



The Halls of Certitude

Book Three:
The Department of
Truth Trilogy

James D Connolly

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TESTIMONIALS

I did not expect to learn about myself along the journey with Jack Johnston through the great Halls of Certitude, but that is exactly what I did. A spiritual wonderland of understanding and growth is found in the deeper worlds that Jack navigates. A unique tapestry of colours, places, imagery and multi-dimensional characters brings to life a process and a people that, like Jack, I have personally experienced and met along my own life's journey. The author, James Connolly, skillfully navigates these unique yet similarly experienced dimensions of self and collective discovery in a way that only one that has traversed them could so adeptly hope to achieve for the reader.

In my quest for understanding the process of character development, community building and consolidation, I have never imagined or understood the beauty of these processes so clearly and visually as the author provides. Through this window view into Jack's peregrination, and those he crosses paths with, the author unfolds a process of individual and collective development where each individual finds and cultivates their strengths and purpose along the way. As Jack journeys away from a disintegrating world, and those forces that seek to destroy it, he finds himself once again in a place where love, unity, justice, and cooperation sets itself apart in a stark contrast to the doubt, fear and chaos of the changing world around him.

Mr. Connolly demonstrates a well-informed grasp of the Institute Process and the people and communities that struggle to understand and implement it. In his travels, Jack Johnston witnesses the destructive capability of what the lack of faith can do to individuals and communities in contrast to the power of the spark of certitude. I am inspired to live it.

Lynette Slaman-Garcia, Senior Editor, USA

Following on from "Department of Truth" and "Expectations of Happiness" Jack continues his spiritual journey into the realms of the unknown.

From a worldwide disaster, there is the creation of hope; a story of people working together for the greater good, building a new society based on service and faith; each having their part to play. Jack and his friends help explore the concepts of the Bahá'í Faith in greater detail. "Halls of Certitude" is another good read, as the imagination of the author comes to life creating a story of hope, connectedness and giving.

Cathy McEwen, Life Coach, Australia

You did it again - gave me a book that needed to be read slowly. I found myself swept up in it and needing to time to reflect on what was written. It touched me deeply.

The Halls of Certitude is more than just a book - it is a map to a better world. It unfolds a journey we all need to take, but few do. It is filled with metaphors and symbolism that paint a picture of light and understanding. The Halls of Certitude is filled with insight and moments that makes the reader stop and think.

This book is not a quick read nor should it be! Read it! "Take the road of heart and soul. Be true to it and trust it."

Thanks again for the time to reflect on life, learning and our journey to a better place.

Bruce Thompson, Lecturer, Canada

"The Halls of Certitude" is an inspiring read. It allowed me to develop the importance of contributing to positive change within society, so that global unity can be achieved.

I enjoyed reading about the concept of transformation of character through the *Creative Word*, since it is a transformation that I myself have gone through. Since finishing the book, I have found that I am more aware of my spiritual nature, and it can help me to control the selfish desires of my physical being.

Shikha Keenoo, Student, Australia

A continuing journey of remembrance from which the soul responds on some forgotten, but never lost measurement. I remember this time, place and purpose, but how is it so?

Simultaneously, the continuing silk road of excitement in The Halls of Certitude, with its newness and the unexpected turns, keeps one pivoted to the magic carpet ride of a spiritual dimension that the voyeur cannot possibly take one's attentive eyes, inner and outer, away from; and wanting even more.

Take the ride and hang on tight – you will not be disappointed.

Kaye Forester-Harris, Retired Massage Therapist, Australia

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks, Lubna, for all your hard work, commitment, and expertise; but mostly, your genuine enthusiasm for the whole Trilogy, which kept the process going.

Thanks to those who have read and appreciated my work. It means a great deal.

PREFACE

“The Halls of Certitude” is a continuation of the story of Jack Johnston and completes the Department of Truth trilogy. It is about the collective human soul and our journey into our future.

This story focuses on people and their purpose, seeking to help inspire the understanding of our essential unity through service to humanity and each other. Service to each other and building a spiritual foundation for anything new we build together, are crucial to our future.

There are many forces alive in our world that seek to separate us and take us away from our nobility. These forces constrain the creative force of individuals and stunt the collective growth of humanity in the name of ideology and profit. We have given our power, minds, and souls to these interests, and need to take it back, and be responsible for our own future. I am very optimistic about our future, but we may have some hard roads ahead.

The three books in this trilogy are inspired by my Faith, but I do not seek to represent it in any way. The mix of my own perceptions, philosophies, experiences, and ideas, let alone the symbolic nature and literal license I have used in these books, leads me to this assertion. There are a number of quotes from my faith in the body of the story, and at the end of the book, there are quotes and links if you wish to explore it for yourself.

This book does not pretend to be anything more than the sharing of ideas through story. I love sharing understanding and ideas, and don’t expect all to agree with me. My hope is that this book, and the others in the series, will start conversations and lead to further exploration.

This journey started with “The Department of Truth”, with the main theme of *existential search*. The second book “Expectations of Happiness” took on the theme of *personal transformation*, the individual in this life, and now “The Halls of Certitude” explores *humanity’s transformation and journey into the future*. More detailed explanation of all three books is available at the end of the book.

I hope you enjoy “The Halls of Certitude,” and the other books in the series.

Groundfall

The great shuddering would not abate. It had started in the night, rising from deep in the ground, and had rolled on for hours now. Jack Johnston lay face down on the floor between his bed and the wall, with his mattress on top of him. Early on in this insane onslaught he *had* thought of running for clear ground, but the quake was too fierce for him to feel confident enough to make it. So, he stayed put, and *hoped*.

The quake's anger would not subside; the sounds, the shudders, and the crashes, just raged on. Even the craziness of his deeper journeys was better than this rolling imminent danger, and the madness he had seen and experienced in the world since his return also made him want to travel deeper again. But there was to be no reprieve. He was here, and he just had to deal with it.

What this violent battering would ask of people in the light of day, would be huge, he thought, as he cowered in his small space. A small space was all anyone owned this night; others had far less comfort, and many were simply gone. The hammer blows continued on, and on. The immovable anvil of life was ringing hard tonight.

The Moon

It was all the next day, and into the following night, before the quake and its rumblings ceased. Jack had never experienced a quake before, but he was sure that they never lasted *that* long. The tremors had slowly gotten less and less intense, aftershocks had come and gone, and it had finally subsided.

People came out, in dribs and drabs, as it waned. This town had never known earthquakes, and the locals here were shell shocked from the constant bombardment. Most walked out dazed into the street, just wandering around, and Jack was one of them. While his mind was trying to make sense of what was happening, he heard people crying for lost loved ones in fallen houses, saw others digging furiously through the rubble, and there were shouts coming from near and far as people got organised to dig survivors out; while others helped injured people to clear ground. Jack's town had already begun to help itself. *People* were helping *people* tonight. *No one* was above another; petty differences fell away, and people got on with what was happening in their own neighbourhood. The great leveller, disaster, had had its say, and what was important rose to the surface again.

Those in the cities were not so lucky, as there had been great areas of ground that had simply fallen in. The ground had shattered, and huge swathes of land had just *fallen*. Great towers had toppled, and some had simply disappeared into the huge holes. The ground had simply given way, and in most cities, the central district was completely gone. Many souls disappeared during the raging upheavals in those places; there was chaos, and many fires grew. People helped each other there too, but the darkness of chaos and the lower nature of people came out more in these large centres. It would be a very long time before order could be restored, and it would be much longer before any semblance of normality would return.

After a time, Jack had gathered his senses, and started helping an older neighbour. It was very natural going to her aid, rather than being something he had to think about. He had just settled her down on a lawn chair, when a man walked into the yard with a battery-powered radio. He set the radio down on the ground, and they all listened to the news, while Jack cleaned up the lady's wounds and the man cleared a path to the street. Jack was thankful for the strong moonlight tonight, and that the water infrastructure had held together here. It allowed him the light, and the water, to bathe the old woman's wounds, as well as give her some water to drink.

As they went about the needful work something came over the radio. Their eyes went wide, and then, to each other. The quakes had happened all over the world. *All* of humanity was in the same boat. The earth had changed, and with it, the future of humankind.

"EXPERTS ARE NOW CALLING IT GROUND FALL," announced the lady, on the radio, now some hours later. "It will be some time before experts can establish just what has happened. Authorities are asking people to stay away from effected areas and gather food and water as they

can. They are encouraging us all to help each other in this terrible time. The government spokesperson was also at lengths to say, that as infrastructure and our major highways are so damaged, and the destruction so widespread, it will be up to people to help themselves for now. Longer-term efforts are underway, and plans are being set in place.”

“It’s gonna get crazy. The whole structure of society has fallen,” commented the man, with the radio.

Jack had seen his neighbour around many times; but only as just someone who lived near him. Jack had been back from his last journey deeper for nine years now and had been quite busy in his spare time with the work of *regenerating the spirit of humanity*. He had never talked to this neighbour, as he was always going here or there. Nine years, and he had not got to know his own neighbour. He could see that this man had some insight and vision, by the way he spoke, and regretted not getting to know him earlier.

“Yep, it’s not looking good at all, mate,” agreed Jack.

“We’re lucky we’re in a small town, where there’s a stronger sense of community. Chaos is gonna’ hit those big places,” offered the man.

“Yeah, I reckon you might be right. I hope it’s small though, and Aussies are good in a bind. It might just remind ’em of their spirit.”

“*Good on ya*’, mate. It’s good to hear some upside in amongst all this. I’ve seen you about, but just didn’t get to talk to you.”

“I suppose we didn’t need to, eh?” said Jack.

“Yep, s’pose,” said the man, looking down in thought.

“Can’t fit everybody into your life,” offered Jack.

“No, you can’t. But we’re neighbours, eh,” answered the man, saying with his face and tone that maybe they should have got to know each other.

“Yep. The whole country’s been getting more and more disconnected,” commented Jack.

“Yeah.”

“I’m Wayne,” said Wayne, offering his hand, with a heartfelt smile on his face.

“Mine’s, Jack. Pleased to meet you, Wayne.”

Just then, Brig came walking towards them.

“Hey, Jack,” said Brig, as he nodded to Wayne.

“Brig!” said Jack, so glad to see his friend right now. Jack and Brig had been working together in the work of their Faith in regenerating community for eighteen years or so since Jack’s original journey to deeper places.

“I was visitin’, Judy, up the road, when the quake hit.”

“Judy’s his sister, Wayne. Is she okay, Brig? Where is she?”

“She’s okay. She’s headed off,” answered Brig.

Thoughts of *where* was she going, and *why* was she going, went through Wayne and Jack’s minds. Their faces asked the question.

“The bush telegraph is ringin’ off the hook. Look *up*, fellas’,” said Brig.

Jack, Wayne, and Mrs Jelenik looked up into the early night sky. A few swear words followed, and then, apologies to the elderly lady followed that. There was a *second moon* in the sky. They just stood there looking at it. Then, Jack remembered back to Johandis and Halin, and his heart skipped a beat. They lived on a beautiful world that he had travelled to a long time ago, and *it* had two moons. “*Maybe,*” he thought.

“It ain’t nature made, Jack,” said Brig.

Jack’s heart sank with the comment, as he was reasonably sure that their moons were natural.

The Moonship was actually much smaller than the moon, but as it was in a closer orbit, it looked to be over two thirds the size of the real moon to them. The sky was quite surreal, and they couldn’t help but keep staring up at it as they talked.

“Maybe these *aliens* shook the world. If they can build something that size, what *couldn’t* they do?” offered Wayne.

“No,” said Brig, shaking his head and looking down at the ground for a few seconds.

They were all taken aback by his surety in all the unknown of the situation, as Brig then raised his head and shared his thoughts. “I think *we* let the ground fall. No spirit, no coherence, no ground. There is some chatter that there are some places; some special places, where the ground is *still strong* though. Me and Jude got the feelin’ of The Rock, The Pilbara, and Carnarvon. There might be other places. Jude’s already headed off, and I’m goin’ too.”

“Are you *serious*, man?” charged Wayne.

