaughter began. I hadn't understood Alulu's plan when I first came upon her. But as the horror expanded around us, I watched her place her child into the makeshift sanctuary that she had built out of mud and clay. I could hear the horses and the cries of the people as they were being killed and raped and otherwise violated. My camera was going and I was afraid that the raiders might come across it and discover me.

Now in the throws of fear and dismay, I was thinking about myself. It was at that moment that a hand touched mine. "Leave it." A small voice said, there is enough room for you in here. It was Alulu and she was reaching out from her mud sanctuary. I glanced at the camera, wanting to get it, but knowing the hoofs of the horsemen were upon us. I quickly made my way into the tiny entrance and the three of us sat motionlessly.

We could hear the horses and the sounds of torment. Screams crying out in the night. Women being raped and sobbing. Little children crying for their fallen parents. Children being killed. Young girls being taken and raped repeatedly. I think at one point, my outrage and fury got the better of me. Because before I knew it I had managed to leave Alulu's sanctuary and was making my way toward a raider who was raping a young girl of ten or so. I couldn't really tell because it was dark and the light from the moon while bright, too bright for the images I was now witness to, also cast shadows. There were shadows of death and disbelief. My God! I had been brought up on the Eastside but nothing could have ever prepared me for this! No matter how bad-ass you might think you might be, to watch the horror and people being sliced into pieces is beyond profound. There is a point in which one loses all sense of being and time and place. It becomes a nightmare in which one wants to awake from the trauma only to find that nightmares are no so foreboding.

Off to my right I spotted a man. He had taken the young girl and was forcing himself upon her. I first couldn't move. I mean nothing could stop me from leaving Alulu's sanctuary and then once out in the open, I was so terrified I couldn't move my legs. You have to understand, that while I was probably like everyone else that comes from a civilized society, I wasn't a hero, I didn't go out

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of my way to protect and to serve. I was just an average guy trying to make a living, make a name for myself. I was a reporter. I was sent to chronicle the news not to become victim to the event.

But before I could think another thought, I heard a voice say: "Get the hell off her you,

bastard!” It was shocking, because it was my voice. What had I done?

Not only had I left the relative safety of Alulu’s wall, but I had managed to call unwanted attention to the fact that more victims existed, ready for this monster and his buddies to come over and blaspheme, with their depravity. If ever there was Godlessness, I was witness to it now. He looked over at me and I could see that he did not consider me a threat, because he just went back to doing the foul actions that forced me to call out in the first place. My fist clinched as I heard the blood in my body pumping. I suddenly developed tunnel vision. I could only see the object of my contempt. Then in my hands I felt the weight of something heavy. And now I was running and as I ran I let out a scream. It was like a scream from the depths of my soul. The raider had stopped because of my voice as it rose toward him. He scarcely removed himself before he felt the cold bash to his brains of the object that was in my hands. After that I managed to pick up the weapon he had been resting nearby and with it I began to meet out a kind of justice that I had only thought reserved for those in purgatory! There was blood everywhere and I was in a state of mind like that of someone having an out-of-boy experience. I could see it was me but it wasn’t me, at the same time.

Then someone grabbed my arm. I swung around thinking it was one of his buddies. I was ready to give them some of the same. But it wasn’t. Alulu’s reflexes were far better than I would have ever imagined. As I swung, she managed to duck and disarm me at the same time. Her personal hardship from her youth served her well now. If she hadn’t been so alert I would have killed her by accident. We stood there for a long moment in the night. Death shadows danced across the surfaces of the camp. The smell of death was all about us. This was what Alulu had to endure every single night. Her and her little daughter. Every night. Another Hell! Every night. The chance that this would be her last night. And what of her daughter? Witness to such scenes of violence and despair. If this is what had happened to me and in such a short period of time. How is it that there was any humanity in her heart? How is it that this woman hadn’t lost her mind?

Now the sounds of the night were made clear and my vision slowly began to return to me. I watched her mouth move. It was a curious thing. I could hear cries for help and screams of unthinkable pain as human beings were being hacked into pieces alive. But I couldn’t hear the voice of the young woman standing in front of me.

Finally the sound reached me, “Are you all right? Are you injured?”

“What? No. No I’m all right.” I managed to look over at the poor girl that the raider had been raping. She was dead. He must have strangled her while he was raping her. I glanced over at his hacked up body. It made me throw up. I couldn’t believe that I had managed to take another person’s life, let alone like that.

“We must return. It is not safe out here,” came Alulu’s calming voice and we did. We managed to stay inside Alulu’s wall for the rest of the night. Inside the mud sanctuary time seemed to blur. After awhile there was no telling one event from another. The whole night was one big blur of suffering and pain. None of us were going to be able to rest. Sleep was for those who knew that tomorrow would come, neither of us was afforded that luxury.

But the morning did come.

I managed to crawl out of the sanctuary. It was day now, and I could see plainly what the darkness had managed to obscure. Blood was everywhere. I walked around the area. If I had known

that only twenty feet or so from me, another raider was there, I might not have acted so recklessly. But he had been stabbed in the back while approaching me, from the looks of it. I could now survey the area that we had been in. We had been in the thick of it. I looked up from the dead man and my

eyes fell on Alulu and her daughter. The look in her eyes told me volumes.