“*Deadly* serious,” replied Brig.

“*Turn tail and run then*. Don’t worry about helping your *neighbours*. Just go *bush* with your mates,” charged Wayne.

“Hey, *steady* fella’. We’re all *one* mob now,” responded Brig, in his defence, and to help Wayne understand something.

“He’s *still* right you know, Brig,” said Jack, with a painful expression on his face.

“Jack, you *know* me. There’s something about *those places*. The world’s in trouble, and I got a feelin’ that those places may at least bring some answers.”

“Still sounds like you’re *walking*, to me,” charged Wayne.

“I can see that,” said Brig, nodding his head, and giving off some humility in the way his eyes moved. “But this is something *new*, and you gotta have a bit of *vision*. I’m sure, in the depths of me, that I have to go; that the answers’ll be there; for *all* people, *longer term*.”

“I gotta say, I might go too...” Jack’s head suddenly seemed to want to explode, and the attack brought him to his knees.

He had been having these recurring episodes for a long time, but the doctors could not find the cause. They believed it might be an aneurism, brought on by a time when he lain for three days unconscious on his stairs, but they had struggled to find it in his scans. It was years ago, and Jack had just got used to these attacks being part of his life. Right now, though, a barrage of heavy emotions, some of distance, and some of grief, struck hard at him.

“You okay, Jack? Is it one of your things, mate?” asked Brig, as he lay Jack on his back on the grass.

“What! Is he epileptic?” asked Wayne.

“No, he just has these things. Don’t worry; he’ll come around any minute. It’s strange, I can feel people callin’ every time he has them. My name’s Brig, by the way.”

“Mine’s Wayne. I am stayin’ *here*, Brig. I got *nothing* against your culture mate, but I can’t follow you out bush on a whim.”

“You don’t have to, brother. We all gotta be, *where we all gotta be*.”

Wayne shook his head in disbelief, totally not getting it, while Misses Jelenik looked on with a smile, and said nothing.

“You comin’ good, Jack?”

“Yep, it’s gone. It’s hitting harder every time. I mightn’t have much time before it does me in, Brig.”

“Don’t be a victim, Jack. Whatever time you got; you have to *live* it.”

Jack smiled gently, and said, “Love you, man. Just *love your work*,” obviously happy with Brig’s candour, and his helping him see *the here and now*, and what *he can do*. Not what *might happen*.

“Just keepin’ it real, brother,” said Brig, with a cheeky smile.

There was a younger Brig in that smile; one that Jack had known on his journeys in the deeper byways of existence; one that loved a bit of fun, just a little bit more than his mate here in the real world. This older Brig was more serious, and when Jack had told Brig the stories of his time with the younger Brig in the nether places, Brig would always say, “That’s your dreamin’,”

Jack.” It had been nine years or so since Jack had found himself on the stairs of his townhouse after a journey Deeper, and many more years before that when he had first travelled to other worlds and deeper places. He could never be sure if his journeys were real, but they were a treasure to him.

Jack had spent a lot of time with this world’s Brig, over all those years, and had become good friends with him and his sister Judy. Jack still didn’t know if she was Brig’s *real* sister. Although he was close to the two of them, he just didn’t want to ask. Mainly, because they would probably play with him for a while before they told him. They often had the word on him with games about their culture, but he was pretty sure they were actual siblings. Maybe he would ask them one day, if it counted.

BRIG AND JACK WERE ON THEIR WAY. Jack had gathered a swag, a backpack with a few clothes, some nuts, dried fruit, and canned food packed in it; as well as some water. Brig already had a small handsaw, lighters, a torch, some good basic cooking gear, and plenty of water too. They had sorted out the load, strapped the gear on their backs, and headed off.

Brig had started walking off to the northeast, but Carnarvon was to the northwest; mainly west. Jack was a little concerned that his brother had been living in town too long, as they were heading in the wrong direction. He then said as much to Brig, and Brig told him that he and Judy had made a plan to meet up to the northeast of town; under a Messmate tree, where they used to camp when they went fishing at the river. He had told Jack that there was something special about that tree, and that place.

The two men were some miles out of town before Brig told Jack that they might have to find food along the way to Carnarvon, or ask for some as they went, as his bush tucker skills were a little weak. But also, that Judy could fish, and that she might even find a ride for at least part of the way. She knew a saltwater whitefella, and that was where she had gone, to see if he was still about. He lived off the grid and had a couple of old four-wheel drive vehicles, and a couple of large tanks of petrol which he used for the generator at his beach shed, as well as to top up his vehicles.

Many of the roads, and most of the large petrol storage facilities and infrastructure, had been destroyed in Groundfall, so all petrol now belonged to the rescue effort. Normal cars were not a real option for travel either with all the broken ground. So, Judy's friend was the perfect gift for getting them to their destination, or closer to it, faster and easier.

"Why didn't you tell me about this plan before we left?" now asked Jack, as they walked along in the night.

"Wanted to see if you were really committed, Jack," answered Brig.

"I got nowhere else to be..." with that, Jack fell down again, with strong pain in his head. Brig just lay him down on the side of the road and sat beside him until it passed. In a short time, Jack came out of it again. "That's twice. *Too* close together," said Jack groggily, as he sat up rubbing his neck.

Brig said nothing. He was strangely just sitting there beside Jack and staring off into the black night. Finally, he said, "We can camp here tonight, Jack."

"What's going on Brig?" asked Jack, knowing his friend well.

“I’m seeing some talk about a new star, another small light in the sky.”

“Another ship! Maybe the Moonship is a mother ship, and this is them coming to make contact,” offered Jack.

“No. It feels *deadly* different to the Moonship,” explained Brig, pointing to a bright star in the sky.

The ship was sat amongst the other stars, trying to mimic their random twinkling light, but falling short. Even Jack could tell that it wasn’t natural, but he thought that maybe Brig was trying to be too clever about it. He found Brig, and more especially Judy extremely intuitive, but they could also get a bit carried away with their own ideas sometimes.

“Com’on, Brig. Get real, mate,” challenged Jack. “How could you know it’s got nothing to do with the moonship?”

“I dunno’, Jack. It’s just got a different *feel*.”

The tone of the response told Jack something, so he just sat there on the side of the road, looking up at it, staring off into the night sky in a kind of weird acceptance. It *was* strange; *so strange* to him; *all* this that was happening. When things were strange on his journeys to other worlds and in the Deeper Places, it was okay; but this was *here*. It was even *more* surreal. He *was* thankfully used to changing realities, not even thinking about the struggle and panic in the minds of most people on the planet right now. So much destruction and change, *so quickly*. Mercifully though, people would move quickly to powerlessness and acceptance, as they really had no choice.

The next day, Brig and Jack walked for the whole day. They stopped here and there to eat and drink, and for the occasional rest under a good tree, talking mostly about simple things and

having more than a few laughs. Sometimes, deeper subjects would arise; and the ‘maybes’ about what was happening to their world. While they walked, Brig would talk about various plants and animals, and show Jack animal sign. Walking the ground again was bringing it all back to him, and he loved it. Jack was blown away just how much honey and nectar was around to be gathered, and Brig showed him many other things, like the mistletoe in the gum trees.

Jack had never noticed the mistletoe before. He had lived here all his life, and loved gum trees, yet never noticed the mistletoe hanging from their branches. Jack asked why he used an English word for it, and Brig explained that he and Jude, as he called her sometimes, had lost most of their language’s words for things in the bush. They took on some English words for them; mistletoe was one of them. He said that *so* much was lost when so many had been forced from their lands all those years ago. Taking people from their country had broken their culture, and their dreaming, because they were all one with the land and all wrapped together: law, land, and spirit. But even though it was devastating to his people, he was quick to say that he was *not* whinging, and firmly, that ‘*that story*’ had been written by those who came before us. Although he respected that story *to his core*, he was moving on to the future, to the *new* story. “We’re all human. One tribe, one mob,” he finished.

“THERE’S JUDE AND TREV, AND THAT’S OUR MESSMATE TREE,” said Brig, pointing ahead, and very excited after now three days of walking.

Jack looked at the tree towering above the four-wheel drive vehicle, and two people sitting on the hood. The great tree was set down in a paddock below the road, but left to right, on the high grassy ridgeline above, and beyond it, was a great line of the same trees. They stood like sentinels

in a line across the paddock's ridge. The scene was magnificent. The single tree had a presence, and a special spirit. It was not that Jack was deifying it. It was that he could feel its spirit, knew it was old, and felt great respect for it. Maybe it was just because it was a sign of a culture and a people he respected deeply and felt somewhat connected to. The Blessed Beauty had said that all things reflected the attributes of God, and also, that man could reflect them all.

"It's one of your places, isn't it mate?" commented Jack.

"I think it might've been, Jack. Sure, feels it. Can't be sure though. The people were taken from here, a long time ago. You know, brother, it's a special place in any case, and *my* history is *our* history. It's one of *our* places now, Jack."

"Yeah, mate. That's what I feel. My family's been here a long time, and I love my Irish spirit, but I'm *Australian* and I've always belonged here. I've *always* felt we had one history. The good and the bad. Our story's one story, for sure. Anyway, like you said to Wayne, we are all *human* now. Unity in diversity, eh?"

"Yeah, Jack. *All one*, but many," agreed Brig, as he waved to Judy and Trev.

Jack waved too, happily thinking, "*New friends, and new adventures.*"

The Halls

The day dawned, after the fifth night since the second moon had arrived in the sky. The gargantuan white spherical Moonship sat quietly in orbit, but there were stirrings on the outer hull that came from a building activity within. The noises had grown in intensity as the night wore on, and in the early dawn of this new day, forty-nine Great Spaceships suddenly burst from the shell of the Moonship. They came out all at once like a massive seed pod casting its seed, and they started moving toward their various destinations on the planet below. The spaceships were barely visible to the naked eye from the ground, in the dawn's early light.

The ships hummed almost musically as they flew down towards the earth. They were all a beautiful deep, yet iridescent, green, and were circular in shape, flat bottomed, and curved like shallow domes. They entered the atmosphere reasonably quickly and began to move along steadily at a uniform distance from the ground, in places all around the planet. Suddenly, there were explosions all over their hulls, as Earth's jet fighters fired their deadly loads. They sprayed the Great-Ships, broke off, and came around again to bring rockets to bear on them. The ships moved gently on, as a frenzy of fighters, rockets, bullets, and explosions filled the air around them.

The defensive action by the forces of the earth lasted over an hour, as even new weapons, not used before, were brought to bear on this unknown enemy. But these ships were huge and had not been damaged *at all* by the onslaught. They simply kept moving on their various trajectories, to their many destinations.

“Damn! Move up the next wave! They didn’t even blink,” yelled the General. Even though he knew that there was no time for a second wave, as did all in the situation room.

He was standing at a large table, a little bent over it and with his hands down on it, as he watched a live feed of the spaceship over the North American continent. The war room went silent, as they waited for his next command. The General did not want these ships on the ground, as his ground forces were weakened, and slower now, due to Groundfall. He was out of ideas, and it showed in the look of acceptance on his face, in his tight lips, and the air that was suddenly expelled from his nose.

“What do *you* suggest?” he asked, as he turned to a very thickset and broad bodied humanoid. It was like this creature was a block, and it wore a light grey suit; one that looked like overalls and a shirt underneath, but all made of the same dull silver material. He wore thick bone-coloured boots, and a dull silver helmet, that almost looked like the old helmets worn by those who hung steel in 1950’s New York. All this creature’s features, as well as its clothes and curved metal helmet, seemed to be dusty.

“We have no experience with these,” said the humanoid, dispassionately. “The only effective weapons you have to destroy them will destroy you too. It would seem foolish to use them. It is best that energies be put to work on your Groundfall. We can also work on taking them

from underneath when they land. Most are vulnerable from underneath, and we are powerful there.”

“Damn!” said the General again, as he turned away from the creature. So much was going through his mind.

“We aren’t *alone*, General. All NATO forces were unsuccessful...Hang on!” called out a soldier, at one of the consoles.

The General, and all in the situation control room, did just that, as they awaited news of some success.

“Make that, *all* planetary forces *unsuccessful*, Sir!”

The first of the huge ships now began to land beside Uluru. It looked almost like it had a huge circular armadillo hide and was about half the size of the great rock. The domelike body of the ship hovered a few meters above the ground, and then, nine great legs at regular intervals around its circumference came down. As these legs met the ground internal mechanisms inside them began to burrow into the earth, anchoring them to the ground. The Great Ship then seemed to settle down on its legs, like it sat down on them, almost as if it was a relief for it to do so. The legs were thicker at the top and thinner at the bottom, forming nine great archways around the circumference of the ship. On the side of the ship was written ‘Hall 4’, in great white letters.

The people of the land, and those visiting the rock, looked on in amazement, and with a little dread, when some large hatches opened all over the upper surface of the ship. These hatches folded back, like eyelids, to form openings that presented curved metal grates. A green gas then started to emanate, or waft out, through these grates. It was a surreal picture, and most were

shocked and awestruck at what they were seeing, as the green gas rose into the atmosphere and spread with the wind.

JACK AND THE CREW BOUNCED AROUND IN THE FOURWHEEL DRIVE. They had given it a real punishing since they joined up that day under the Messmate tree, but it had taken the beating well. Most of the roads had been good, and Trev had brought plenty of petrol in jerry cans. Food supplies, and other things, had not been high on the list of cargo, as they had to get where they needed to go as quickly as they could.

It had been a few days of travelling together, and they were now skirting a town when the bouncing suddenly, and thankfully, settled down. They had just hit the flattened ground of a wide flat red claypan.

“Slow down Trev. It’s a paddock, mate,” said Jack.

“We aren’t far now, Trev. So, steady up,” put in Brig, trying to slow Trev down too.

“Just want to get around this town without interference,” said Trev, with a bit of crazy eye going on, and his adrenaline driving the vehicle erratically.

They had skirted a number of towns before this one. The group had wanted to trust people as they went but decided they would do it when they *had to*. Just then, as fate would have it, they found they just *might* have to, as a front tyre blew, and they were all out of spares. *Fear had run them right into trouble, as fear mostly does.*

“Hell, Trev. He said, slow down,” chided Judy, turning with a smile to Jack and Brig in the back.

The men laughed out loud, and Trev let out a very emotional, and quite choice, cuss' word. Then he joined in with the laughter of the two other men, and Judy did the same. They all sat there laughing at their predicament and enjoying the magical humour of human fallibility. There was no blame in that vehicle, only the humour of life.

Just then, there was a tap on the window. They all looked out the driver's side of the vehicle, and there was a man with a gun pointed at Trev's head.

"Turn the vehicle off, mate," said the man, in no uncertain terms.

Trev was getting ready to make a crazy move, when Judy piped up, "*Just do it, Trev.* He's probably just as scared as we are."

Trev replied with his eyes, '*I don't know, Judy.*'

"*Turn off the vehicle,*" came the repeated order.

"*Turn it off,* Trev," warned Jack. "This guy has asked twice. If he'd gone bad, he would've just popped us off from behind a tree."

With that Trev relaxed and turned off the engine. Brig wound his window down and said, "Just travellin' through, mate. Trying to keep off the radar and get to the gorge."

"To the ship?"

"*What ship?*" asked Brig, surprised.

"*The great big, bloody, green one,* that everyone around here's talking about. It landed there yesterday morning," informed the man, as he lowered the rifle, now sensing that the occupants of the vehicle were not a threat.

“In the gorge?” asked Judy.

“Yep, right in the park at the mouth of the gorge. There are a lot of your mob there,” answered the man.

“You mean, *our* mob,” said Jack.

The man smiled, and said, “Yeah, *I suppose so*; considering everything.”

“My name’s Jack. This is Brig, and this is Judy. This fine gentleman is Trev.”

The man had a wry smile on his face as he looked at Trev’s crazy eyes, and said, “Mine’s Rowdy. It’s not really; it’s just what they call me.”

“Good to meet ya’, Rowdy,” said Brig, and Jack followed suit.

“We are just over the hill there if you want some tucker,” said the man, as he pointed the way. “We have another visitor. She’s interesting too.”

There was instant agreement about the offer of food, and they all got out of the vehicle, and started walking together towards the very gentle rise.

“*Interesting?*” asked Brig, as they walked.

“Yep. She turned up here today too.”

“So, what’s her deal?” asked Jack.

“Just found herself needing to come out here; *before* Groundfall. She just left her house, got in her car, and headed out this way. Said, she had a dream, and that she just had to act on it.”

“*Really. That’s great.* I’m looking forward to meeting *her*,” expressed Jack, feeling a sense of the way *he* had Travelled, in her story.

“You won’t be seeing her ‘til morning. My wife put her to bed because she was so exhausted. She’s heading for the spaceship too, so…” Just then, Rowdy started to laugh, and shake his head. “The *bloody spaceship*...like it’s *bloody normal*,” he added, as he giggled internally, but strangely like a child sharing a joke with himself.

They all laughed, as they walked together. They were all in the same boat, and in that moment, they were one, one mob. They didn’t know it, but it was now the first light, before the dawning of *one human family*.

BOTH MEN TURNED THEIR KEYS.

“Fire!” came the order, and both men hit the red button in front of them.

The accompanying sounds of the missile’s release seemed to punctuate the expressions on the faces of the sailors. The missile then burst through the surface of the water. Its target was the Moonship. It now gathered its deadly trajectory, then shot upwards and away.

The General had passed down the order to fire the missile from the situation room, even though he was not totally comfortable with the order he had received from higher up. But *comfortable* wasn’t what his job was about. He had been given full military command over all his country’s forces, and he had a job to do. They were still strong at sea, and the systems on the subs were not compromised by Groundfall. This had made the decision clear to use naval firepower for this strike.

The General became more hopeful with every moment of the missile's flight as he stood up in the situation room willing it on. Halfway to its target, some very small projectiles shot out of the Moonship.

"There is some movement, Sir. They're not showing up strongly on the radar, so they aren't metallic. They may be some sort of countermeasures."

"Countermeasures won't help them," said the General.

"Sir, we had planned for detonation further out of the Earth's gravitational field. If they are countermeasures, they will detonate the nuke closer to us, it will *definitely* become our problem."

"Damn...what contingencies have we got for this?" boomed the General.

The room was silent, until a military analyst said, "The missile is too far up now to reposition its targeting form the sub, and it's far too late for anything we've got to get to those countermeasures before they get to the missile, Sir."

"Goddamn incompetence! We had to see missiles coming in the scenarios, for God's sake."

"We were prepped for that, but we didn't expect countermeasures, especially non-metallic, Sir."

The small countermeasures zeroed in on the missile's flightpath, then spread across the path it would take to the Moonship. Suddenly, two of them shot outwards from the others, and came around in an arc, to gather speed, and match the trajectory of the missile, as it passed the line. The others then turned and followed the missile.

"Their counter measures seem to be following the missile, Sir."

“Following it?!”

“Hubble has eyes. Images are coming through, Sir.”

Pictures lit up on part of the very large situation screen. The missile was almost far enough away from the Earth now, and the Moonship had not moved. The General was more hopeful, and asserted, “Focus in on the countermeasures, or whatever they are. Hopefully they don’t know what kind of payload is on that missile and it will get close enough.”

They focused the space telescope on the projectiles that ran alongside the missile, but the pictures were fuzzy.

“Work on those pictures.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Just then, a soldier working at one of the monitors, called out, “Trajectory changed; new trajectory, Sir.”

“Of our missile, or those other damn things?”

“All of them, Sir.”

“What’s their heading!”

Another man on a computer screen, in civilian clothes, answered, “The Sun.”

“You have a strong adversary, General,” said the thickset dusty humanoid.

“We may not *have* an adversary, Sir. There have been no shots fired from the mother ship, or the landing ships we attacked. This action also seems defensive only,” said an analyst.

The General looked around the room for anyone else to share anything that might be of use. Other generals, officers, and intelligence people all gave him the *'I have nothing'* look.

“Pictures coming in from the Yosemite landing, Sir.”

The main screen split into two images; a broken fuzzy image of the missile and its new companions, and a clear image of one of the Great Ships at Yosemite National Park. There were people all around it, going in, *and* coming out of it.

“Get a sample of that green gas, and get it tested! They are in our space, and they are on our planet without an invitation. They’re still to be considered a threat.”

“I must get to work, General. We will need the bones of the dead to shore up the edges of the groundfall. It *must* be stopped before it spreads further,” said the humanoid. Only his words, not his body language or tone of voice, showed any hint of concern.

Groundfall had continued to grow after the great quakes; slowly but surely, it was spreading, and people were retreating before it. Sometimes too, new groundfalls began, with no warning. *No one* could be sure of their ground. It was chaotic, as there was no way to know what ground would be affected next. These humanoids, who had come to Earth’s aid, had no real answers in that aspect either, they just had the technology to shore up the ground. Anxiety was rising and chaos was growing, or threatening to, in many places.

“The President has to be informed of this new request,” said the General to the alien, as he felt a shudder go through his body at the thought of human bones shoring up the earth. “A meeting is scheduled. Please return to your ship, and do not draw attention to yourselves. There is enough chaos out there already.”

The humanoid turned and left, with no nod or indication. It did not seem like they were able to even bend their thick rigid necks. These aliens had soon after the Moonship; the ship that Brig had seen in the sky on the second night after Groundfall.

“Sir, we have a higher resolution and clearer pictures of the carpets, coming through.”

“Carpets!”

“And riders, Sir.”

“*Put it up on the screen, boy!*” yelled the General, as he stood up to get a better view of it.

It was a little fuzzy, but *there* were the carpets, *and* the riders. The riders had on small oxygen masks, and what seemed to be old biplane leather helmets with goggles. The riders seemed to be inside bubbles that encompassed them and the carpets.

“They are human, Sir. When we got eyes on them...well...*they waved*, Sir.”

“*They waved!?*” spluttered the General, almost exasperated, as he flopped back down on the chair. “*Carpets*,” he added, sitting back with his hands on the back of his head and beginning to smile; the others in the room started smiling too.

A soldier at one of the consoles was still so intent on his screen that he did not see the smiles. He simply answered the General, “Yes, Sir. *Carpets*.”

The whole room erupted in laughter.

“Beaten by *carpet jockeys*,” said the General, just keeping to a smile, and shaking his head.

A man in a suit sidled up to the General. “We had better get some of the right people out to that ship on the ground. We have to make formal contact.”

“Get it done,” said the General, as he sat back and exhaled strongly.

IT WAS THE MORNING AFTER THE FRIENDS HAD MET ROWDY. They had gotten up early, had breakfast, and then helped stack some eskies in the car. They had all waved Rowdy’s wife off, as she drove the children into town. She was taking what food they could into town to share with others and take the kids to school.

Everyone in the area had realised that banding closer together was the only way forward and had begun sharing what they had. There was a central pool of food and goods, and some other trading. It was like trading goods and services, but with a strong sense of charity. Everybody gave time, effort, or goods, and nobody was allowed to be idle. The ethos of the community had become, *‘What can I do for...us?’*

They had begun working together very naturally, as this community had been through a good deal of drought over time and received little or no support from outside their area, so they had already been at it for a while. It was a big change when the supplies of food and many other things had stopped with Groundfall but *making do* was not foreign to them.

There were many other places in the world where *community* was strong, and means were small: and for them too, the change was not as great. All these communities were used to the unyielding anvil of life and just got on with things. Strangely, or not so strangely, happiness and

even greater bonds were growing in this semi-desert community. The rains had also come to places to the north, thankfully, and the desert places west of them were blooming too.

Just now, Jack came out into the lounge room to join Brig and Judy, after washing his hands. He had been helping Rowdy with a few jobs, and just as he walked into the room, a lady emerged from the hallway. He just stood there a few feet from her, staring. The lady stopped, half smiled, and half frowned at Jack.

“You are staring,” said the lady.