“Are you two okay?” I finally managed to get out.

“He was going to kill you. I had no choice.” Alulu wasn’t a killer, she was just a young woman trying to survive the nightmarish hell that she was forced to live in.

“You had my back . . .” I walked over to where the camera now sat. It was covered with blood. Was that what was in my hand last night? I must have grabbed the camera and struck the raider with it. I examined it. For all the violence it had managed to endure, the thing still seemed to work. At closer examination, I realized it had recorded the events of the night.

We both managed to gather up what little things were ours and we all started out. We must have walked for several hours and then I spotted the dust of a vehicle. As it came closer, I realized it was my news crew. They had come out to get me at the crack of dawn.

The camera man jumped out the vehicle. “I can’t believe it. You’re still alive. We all heard that the attack last night was severely brutal!” He went for the camera and began to examine it and the footage. “Wow! You managed to shoot this last night!” The rest looked on and were excited. There was talk of streaming it as soon as we got back.

I looked around and Alulu and her daughter had already started to walk on. My heart sank because I knew what she had just lived through and I knew what she was looking forward to. The hunger and the damnation of another night. I ran to her.

“Where are you going?”

She looked at me, her eyes were so sad, “I don’t know.”

I looked at her daughter then back at her, “You are going with me.” I took her by the arm.

Alulu shook her head. “No. It is good of you to say it but we both know that I can’t go with you. My fate is here and yours is a continent away.”

“You can’t be serious! After what we have just been through together. Maybe two days ago I could have just gotten in that vehicle and drove on off. But not today. Not after last night!”

She said, “The others are calling you. Go to them. But remember me. Tell the world about what happened last night. You lived through it and I have to believe that God let you do this for a reason. So that you can give voice to those that have no voice. Perhaps you will be able to open their eyes, if not but for a moment.”

She walked off and I went back to my friends. My friends. The same one’s who had left me for dead the night before. The ones that were now on their phones talking to the “right people” about the footage, I’d managed to get the night before. We drove away. Dust kicking up in the air behind us. Behind us was the misery and the horror what was at that very moment subsiding. Leaving me like some bad dream. Only I knew it wasn’t a dream. It was real and it really happened and there really was a young woman with her young daughter. Alulu’s world wasn’t going to be so filled with the things that I was now headed toward. There was no way out for her and her child. There was no way out for any of them. All those people that were forced night after night to suffer the horrors.

“So. Tonight I come to you. The world. And I offer up the evidence and the truth of what is really going on in Darfur. I don’t pretend to know the political outcome of the situation. Would if I could wave a magic wand and make the whole situation go away. But even if I could, it wouldn’t do  
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justice to the countless victims of such tragedies and tragedies throughout the world. With all sorts of other political events going on throughout the world, it is easy and perhaps convenient to lose track of poor nations and their poor people and their poor problems. But look at it from this point of

view, someone once told me back when I was in college: A nation is only as strong as its weakest citizen. If we are truly approaching a global world and not just a global economy then perhaps that is what is wrong with our financial institutions. We have managed to accept the vast resources of wealth while rejecting the humanity of the world's people. If what goes around comes around, then perhaps those voices that might be ever so wiser than our own, might hold the hope of the future. For it is in our ability to help others and to see the great injustices of our time and then to act that galvanizes a nation to do well and a world to seek a better way."

The cameras switched away and the moment was now left to the viewers to ponder. I was met with smiling faces and extended hands. Promises that I had a real future in broadcasting and the specter of promotion.

My producer came into my room and said, "That was a good piece. It went over well and the ratings seem to suggest that the audience like pieces like that. You managed to touch a nerve with some of the viewers. Well done. Take a few days off and I'll find a good assignment for you to tackle next." She left with a smile and a thumb up.

I found my things and put on my coat. It was a cool night here, back in the States. I thought on what my producer had just said, basically, and I was on my way toward making a real name for myself. If I kept it up who knows, maybe some cushy position reporting the news, while some other poor slob had to go out and brave the new world.

It was a long walk out of the building. The usual hellos and goodnights. It was all part of the way business was done, funny how things work out. I'd risked my life but got a good story. People would listen to it for all of a few minutes, the time it took to present the presentation and then move onto their own little lives and their own little problems, all so real and all so important, and with all good reason.

A cab was waiting for me when I got out of the building. The door opened and a hand extended out to beckon me. "We saw you on television . . ." Her voice was sweet and reassuring. It had taken quite some doing as one might imagine. But with the help of a few friends in the State Department and a lot of frequent praying, I managed to get Alulu and her daughter out of that awful situation, what looked like sure death, but the Lord was able to deliver them. Six months after that Alulu and I were married and I started the process of adopting her daughter. We often allowed ourselves to talk about that fateful moment when we first met. And together we started a movement to help others from that area. It has been an uphill battle and it seems like the media has a short attention span when it comes to the plight so honorably sought at Alulu's wall.