“*Again,*” said Jack, totally unconcerned at the lady’s reaction.

“Oh, so you do it often?” asked the lady, a little intrigued at Jack’s words and demeanour.

“Only the second time,” said Jack, with a broadening smile. The lady turned away and smiled, but she wasn’t sure why.

“*Leave the girl alone, Jack,*” said Judy, with a big smile on her face too. She turned to Brig with a ‘well, what about that?’ look.

Brig and Judy had never seen Jack with any real interest in a woman since his divorce. He was warm, and a bit of a hugger, but he only ever seemed intent on the work that he and Brig shared. There *were* some of course, but they were only fleeting, and nothing so overt as this. Brig turned to walk out to the veranda, and Judy grabbed Jack to follow, then pushed him out the door. The lady stayed inside; she was okay, but a little taken aback, and wanted to gather herself.

Trev and Rowdy were sitting out on the veranda enjoying a cold lemon and water drink, when the three friends joined them. Rowdy had solar power and water tanks, as well as some windmills and a few flowing bore heads on the place. They had always had a fair vegie garden and

a couple of house cows; as well as some citrus trees. So, he was largely self-sufficient for now. A cold drink, a lemon, water, and a peaceful outlook was rare for most in these times.

“Lotta’ space out here,” offered Trev, as he looked out at the great expanse of flat land.

“Yep, *a lot* of space; big flat, red brown land, that goes on forever,” said Rowdy, with a real love in his voice.

“You lived out here, *eh, Jack?*” asked Trev, but more a comment.

“Yep, well, not here, but in Gundi’ and Cunnamulla. Loved the desert-country most. Nearly didn’t leave Cunnamulla; loved my family there.”

“You got family there, Jack?” asked Rowdy.

“No, Rowdy, all friends, but I’ve come to realise they were like brothers, and mothers, and fathers; some really great sisters too.”

“Yep,” said Rowdy, “I’ve had a few mums when I was younger, and runnin’ about half mad.”

Jack chuckled at the shared experience, and said, “Community, eh.”

“Yeah, Jack.”

These two spoke the same language, and they knew it. Jack could speak many languages because of his life experiences. They were *all* English, but they were all *different*.

“This is Jennifer,” said Rowdy, as the lady finally walked out on the veranda.

Judy and Brig smiled at each other, with that ‘*Oh, so it’s her?*’ look on their faces, and then they both looked over to Jack with questioning faces about how this could be the woman he had shared stories about. But Jack was not looking at them. He was staring again, and the lady was trying not to notice as best she could. Trev on the other hand, had no clue, and just smiled at the lady. He then looked at Jack, then Judy, and then looked confused; and Judy, just smiled.

“For God’s sake, Jack. She doesn’t *know you*,” said Judy, trying to wake Jack up to the lack of courtesy he was showing this lady.

Jack again realised his foolishness, and his bad manners, and dropped his gaze, but he had never forgotten her. Since his return from that journey, nine years ago, no other woman could hold his attention. He looked over at Judy and nodded in thanks. He trusted Judy with women’s business, and other life business as well. He also knew that he had to say something to ease this soul, so he said to her, “Listen, I’m sorry. You remind me of someone who was *very very* dear to me. Someone I lost a while ago. So...*you know*.”

The lady just nodded, a little relieved and showing understanding. Then Jack sat down beside Trev, looking away into the distance. Judy was still questioning, and then she realised that this was *actually* the *Jennifer* he had talked about, *somehow*. Brig now introduced everyone, “I’m Brig, this is Judy, and that’s Trev. The lost soul over there is Jack.”

Jack waved but kept looking forward and away from the others. Judy, then went on a search for the truth of this Jennifer, for her friend Jack, and to help this poor girl to get at ease with this mob descending on her.

“So, Jennifer, Rowdy tells us dreams brought you here. You aren’t a bit *brown* are ya?”

Jennifer smiled at that, and gathered some relief, but was somehow concerned for Jack. It was strange that she felt for him when she should be more concerned about her safety. These were strange times, and she was learning faith in the unfoldment of things, but this man, and these feelings where all a bit sudden, and a little confusing for her. Thankfully, Jack's friends were helping.

"Not that I know of, Judy," she replied, softly.

Judy just looked around at Jack and caught his eye. With a look, she said to him, 'I see why you like her.' 'I like her.' Judy could see things clearly in another person almost straight away.

"So, Jennifer, would you like to tell us about your dreams?" requested Brig, gently.

Jack was very curious, but he had to leave. He was just about bursting and was not one for sharing his tears with anyone. He knew the Jennifer he met on his travels deeper was not real, and this was not her, but *it was her*, and his feelings were still very strong.

He wandered off and walked along near a huge tractor shed. He was distracted, and holding back the pain of his separation from her, when he tripped and fell in a shallow oil sump pit; face first. Rowdy always bled his cars and tractors there, over the years. Jack spat out the oil, as he pulled himself up out of it. He wiped it as best he could away from his eyes and mouth, while throwing a few words out there on how he felt about it. The front of his clothes was coloured in, and a good deal of his hair was filled up, with the black-brown oil. Then, he started to laugh at the mess, and then, he laughed harder at himself and his whole predicament.

He loved the ways that life slapped you about until you finally woke up. But, as he ran his hand up through his hair to squeeze out some of the oil, a deep sadness joined his joy. He had a

melancholy moment, and he let it have its way. After a short time in that place of acceptance, he realised that he had to *get on with reality* and shake off the dreams of all those years ago. He had to accept that the feelings were real, but the reality he had experienced was not.

He had learned much about dreams since his last journey, and he knew that dreams were about cycles of learning, long and short. The soul was beyond time and space, seemingly living in the reality of meaning. That, a dream played out in life, was only important for its meaning, and as a marker of the time in the cycle. It was all less magical now, and for Jack, simply a part of reality. He had learned that *meaning* connected *times* in our lives, or more truly, that *our lives* connected meaning and learning.

A little hope sparked in Jack's heart with these thoughts, and he already knew he had to just get on with life, so he got himself up and walked back to the veranda.

"He was brown all over and his hair stood on end," finished Jennifer, as Jack rounded the corner.

Jennifer's heart jumped, and some small tears came to her eyes. It was her dream. It was Jack, and there was a lot more that she had not shared with the others, now filling her with strong emotion. The others just laughed as Jack walked past them, and inside to the shower. Jennifer's heart jumped again, as he walked by. Judy and Brig then looked to each other and smiled, both, with a nod and big eyes.

ROWDY DID NOT HAVE A TYRE TO FIT THE FOURWHEEL DRIVE. But he had been sure that he could rig up something. So, he and Trev had got on with some *bush mechanics*.

They changed the tyres around, took out the moving parts of one of the back axles, and made up a flexible steel ski that they welded onto it. They also jiggled up another shock absorber to it as well. As long as they went slow and kept to reasonably flat ground, and on the clay pans, they could get a long way. Rowdy had been hopeful that it would hold for long enough, as he waved the small band of friends off.

The system was a real triumph, until some of the welds broke about halfway to the gorge. Brig and Trev then used a great tree branch, with its natural crook, and stuck it under the back axle, and through a hole in the wheel well that Rowdy had cut out in the modifications he had done. The branch was set backwards like a flexible dragging ski. It just propped the car up and gave a natural shock absorption. It took two of these branches that slowly wore down, and two slow moving days, before they eventually had to walk.

Jennifer had come with the four of them, and she and Jack had a lot of trouble even speaking to each other. Her feelings, and his, it seemed, were all over the place. Even though Judy felt for them, she was *more* than over feeling it, so when the group stopped for a rest and some water under a tree, she said, “For God’s sake *you two*, go find your *own* tree and get these feelings sorted. It’s driving me *crazy*.”

Brig smiled; and Trev, as usual, just looked confused.

“Yep, com’on Jennifer. Let’s go and have a talk. I have a lot of things to share. They *are* a bit whacked out, but you have to understand some things about me,” offered Jack.

“Well, what I have to share is not so normal either,” responded Jennifer.

“We are on our way *to a spaceship*,” added Judy, with that wonderous aboriginal emphasis, along with smile and eyes that said, ‘*Are you kidding?*’, and ‘*Just get on with it*’.

Jack and Jennifer smiled at that, and walked off together to find a good tree, and when they found one, they sat down in its shade, looked out, and talked. Jack went first. He just dove into it, explaining his journeys and her part in them, or *his* Jennifer’s, at least. Because of the crazy stories Jack was telling, Jennifer felt more and more confident about what she had yet to share.

“...So, you can take it how you like. There is a whole lot more, but I don’t want to seem *too much* like a total fruitcake. I don’t know what’s real sometimes, but the whole thing was very real to me,” finished Jack.

“Dreams are strong, and sometimes the feelings in them are very strong,” said Jennifer. She then shared her dreams, and how they had guided her, and how she saw him. She did not share the deeper feelings, as she thought it was not yet appropriate. “So, we know each other a little now. It’s a start, and it’ll take a lot of the emotion out of the air.”

“Judy will appreciate that,” said Jack.

“*She is something*, isn’t she?”

“*She is*. I remember one day, there were about ten of us, all sitting down having a big intellectual discussion on the world, its problems, how people were disconnected, and what that all meant. We were really reaching some high intellectual places, and she just said, “I am Judy, and I live on Barcoo Rd.” It’s hard to explain, but those words just smashed through all the words and ideas, and as she walked past the high towers of intellect we had built, they just collapsed. She

showed us that what we were exploring was *really simple*; that it was about *people*, and actually being there *with* them, not off in endless words and ideas. It *blew* my mind.”

“That’s lovely. The truth is very simple.”

“It is, Jen. There was also another time,” Jack started, with a bit of a chuckle, “when I was trying to share my Faith with her really gently. At least *I* thought so. To her, it was right in her face, she told me later. Anyway, she asked me to look *right at her*, her face and eyes, and repeat three times the name of my Faith. I did it, and I could *see* her. I mean I saw *where* she was; what her beliefs were; what her reality was. It was simple, *powerful*, and very clear. A lifetime of discussion would have never shown her so clearly to me. I think it just gave me the coordinates of my beliefs relative to hers and showed me my disrespect. I let her be, and we became closer friends. She holds her own reality; her own belief. Just love her.”

“That’s nice.”

“Well, at least now we can relax a bit more,” said Jack, getting back to the feelings between him and Jennifer.

“Yes. *Go from here*,” offered Jennifer.

“Yep,” said Jack smiling, and they both walked gently back to join the others.

The Purpose

It was getting late into the evening when they came upon a great line of cars. It was like the road, as well as the ground beyond the table drains, here, had become a great big car park. The friends looked ahead, beyond the cars, seeing the green hue created by the gas in the evening sky. It was surreal, and quite magical, but they experienced many other emotions as they walked towards the Great Ship.

As they got closer, they strangely felt more and more at ease. It was like the gas was changing something. It took Jack back to the memory a sky miner called Alabast, on his last jaunt, who told him to live in his heart and that the rest would follow. They were all feeling the love in the air, and now realised how it had been missing in the atmosphere of the world before Groundfall. It was a tangible difference, and the feeling prompted Judy to say to Jack, that she was glad he and Jennifer had sorted things out.

“It’s all cool, Judy. She doesn’t feel like I do. I think we can be good friends,” said Jack, trying hard to kid himself.

“Look at her, Jack. Get out of your thoughts and look at how she *looks* at you. *Men*; so dumb.”

They both had a bit of a laugh, and Jack asked, “You think so?”

“*God* yes, Jack.”

“I hadn’t lost hope, but I didn’t *see* that.”

“You can’t help it that God made you a man, Jack. *That’s why He built us*. You fellas’ *really needed help*.”

They both started to laugh a whole lot more, and the others looked back to share the joke, but it was not forthcoming.

“Secret, *me and Jude* business,” said Jack, smiling, and Judy nodded her head to them to put a full stop on it.

The small band eventually reached the campgrounds in the mouth of the gorge and made their way through many small wooden living pods recently built there. The pods were small; eight sided, and had wooden tile rooves. Some had small landings out to one side, with just a few steps up to them. They were built up just a foot or so off the ground, and they were alike, but not the same. There were big purple shade nets that sat above them that radiated out a metre or so beyond their walls.

As the small band walked along, they looked at the spaceship. The huge Great Ship’s dome loomed high above the pods, and above the trees beyond them. The iridescent scaley green skin, and the green gas, made it seem like a great creature snoozing gently in the cool of the evening.

Jack imagined it as a great dragon sleeping there, and he jumped a little, did a little jig, and turned to the others, “Can you believe this thing? *It’s real.*”

They all then stood there in a wide-open area in amongst the pods that led up to it, just enjoying the view, and the feeling of awe. It was strange, but they all felt a little trepidation at going on towards it as well as their excitement, along with a sense of respect in waiting there a while.

“Are you guys new?” came a voice from a nearby pod.

“Can you tell, mate?” said Brig, with a smile.

“Well, yes. *Magnificent* isn’t it.”

“It *sure* is,” said Brig, as the man came up to them, and shook his hand.

“I’m Phil. This is the men’s section. The family section is over there and the women’s section over there.”

“What?!” said Trev. “I don’t like the idea of us splitting up.”

“When in Rome, I s’pose,” said Judy. But she looked at Brig as if she was all at once comfortable, and not comfortable, with it.

“If you want to do things your own way, there is a camp to the south. They’re still part of things, and we all work together, but they just aren’t comfortable with the way of things here,” offered Phil.

“How do you see it, Phil?” asked Jennifer.

“I think it’s all fine, no matter *what* you do. There is an intake at 7.30 this evening. They explain the basics there.”

“The aliens?”

“I’m not going to spoil *that* story for you. You’ll just *love it*,” said Phil.

IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT IT COULD LIFT OFF, LET ALONE FLY. The Great Ship was huge, and beautiful. Phil had explained that they were called Halls, and there was a Main Hall inside where they welcomed new people who came to the camp; among other things. The Ship sported the designation of ‘Hall 3’ on its hull.

As the friends walked in through the outer arches, they were very excited; yet also felt some reverence as they eventually came into a large central *Great Hall* with a high vaulted ceiling. The ceiling was ornate, burnished steel, and great thin arches that supported it. The arches rose up from the floor and met at its centre. They were made of the same metal, with goldleaf embellishment colouring them. Huge carpets covered the floor; a great carpet in the centre, and others laid out in orbit around it. Other smaller halls encircled this Great Hall, and the people waiting here now, had all entered through one of these small halls. They had seemed huge until they entered this great central hall. There must have been other levels above all these inner halls, but Jack could not see any obvious access.

The crowd grew, and some sat down on the carpets, while others stood in groups. The hum of conversation filled the room, until five people came out of a hatch that opened like an eye, but sideways. It was almost like the wall had simply opened.

“They *seem* human,” said Trev.

The five people walked to a stage made of wood scaffolding, so they could address the crowd. A lady, who looked like an Islander, began to speak.

“We only stand above you as a service to you. So, you can see us, and that what we say will be clear. We are here to be of *service* to you. We are here to help you rebuild. We are here by the Will of The Centre of All Things. My friends here, and all those who have come in the ships, are originally from this planet. We are your kind. We were taken and trained, and deepened, because it was known that Groundfall would come to pass. We have built these structures as a service to our kind, and we have worked hard beyond your view to build what we were bid, to create some order for humanity into the future.

Chaos surrounds us. There are other Halls, and we are like islands of calm amongst the destruction. We have begun to send out ‘*Seeders*’. Our riders will be spreading the seed of the seed trees that will bring some new fruits, and you will be taught how to tend them. They are also designed to keep the ground strong, while you rebuild communities again.

We have a number of courses on community building that you may also attend. They are founded on spirit, as it was the lack of spirit that made our ground weak and brought down the cities. The lack of love too, made our world dry, and, more and more lifeless. The green gases you see rising from the Hall are meant to augment life by bringing balance, and the rains. The essence of this gas is love, but it is limited, and although you do not understand, the love you give out from now on will augment life and bolster the water cycle.

The first courses on nurturing the fruit trees, and the first courses on community building will begin at 9 am. There will be prayers at 6 am each day, here in the main hall, before breakfast.

It does not matter what culture, creed, or religion you hold; all are welcome to pray with us; and of course, only if you wish. One thing, we would ask you to understand is that any diversity present within the mix of peoples here is *a gift*. So please couch all your differences in the unity of this camp, and in the unity our kind. If prayer is new to you, please find your own sense of what you see as God, and join us, again, if you wish. It can do no harm and will help bind us.

In time, *all* your questions will be answered, but if you have any questions that seem important, we can take some now.”

One person put up his hand.

“Yes,” said the lady, and then, said almost immediately, “It would be best if we talked alone, Mister Johnston.”

All attention turned to Jack, and another lady came from the side of the crowd to gather him. He smiled widely at his friends. He was just loving the fact that his journeys may now have been real, or at least part of them; but mostly, because he didn’t often get Brig and Judy surprised. He looked at his friends with a feigned, ‘*Yes, I know about all this*’ look, that was obviously just for fun. Brig and Judy smiled, Jennifer was just in surprise, and Trev was thinking about what he *didn’t know* about Jack, and *these people*.

Jack turned and talked with the lady who had come through the crowd, making a request. She shook her head, and Jack stood there making it clear he was not going anywhere unless his request was granted. She thought about it quickly, then nodded, and Jack turned to his friends, and said, “Come on. You’re gonna’ *love* this.”

“So, again, I will take any questions,” called the Counsellor, as Jack and his friends were lead from the hall.

“YES, JACK, WE ARE OF *THE DEPARTMENT*,” replied the Counsellor, speaking with the Jack and the friends in a small room. “We *did* ask you in, and we *have* found you amongst us, at times, since then,” not sharing the details, and her deeper understanding, of Jack’s travels that she was well aware of. Knowing that it was not wise, and a disservice to his development, she simply continued on in relation to where he seemed to be right now, “But you were to stay on Earth and help run the community building courses of the Blessed Beauty. I don’t know if you have, but they are like orchards out there now, feeding and shoring up the ground of the communities they developed in. As to what happened, or what did not happen, to you *beyond* our doors; what was real, and what was not, in your journeys, I cannot say.”

Jack had met this Counsellor in deeper places on his last journey, so she was the first tangible link to *The Department*, and places Deeper. He had been after answers and had asked many questions all at once. The Counsellor was now doing her best to answer them.

“If you have learned things in other places, we would say that is for use here and now. As is *all* learning. It doesn’t matter if those places exist or not. The Creator conducts the *Greater Plan*; we simply work on the Lesser Plan of action. All the while trusting in, and accepting, that the *wisdom* of the Greater Plan is in motion; for this planet, for you, and our kind,” explained the Counsellor, making it clear that he simply had to give way to acceptance and use what he had been granted.

Jack stood there reflecting as the Counsellor gave him time to digest. Some things were clear, and others weren't. He would still look for answers, but he did understand that *what was real, and what was not real in his journeys*, did not seem to matter. It was all about *using what he had gathered*. One thing he *was* sure of though, was that this *was* the world of Johandis and Halin. A wonderful world he had visited many years ago on his first journey, now understanding that he had visited the future. The blue green sky had clinched it. He would be helping to build the embryo of a new and wonderful civilisation; a *new world*. He was going to be there, here, at the beginning of the new culture, and he loved that idea.

He turned and looked at Jennifer, realising that parts of his last journey must have been dreams; at least with her, it *must* have been. Or was it? He wasn't sure. Things were starting to become a little clearer though, about what was *deeper*, what were *dreams*, and what was *real*. Then, little anomalies came to him, and his mind crashed again, as he could not work it all out. Even his body swayed and struggled to keep balance while he thought about it, and Jennifer and Judy laughed at the confused look on his face.

Still determined to get the big picture, his mind clicked away, and he got lost in it, and with it his sense of reality. Such is the way when the mind seeks to be the soul, or seeks to rise beyond its ability, and knowledge, too quickly. He began to reel, and now knowing he was lost in it, reached for solid ground. He allowed himself to *not know* again, and to return. He was coming back to the reality of what was now before him. Also, by reminding himself that Brig was real, home was real, and his family was real, when suddenly, Jack suffered another attack.

The pain and the feelings of loss tore at him, and it was *so* severe that he passed out.

He found himself on a great steel suspension bridge. It was a bright but deep blood red, sitting in space with the stars all about it. It sat there, attached and grounded to nothing. There was only one tower with a short span one side of it, and a longer span on the other. He stood at the rails beside the roadway, looking out to the heavens. It was a sight, and he looked down and up, then turned to look at the great structure that he had found himself on. On the cement road surface, under the tower, was a large digital display, and it was counting down. These numbers of light seemed to project through the two-metre-thick cement span, and as they counted down, the bridge at either end would lose tiny pieces of cement; the pieces of which, fell upwards. Jack was no longer in pain, and he wondered at this place.

“Are you okay, Jack?”

Jack was on the ground, and groggy, and those around him waited for him to answer.

“Yep. I’m okay. *Damn*, I hate these things,” he finally answered, still feeling some deep pain.

“Are you unwell, Jack?” asked the Counsellor.

“Yep, I get these attacks. It started years ago. There is something in there the doctors can’t find,” said Jack, pointing to his head.

“We would like to see you well, and we *may* be able to help. But what is *planned* for you, may be *planned*. We will have to be cautious.”

“Anything you can do would be helpful,” said Jack, standing up with Brig and Jennifer’s help.

“You are all welcome to sleep here tonight. It is wonderful to see your obvious unity,” commented the Counsellor, seeing the bonds in this small group. “*Unity* is what will save this world.” Then she quoted the Blessed Beauty...

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole Earth.”¹

“That’s from the Creative Word,” said Brig.

“Yes, they are the Words of the Blessed Beauty. There is always need for an Educator, in every era, for the reawakening of souls and revivifying the human system. The Creative Word is the return of The Spirit. It realigns the human mind, and world, to the spiritual core. The Creative Word, and striving, will shore up the ground, just as the trees and rebuilding communities will. The Spirit of The Beauty has come, the Sun already rising on a New Age.

In the central Great Hall, we *all* learn from these words before we go about our day. We share learning about the trees, and their fruit, and how to propagate them; we will also help you develop the spiritual resilience to venture out to help our kind. The new civilisation will be founded on spirit. The ground is weak from the void of spirit and character; character has certainly waned in the increased material focus of mankind.

At the end of each day, we return to the Great Hall to study The Word, then go to our pods or outside in the natural places to reflect on our day; to see where we are, and what we need to learn more about. The rest is time for social and artistic endeavour. *All* will be part of *all*.”

“What about all the different beliefs?” asked Brig.

“All are free to be in *all* the activities, *some* activities, or even just *part* of them. There is no force to be applied to anyone; anyone of any belief, or of no belief. All will evolve as it will, as He Wills. There is to be *no* separation. Unity is *first*, and *last*, and *all* that is in between.”

“So, do we *have to* study, and grow fruit trees? I might like to just build pods. I don’t go with all this fruit tree and *God* stuff,” said Trev.

“That is an honourable service. Your service to your kind is *yours* to choose, and we all need to pitch in. *All* have much to give. Free will, and the freedom to believe as you do, is your right, *beyond* the criminal and the perverse. All who are born into this system have that right.”

“So, there are laws?” asked Trev.

“Free will is a law of life. But there must be *some* laws to keep order here, and laws needed to suit the conditions of each human Age. Laws keep people safe, provide justice, and an environment, for communities to grow and to safeguard peace. *Chaos* is the enemy; spiritually based laws provide wellbeing.”

Trev was still not happy. “We’ve had some real nutcase religions in the past,” stated Trev, still not getting it that these people were humans, “so I’m not so sure I want to be here *at all*. ”

“Please be assured the laws are just, and the right to speak honestly is enshrined in them. But, if you struggle with them, you may leave. You will *not* be *kept* here. But if you stay, we must ask that the laws be adhered to. They are mainly small sanctions and enacted with mercy. That is *all* we can offer you.”

“Yep, okay. *We’ll see*,” said Trev, feeling his right to his own choices.

“You are honest, Trevor, and it is very much required if we are to succeed. Just know that we don’t seek to control. We seek to empower.”

“Yep, *we’ll see*,” repeated Trev, with some badly acted bravado.

“We are only here in The Halls for a time. Most of us will go back to our home communities around the planet; others of us will return deeper. The Halls will also return to Certitude. It will stay in orbit, but it will be closed down in time. It will be a new light in the night. *You all* will go out to rebuild where you came from, or wherever you decide to go.”

“So, Certitude is the name of your mother ship,” said Jennifer.

“Certitude has been gifted to this world.”

Just then, heavy rain began to fall, and was heard on the hull of the Great Ship. It sounded a little like the rain on a corrugated iron roof, as they had been talking in one of the upper rooms near the skin of Hall 3. The room was very simple, and was to see to basic human needs, just as the pods were. All those in the small room now looked out, through what was an elliptical window, much wider than it was high.

“The frog’s mouth’s opened,” said Judy.

Seeds

Jack, Brig, and Trev were on their bunks. They had settled in for the night. The lights were off, and they had been talking for a good while in the dark.

“Hey, I just enjoyed not being the *only* one without a clue. It was always, *just me* asking the questions, anytime I came in contact with *The Department*. *It’s normal* not being sure with those guys. So, don’t worry, Trev. *Actually*, they were way more forthcoming than I’ve been used to,” explained Jack.

“But can we trust ‘em Jack?” asked Trev.

“I would say *one hundred percent*, mate. I think they have more of a clue than most, and their intent *is* pure. But just because you’re one of them doesn’t mean you’ve got it all down. They even admit to that. So, yep, Trev, you can trust ‘em.”

“Better here with you guys than out there at that other camp anyway, I reckon, and I don’t even *have* to do the *God* thing.”

“No, mate,” said Jack, smiling in the dark.

“So, I’ll just sleep in, while you go to prayers with your religo’ mates tomorrow,” said Trev, having a chuckle to himself.

“Good night, Trev,” said Brig.

“Yep, you have to get up early *too*, *don’t ya*’, Brig,” said Trev, really enjoying himself. Then, sighing with great satisfaction, he turned over, and went to sleep.

The room went quiet, and all three of men got the soundest night’s sleep they had gotten since the great quake.

Words

“Hey, Jack.”

Jack just breathed in, got himself as poised as could right now, and looked around. He knew this was a dream, but he had been brought back to this place so many times. It was a dream he could not escape, and it had been a nightmare, mostly. He was returned here time and again, and he knew it was because he still had much to learn.

“Hi, Thomas,” responded Jack, finding himself almost saying that it was good to see this man again by the tone of his words. But it was a lie, and although Jack was past talk and lies, he couldn’t help it. He knew that he would have to keep striving to make his word true, even when it was difficult, but right now he had watched his greeting fail in honesty, while not so, in some kindness to Thomas. He knew that unity took honesty as well as kindness, as he had seen what half-truths, gossip, and not speaking up had done to this Garden in the past. He had seen a kind of spiritual dishonesty, play acting, and endless talking in people. They seemed to do it in the hope that they would be seen as a good follower of Law. “We’re all flawed, and all working our way forward, so why not just accept it in ourselves, and keep striving,” he thought.

Jack had seen in his life how honesty could cut through any intrigue or manipulation. He had seen it cut through ignorance like a knife. To him, the level of honesty was one barometer for the spiritual health of a community, or the health of any social group. It was one of the crucial requirements for true unity. Ego is a constant trickster and a liar, and seeks to hide the truth, when it does not suit its wants, whether people are aware of it or not. Self-honesty, and honest acceptance of our true ability, allows communities to grow from where they really are. Honesty, to Jack, was clearly a large element for a solid foundation on which you could build; as an individual or a group.

He also knew now that one simply needs to walk with God, and that all beyond us is God's business. Also, that honesty needed to be in service, used in kindness and tact, and not in judgement. But sadly, he would very soon fall heavily to the failing of judgement, and in many small ways after that. Why do we think we are always right, and have a right to judge? Are we so afraid of hurt, or life, when none of us holds perfection? It would seem that Jack had not heeded even his own recent thought of accepting our imperfections as we grow, or that his ego had hidden this aspect of that same truth.

"Haven't seen you for a while, Jack," said Thomas.

"Yep, I had hoped that you would never have seen me again," stated Jack, with as much honesty as he could now gather.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"I have no choice. I have to be here, or I can't be of any use to the Cause I love. The Garden draws me back here."

“Well, that’s honest. It’s hard for me too, Jack.”

“Really!?”

“Yep. Every time things grow, and every time they fall. I see my failures, and mostly struggle with my lack of speaking up.”

“That’s great, Thomas.”

“Is it?”

“Yes, you can see what you have to do, and to be frank with you, I always felt that those who said nothing were as bad as those who would not shut up. It creates an imbalance; an imbalance, I always thought was my duty to remedy. But I learnt my powerlessness trying to do it. In the end, it’s up to all of us to grow.”

“Yes. We’ve made a lot of mistakes on our way. I can see clearly now that real communication, and allowance for people to speak, are essential for a healthy group.”

“Yep, honest communication,” reiterated Jack.

“Oh well, we know now, Jack. It’s all a process.”

“Yep. Keep learnin’ eh,” said Jack, smiling. “You know, while we’re putting it all out there, I reckon there are people you work more easily with too.”

“But we can’t think that way, Jack. Law calls us to unity. Seeing things through and growing our souls in any hardship.”

“Sure, but I’ve found, at home, that my service has faltered due to wasting too much energy on someone’s ego, or fears, when some boundaries often set me free to act. It’s become a clear reality to me. I’ve seen whole communities falter on the rock of someone’s ego.”

“Maybe we do work better with some people, but we don’t have to call attention to those who it is harder to work with,” offered Thomas.

“Yep, I think working with people that work with you, and having an honest relationship with those you don’t, works.”

“I think we can even get beyond that place, Jack.”

“Yep. I believe so too, but I reckon this is the way to that place for me. I want to be free in the full intention of love, but I’m not there yet. I also believe that honesty and courage in people builds open communication and forms real bonds of love. That love built on genuine relationships with each other are the way there.”

“Maybe. But it may not be possible, and we can’t wait until we are all there to get on with the work. I think humility is the most powerful way,” offered Thomas.

Jack just breathed out, as he knew how sublime and powerful humility was. He knew it trumped anything he had shared until now. He knew, how his lack of it shut him off from others and created trouble. He knew, from experience, that when he had let this joyous power take him through something, he had been free, and less wanting to control. He had simply shared his ideas easily and let them go. At these times he had allowed the process to unfold in front of him and waited quietly to learn more. Then he remembered, what a Surfer had once taught him about poise;

about sitting deep in humility. Humility, it was sublime, and very powerful, but there seemed to be a place for all these things in Jack's estimation. "Maybe, it's about all these things, Thomas."

"Maybe," responded Thomas.

"It's good to see you, Thomas," now said Jack, genuinely.

"Good to see you too, Jack."

Jack woke from the dream relieved, refreshed, and ready for the day. It was earlier than the group-prayer time, and he was happy about that. He always liked time for a wander outside in the morning. He drank some water, put on his walking hat, and headed out of the ship. When he got out into the early morning sunshine, he looked up at the sky. He just knew it would rain again today, but not for an hour or two, so he headed off into the gorge.

The pathway that led up into the gorge, followed alongside a stream, and crisscrossed it at intervals in amongst the trees, as the small flow meandered down through the wide soiled gorge floor. The vertical rock faces on both sides towered above the trees that grew here, but much higher on one side; at least here where Jack now was. Great gums were dwarfed by the gorge's massive random, yet ordered, blocklike form. Great, almost straight, black crevices and cracks ran through its form creating a kind of irregular blockwork. It almost seemed like huge thick wide blocks made up these high walls.

"This stream might grow with good rain," he thought. He remembered *his river* of two tides, and now picturing it in full flood made him just a little wary. He didn't know this country, or this creek, he knew that this high tight country was the type of country that may quickly change

this gentle stream into a torrent of trouble. He didn't believe it would rain that much today and wasn't really concerned; it was just a bush sense thing.

He wandered through the bush, with interspersed low clumpy palms, and high palm trees, in amongst the bushes and gum trees that he was used to. This place was protected in a way because of the gorge walls, and it was ancient. The palm trees were a sight to see out here in the bush, and yet they looked right at home. He had been told that when the sea level was different eons ago, before the gorge had formed, that this was a river delta at the edge of the sea. He saw in the palms here, the nature of reliance, and the protection of fate, and he contemplated those realities in his own life, as he wandered along the track into the gorge.

JACK GOT BACK TOO LATE FOR PRAYERS, but he didn't care. He had missed breakfast too, but he wouldn't have missed his wander around for anything. He saw it as sustenance and being with God anyway. The wisdom available in nature was mind boggling, especially when he reflected on the things he came across in relation to wisdom in the Creative Word, just like he had this morning. So much understanding had come to him on reliance, and the protection of fate, and their relationship to other things. The flow of such reflection was almost endless if you allowed it.

He had constantly referred to the palm trees, their reality and environment, and by this, somehow seen more deeply, aspects of the Creative Word, life, and the evolving work of his Faith. Even a turning in the path was meaningful when his thoughts changed, or had the path changed them? He really didn't have a formula, but he could find the echoes of the spirit in the natural landscape and in the nature of physical existence. It was certainly a magical way to start the day.

He now entered the Great Hall within Hall 3, and to his joy and amazement, there were see-through words floating high above the crowd. They looked sublime somehow, as there was no screen.

“The words are for contemplation and reflection before we start the day,” offered one of *The Department* people, to him gently.

Jack smiled. He simply *loved* this morning. So much had come to him, and now, he looked up at the words in the air.

***“...Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise singeth upon the twigs of the Tree of Eternity,
with holy and sweet melodies, proclaiming to the sincere ones the glad tidings
of the nearness of God, calling the believers in the Divine Unity
to court of the Presence of the Generous one ...”²***

These words were from Jack’s Faith, and he knew them well, but he sat down on the carpet contemplating them, until some gentle bells called the camp to work.

“Hey, Jack.”

“Hey, ladies,” replied Jack, as he turned to see Judy and Jennifer.

“We are in the *phase one* group. Apparently, we go through four phases in the year, before we head home *or* off to where we’re needed,” explained Jennifer.

“Did you see the carpets fly this morning, Jack? They were like a flock of birds taking off,” said Judy, with a little wonder.

“Carpets, *they’re using carpets here?*”

“Yep. What was it like, Jack? To ride them?” asked Judy.

“You *rode* them, Jack?” asked Jennifer, surprised.

“I didn’t tell you about the carpets, Jen. Like I said, when I explained some of my journeys, I didn’t want to come off like a *total* nut. But to answer your question, Judy, it was *more* than magic. It’s a lot more than just the fact that you’re flying; it’s your interaction with the carpet, where it takes you, and where you take it. It was *so* hard when they took the carpet from me.”

Jennifer and Judy could feel the sadness in Jack’s voice, as all three now headed off to an outer hall for *phase one*.

THE HUMANOID WAS NOT HAPPY. They had been made to work under supervision by the North American government for now. Other governments though, had been far less trusting of their offers of help, and had not allowed them in their territories at all. These visitors had only been officially allowed to do their work in the USA, Russia, and England. The men who supervised their work in the US called them *Cementers*.

The Cementers were receiving payment for their help, in rare earths. Gold and food were offered to them, but they declined the gold, and they did not even seem to eat. Nothing was really known about these strange aliens, so the supervisors here were given strict instructions to supervise them as closely as possible, as well as learn as much as they could about them. But the game was

being played on both sides of the board. The Cementers kept watch on their supervisors as they went about their business, *a far more grisly business* than was known, and in *all* parts of the world.

The Halls too, were under supervision in many places, as was the right of any government. Some government delegations had met with those of *The Department* at the Halls, and had allowed them to continue their work, as they could see that they were there to rebuild. The Halls would adhere to the rule of law of these countries as they went about their work, also in the camps that would grow around them. Order was required, and any order was better than chaos.

The dislocation of countries and their institutions had brought on a cascade of chaos. It, and the continuing groundfall, had increased the number of failed states in the world, so in many places there was no government. The destructive reality, of no order, was becoming the daily experience of many on the planet. Those of *The Department* knew, that not only was adhering to local law respectful, but it would also add to unity. Unity was the greatest power to assuage, and hopefully, one day end, the swirling chaos humanity had found itself in.

Officials had met in the Hall that landed at Yosemite, and the activity of the Halls was explained. They were allowed to continue with their efforts, and so were the Cementers. The government had held here, but most of the territories, and what was left of the cities, were somewhat lawless. It would take a long time, and a good plan, to bring back even a semblance of the world they once knew.

There *were* many places across the world, many pockets, and even large areas, where people *had* worked together to survive, and even began to rebuild. In some areas a basic order was even enforced for the good of all. The nature of each culture played its part in the success of a number of these places, but mostly, it seemed that people had begun to rediscover their higher

humanity. People banded together, selflessness grew, and many heroes were born in just a few short weeks.

Even though the Halls went on with their constructive work, and while it seemed that poorer and simpler living areas were more easily embracing the Halls, there was some distrust aimed their way as the stories of them spread all around the world. Word of mouth, moving populations, and personal radio talk spread the news of happenings; and as may happen, misunderstandings and embellishments of stories of the Halls grew. There were also many who thought that these *Others*, or the Moonship, may have shaken the earth in the first place. There was still a lot of fear, and that would not pass quickly.

Another Cementer now gave a signal to the humanoid who was with the supervisor. It had appeared out of a square cement tunnel, which stepped its way up out of the ground in cube like sections.

“I have to go under,” explained the Cementer.

“I will come with you,” said the supervisor. “I have to check that you are using the bodies, as agreed.”

“We are beginning a new wall, and it is always more dangerous then. You can check on us any time after the foundation is set.”

“Okay. But next time, I’ll be *with you* down there.”

“It is best this way,” said the being, with no feeling, yet oddly with the required emotion added to its words.

The Cementer disappeared down into the tunnel alone, and after a time, he entered one of the tunnels leading to the new support walls. Cementer tunnels were concrete, and square, having no curves at all; they simply offset square sections in steps, to change the trajectory left, right, up, or down. All branches off a tunnel, right or left, came off at ninety degrees from that source tunnel; not any greater or lesser angle. It seemed that everything was square to the Cementers.

The creature turned off twice more on his way, and on the second turn, he asked, “Have they been deboned?”

“Yes.”

“Then let’s get this disgusting rotting flesh into the void, so we can eat.”

“Bones, bones, bones,” said one, seemingly with joy.

“Bones, bones, bones,” said the other, with soulless eyes, and copious saliva leaking out both sides of its mouth.

TREV AND BRIG CAME UP TO JACK AND THE LADIES as they were heading in for the training.

“We’re heading into that hall to start learning,” said Judy.

“You really want to do that, Judy?” asked Trev.

“Yeah, why?”

“Well, it’s not *your* religion, and I would much rather work on the pods.”

“You *can*, Trev. I want to learn more, and I want to help nurture community again. I’ve been missing out; feels like I have been on the *outside* for so long. I’m feeling *a part* of this, and I don’t have to change my beliefs.”

“Working with my hands is natural to me,” expressed Trev.

“Then go and do it. It’s all good,” said Judy.

“Will I see you guys later, then?” asked Trev, not very sure about what would happen if their work diverged.

“Yeah. You will. You’re our *roomy*, mate,” said Jack, making Trev feel more at ease.

“*Geeze, Trev,*” let out Judy.

As soon as Judy said it, she turned and walked off, and Trev immediately felt more at ease. He knew he didn’t have to worry because Judy wasn’t worried. He trusted her, and the fact that she was dismissive of his concern made things clear for Trev, and he headed off quite happy in himself.

Jack and Jennifer had seen the magic of love in action, in all Judy had just done. It was words spoken for the sake of another, and in that person’s particular language, not for her own comfort as it may have seemed. They both really appreciated it, and smiled at each other, as they turned to follow Brig and Judy into the hall that they were assigned to for phase one.

There were many in this hall, and a man came over to them, and said, “How arre youuuu!?” and gave them all a big hug.

Judy and Brig moved on, Jack didn't feel quite at ease, but Jennifer smiled gently, saying a chuckling hello back. Jack didn't like '*singers*'. He found them disingenuous mainly and stayed clear of them. Jennifer started to talk to the man, telling him how she really loved the friendliness, even love, in the people here. It had been tangible for her. The man talked a lot, going on about this place and what he and others had been doing here. Jack was taken by what he was saying, but it felt like the man was on a stage.

A lady who had been trained by The Department and come home in Hall 3 to help facilitate this process, walked by, and said, "Could you turn the sound on now. We are ready."

The then man indicated that he had to leave, with a false, or practised, humility, and...well...that was it for Jack. He was definitely steering clear of this bloke, wondering why people were like that. Was it because they thought they had to be something special to be valuable? Had their childhood trained them to kowtow? Had it taught them to hide behind a smiling face? Did they not know that they could just be themselves? Did they know the power of honest words, let alone self-honesty? Did they not believe in their intrinsic worth as a creation of God? Or was it just ego and stealth? Jack thought that it may be some or all of these.

He also wondered how such people thought they were fooling anyone. They were fooling themselves, that's for sure. He couldn't believe the energy they had to waste in their constant effort to seem a certain way in front of others. It was like they were almost trying to force endearment. He had found that genuinely evolved people were at ease, and very simple people. They smiled easily, talked gently, and went about their work. Serious faces, or feigned importance in someone, or in the work they were charged to do, also showed a hidden person to him. He felt for them,

though, very much, as they were gaoled there, but he was also wary of them, especially people a little lost in their ego who were in positions of authority.

The lady who had asked the singing man to turn on the sound, saw the disgust in Jack's eyes, and asked, "Did this man offend you?"

"No, he was lovely," said Jennifer, with a smile on her face. "The love in people here is so wonderful."

"It is," she said with an open smile. "May I talk to Mister Johnston alone for a moment?"

"Sure, I'll see you in there, Jack," said Jennifer, with a smile on her face, and walking backwards, before she turned away.

Jack smiled and turned back to the lady.

"They tell me, you have been places even those of *The Department* haven't, so your reaction to that man surprised me."

"The one thing that raises my ire, is games, misinformation, and dishonesty. Dishonest words are destructive, no matter for what, or how they rise."

"Yes, that is so. But this man is just another traveller going through this place. We *all* have much to learn. *Love* him, and keep your word *honest* with him, even show him if he is open to it. Otherwise leave him to God, and to life, to educate him."

"I don't see it as my place to teach anyone. I find that a little arrogant."

"*Really*. Is not *judgement* arrogant? See him with the eyes of love and give him what you can; with love."

“I *am* hearing you, but all I can do is react honestly. I’ve been bound to stupidity too many times in the name of unity. It has to be *real*, or it just becomes another dysfunctional connection, and leads to a dysfunctional or less functional group. To humour them just makes things worse.”

“Just *look to yourself*, as we are asked to, Jack. It is an empty life that looks too much at other people.”

Jack just nodded, not at ease from *her* forthright honesty, and turned to find a seat in the hall.

The lady looked after him as he walked away. She did not understand him. To her, he was more than a conundrum. He seemed so elevated in the many stories of Department experience with him beyond his short time riding a carpet, and he had been allowed to see what any of them would die for, yet he was unrefined somehow. He had also spent many years in the work here already and been *very* exposed to the Creative Word.

The lady would reflect on this meeting, when in the evening she reflected on her day, seeing that human creatures have many intricacies, and that at times, we all rise to what is higher, while we yet have to grow so much more. But she was also not aware of what the Counsellor was; that many of those stories of interactions between Jack and The Department were in the future in this Traveller’s flightpath; a flightpath that disregarded the existence of time and space.

Jack was already reflecting on what the lady had said about loving the man. He decided to consider it more on his walk tomorrow. He would reflect on it in nature, and within the remembered verses of his Faith. He would allow his experience in too. Jack knew that he was responsible for his own soul, no one else, and he would learn what he was to learn from this.

He now looked around for his friends, and there were words in the air here too.

“The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds, through commendable and seemly conduct.”³

“Hey, guys,” said Jack.

“What did the lady want?” asked Jennifer.

“Not sure, yet. Have to take a look at it.”

“Some more learnin’, eh, Jack?” stated Brig, smiling.

“Yep. It’s *eternal*, mate,” said Jack, shaking his head, and smiling.

Just then, the lady reached the front of the room and started to talk.

“Today, we will learn about the seeds for the new fruit trees, and how to propagate them. The words above you will sit there for today, as they are also seeds. It is our hope that you will memorise them, and hold them in your heart, and water them. Each day, there will be different words, and we will learn from them, as well as learn how to create orchards and multiply these orchards. We will learn how to grow communities from the Creative Word, and with these new trees.”

“I thought your carpet flyers were planting, and we won’t be out there for a year yet,” asked a participant.

“They are planting *seeding* trees. These particular trees rise to seed in the first year, producing large and varied seed pods. It is the trees of *those* seeds will grow the various fruits. It will take time, hope, and effort to raise those trees to fruiting when you go out. You will have to be patient, nurture the trees, and the community building process, when you go out. You will need to allow them both to grow naturally, and to the conditions. Now, let’s get back to the seeds.”

The day rolled on with instruction, and breaks, and lunch, and there was a good deal of discussion, both in study, and in the breaks. Near the end of the day, they took time with the words that sat in the air. The man facilitating that final discussion continually brought the focus back to the sentence in the air. This was not new to Jack, as he had run the courses of his Faith. These words were imbued with power, and when the conversation wandered too far away from them, the energy and wisdom they lent would dissipate.

He remembered back to when he had facilitated one of the course books over the phone to bring a friend, who lived over two hours away, forward in the series of training courses. He would get home from a day’s work at his job feeling smashed, thinking that there is no way he could do two hours of study that night. He had most often dragged himself to this task, yet wonderfully, the study would totally energise them both. It was not just their friendship, or their banter, that lifted them, as one night, when they lost focus on the words and the coursework, the energy was lost. But on the nights that they held focus, the work was done easily, and he always felt amazingly energised when he hung up the phone.

The Creative Word held a power, and if the world was to be rebirthed, it needed energy. Jack knew from his experience that these words could impart that energy; that, and much more.

JACK HAD ASKED JENNIFER TO WALK WITH HIM THE NEXT MORNING. She was *not* the traveller he had met all those years ago, in herself at least, and it was still a little strange for him. It *was* her, but without the experience of travel that she had to many places it was just *not* her. He felt a little sad for the loss, and if he was honest, much of what he had felt on seeing her again was now quickly fading. He had asked her to go for a walk because he hoped that time with her would help grow that bond begin again.

They had walked along and talked, and didn't talk, as they went. They had been walking for a while, when Jack noticed an unused path that headed off towards a small rock face. It was a good way away from the path, and he waved to Jennifer, and '*headed bush*'. Jennifer followed, with a little niggle inside her saying no, but she followed him off the path, anyway.

In the silence of this path, Jack reflected on his small interaction with the lady of *The Department*, on the subject of the singing man. He took his own counsel these days and did not share his confusion with others. He did not burden others with the endless blow by blows of his spiritual journey either. He had learned that he could retain poise, look to himself, and not burden others. It also kept him safe from backbiting; the cancer of community. He reflected on The Word and his experience, while he looked around him, seeking some clarity. Real clarity was very hard in coming though, as the two perspectives danced with each other, and sparred in his head. He did not see the interrelatedness of all about him, sadly. He did not see how everything struggled in nature; struggled in its merciless grip. He did not gather that he was a part of something greater and a being of far greater power than simply a plant or animal.

He just circled in his mind between these two seeming antagonists. Around and around again, knowing them both to be true and unable to resolve them. He now realised that this one

would take time, and maybe some action, or more experience for clarity. “*She made me see I wasn’t being all I could be, though. But I don’t know yet, and I have to do this, real,*” he thought, in conclusion.

Just as his mind fell to silence and his being rose to awe, as they came upon a rocky pond perched at chest height, with a small waterfall flowing from it. The pond and waterfall were inside an open-mouthed cave, and a tree fern grew on the side of the pond, just inside the cave’s mouth. It looked magical.

“What is this place?” asked Jennifer.

“*Woman place,*” came a threatening voice from behind them. “You *shouldn’t* be here.”

They both looked around in surprise. Then, Jennifer found herself saying, gently, but staunchly, “*I’m a woman.*”

Jack liked that; beginning to see signs of the courageous woman he had known all those years ago.

“I meant *him*, love,” said the man, with a very serious look on his face.

“Sorry, mate, we’ll head back,” said Jack, starting to tuck his tail between his legs, and they both turned to head back along the track they had come here by.

“*And*, if you come here again, *don’t be so loud,*” added the man, smiling.

Jennifer and Jack smiled in surprise, both instinctively looking back to the man.

“Seems, you two like to wander about a bit. I know *you* do, brother. I see you looking at things a bit deeper. I can maybe take you some places. Have you two got anywhere to be? I know you fella’s like to keep your watches tight.”

“Not me,” said Jack.

“I can miss a day for some time out here with a man of the land,” said Jennifer.

“*Well. Let’s go,*” said the man, with a beaming smile.

It was not lost on Jack, that the man had shown great respect for him and Jennifer. He *saw* them and would not have taken just anyone for a day with him. It was the same *sense* that Judy and Brig had. Something a little lost to most in the modern world, and to so called ‘*refined*’ human beings.

They wandered all that morning, while the man showed them animal sign and edible plants, rock paintings, and other special places. They tried this and that plant, flower, or seed; some good, and some that would take time to appreciate maybe. Jack and Jennifer felt very honoured, and eventually they all sat down near a swimming hole. The sand on the flat bank went down to the water, and the water on the other side had dug into the rock over the years, making a long overhang above the water. It was a good, shaded swimming spot, as there was a natural rock-shelf back further under the rock roof and just above the water line.

The three swam, sat on that rock-shelf, and talked as the main heat of the day passed. In time, they wanted to eat some more, and they waded back to the small sandy shore.

The man opened his backpack and produced a billy, a packet of tea and some biscuits.

“Some more *bush* tucker, mate,” said Jack, smiling.

“Yep,” said the man, smiling, but not looking up from his work. “Get me some kindling leaves and some twigs will ya’, cuz’.”

“Sure.”

“I’ll get some big stuff. You whitefella’s are rubbish at getting good firewood,” finished the man, as he began scooping out a small, very shallow pit in the sand.

Jack had a chuckle at his new friend’s candour and headed off. The man had called him ‘cuz’ after this short time together. There was plenty of unspoken respect *right there*, so a little blackfella’, whitefella’, fun was definitely on the cards. After a time, Jack returned with some dry leaves and twigs. The man returned with some wood, built up under one arm, and a loose ball of dried grass in the opposite hand.

“So, what a’ you two missin’ at that big ship today?” asked the man, upon his return.

“More of The Word, and how to plant and care for seeds,” answered Jennifer.

“I think *you* could run some lessons, there, mate. We’re all leaving, eventually, and it’d be handy for them to know the things you showed us,” offered Jack.

“It’s different everywhere, fella’. You’d need to link up with some local brothers and sisters who still know their country. Some things that aren’t even related, are a sign for each other. I know one place where witchetty grub lines are a sign of mullet runnin’. There’s a lotta’ hidden knowledge.”

“Sure, but recognising sign, and general ways of finding edible food would help.”

“I can take ‘em around here maybe, but it can only be a few, and only now and then. There is too many of you lot, and you’d pick this place clean in no time.”

“Or you could just do some talks about food gathering that works everywhere and educate us all about the respect for keeping the balance, wherever we go,” suggested Jennifer.

“I’ll think about it. No disrespect, but gotta’ look out for my country, *and* other’s country. So maybe it isn’t right to share too much,” explained the man.

“Okay,” said Jennifer, leaving it for him to decide.

“So, what’s *The Word*? Must be *one really special* word,” said the man, grinning.

Jack had a giggle at that, and his new brother smiled a bit wider. Jack loved the way the people of the land played with words. Little bit of magic every time.

“They’re words for spiritual understanding,” said Jennifer, with a small chuckle.

“We have a lotta’ those words, and they’re like this kindling,” said the man, as he lit it, and blew on it. “They start the fire...No fire otherwise...The dreamin’ brings life... No life otherwise.” There was a long pause, while he adeptly built the fire. “And ya’ know, the fire cooks the food, and keeps us warm.”

“Yeah, I s’pose it does, mate,” said Jack.

Jennifer just fell in love with that, and the three of them sat there contemplating those few simple words, and the wealth of meaning they provided. They shared a meal of sorts, and a good deal of time there by the swimming hole. No one was in a rush, and Jennifer and the man shared a lot of fun and banter when they finally headed off. Jack enjoyed it, but didn’t join in. He just

walked along, and reflected some more on the nature of kindling, The Word, *and* seeds. There was endless meaning in the interaction of these, and so many realisations flowed in.

JENNIFER SAT WITH THE SINGING MAN; the man that Jack was just not real sure about. It was some weeks now since they had begun training. It was lunch time, and a good time for people to socialise. The food had kept coming, and no one was told where it came from. Most knew that there was not enough room, even in this Great Ship, to store the amount of food given out until now; and it was always fresh. A small amount of food *was* now being grown in and around the pods as people learnt how to nurture plants and grow food, but it was a tiny amount, and only supplemental.

Jack looked across at Jennifer, from where he, Brig, and Judy were eating lunch. Jennifer had really taken in the loving ethos of this place. She revelled in the gardening work, and the Creative Word, but mostly with the atmosphere of the community. She had never known so much love and peace before, or maybe something deep within her craved company for some reason.

Judy saw Jack looking across at her, and said, “Not getting enough *attention*, Jack?”

“Just worried about her, Jude. Being protective is in my nature.”

“Who says she needs *you* to protect her, Jack,” said Brig.

“She’s a big girl,” added Judy.

“The trouble is, the high amount of trust in this place lowers peoples guard,” offered Jack.

“Orh, *for cyin’ out loud*, Jack. The trust here’s a *good thing*, and *life* teaches us by just living it anyway,” said Brig.

“Isn’t she in the *Creator’s* hands?” asked Judy. “Heard you men goin’ *on and on* about that.”

“It’s not that simple. *We’re* responsible for what we learn, and for what we *do*; no matter if we’re in the hands of Providence. And just because we’re *loving*, doesn’t mean we shouldn’t be *circumscribed*,” stated Jack.

“She *likes* people. Nothing wrong with that, and maybe, she is *way* ahead of you, Jack.”

“Well...You guys just turned and walked when we met this guy. So maybe she’s more advanced than *you*,” charged Jack, as they all started laughing.

The laughter grabbed Jennifer’s attention. She excused herself, and headed over towards her friends.

“You know, when I smile at people to say hello, and I get a blank face, *that* has always hurt me; but *especially* here. It’s so *easy* to smile, here,” said Judy. “Means respect, to me; and love.”

Judy was like that. She just came out with things when she was with those close to her.

“Yep, it is to me too, Jude. But it’s *their* life. It takes less energy to just look at yourself, and grow your soul stronger,” offered Jack, very much realising what his own words said about *him* in his struggle with the singing man.

“Yep, we *all* need stronger souls,” said Judy, looking across at Jack and giving him a smile, and a look, that reinforced the ‘*all*’.

“Stronger souls?” asked Jennifer, as she sat down.

Judy explained about smiling, and Jennifer said that she was also having a discussion about that, just now, with her new friend; Jack’s singing man. She told them that the man had said that it was a lack of spiritual growth when people weren’t friendly.

Jack felt a bit of a twinge when he heard that. He *wasn’t* being friendly to this man, but he just couldn’t bring himself to trust him. He was now even feeling that the statement was aimed at him, and could even be manipulative. He would not have cared, but for Jennifer, as he knew this man’s soul *was* God’s business. Trouble was that, at this moment, he didn’t understand that Jennifer was too.

“To talk about disappointment is one thing, but to say where someone else is *spiritually*, just on a missing smile, that’s a big call, Jen. *Nobody* knows where anybody is,” put in Brig.

Jennifer shook her head, and said gently, but adamantly “It’s a reality. My friend made that very clear to me. I see it. *Clearly*.”

“*Do you?*” asked Jack, challenging her.

Jennifer was not holding back. “He told me that you would struggle with this, Jack, as you are not as spiritually evolved as him. No offence. He just explained to me that is why you couldn’t smile at him. He said you’d be judging him, and *you are*.”

Jack could see the beginnings of this man's manipulation in Jennifer's words, as he glanced over at him. The man was looking at Jack, and quickly looked away. "What did he *actually* say, Jen?"

"I am more spiritual than Jack," answered Jennifer.

Jack was about to pop, not for any reason of ego, but for the level of ignorance in that statement, when Judy touched his arm, and Brig started to talk, "Jennifer, to say '*I am more spiritual*' is an oxymoron. Even to *think* it, is spiritually destructive."

"But he made it crystal clear to me. *It's a reality*," said Jennifer. "People just don't like hearing the truth."

"Are they *his words*, or *yours*, Jen?" asked Jack, trying to help Jennifer see something.

"There are greater and lesser states, but we don't know anyone's particular measure, or what their history or current situation may be asking of them. Only *God* knows," offered Brig.

"It's just arrogance and ego, to think or say otherwise. Anyone could be a saint or a wolf, or anything in between. We're hidden from each other's view, mostly. No one has lived our life, and no one's measure is the same," added Jack, again feeling a stinging twinge of hypocrisy from the difference between his words and his actions where this man was concerned. But to him the evidence of this man's character was growing.

He seemed to have also missed the clear advice to '*look to himself*', as even though his conscience *had certainly* checked him twice now, he had not *truly* looked to himself. He had not looked to his own deep and abundant failures of character in his own life's story. We find ourselves far less likely to judge, or *want* to judge another, when we do.

“In any case, Jen,” said Brig, “*humility* is the key to greater spirituality. Learning takes humility. If anyone thinks that they are more spiritual, better than others, or even believe they’re smarter, it immediately damns them to backward spiritual movement.”

“And *those* words are a bloody good indication of where he *really* is. I can’t know his measure, but he is *misinforming* you. And you have to *think for yourself*, not blindly repeat other people’s words,” finished Jack, maybe right now, more seeking to bring things to light.

Jennifer looked at Judy. Judy just said, ‘yes, love’ with her face.

“I *can* see what you are saying now,” said Jennifer, feeling quite embarrassed. “I feel like a fool.”

“Him, you, and us; fools, the whole lot of us,” offered Brig. “We’re all just learning creatures, and we’ll learn ‘til eternity. And anyway, you were just being honest, and after the truth.”

“Don’t stop being your *loving self*, Jen. But sometimes, it’s better to leave people to life and *its* wisdom,” added Jack.

“But he needs to be set straight; he needs the chance to learn,” said Jennifer. “I am going to go tell him.”

“Many people...” started Brig, “no make that *most* people, think they’re better or smarter than other people. *You might have to tell the whole world*, Jen.”

“Or you can just tell yourself,” offered Judy.

Communion

“We are seeking to engender a culture of learning. Where no one is greater, ideas are shared, and we all learn together. We are seeking to engender *a posture of learning* in *all* we do,” explained the man, facilitating the small groups session. The training had well begun its second month, and the participants were now sitting in a circle of chairs; the session was now nearing its natural end.

“That would take humility, wouldn’t it,” said Jack, glancing over toward the man on the sound, but not looking at him, *or once again, himself*. “I mean, needing to think of ourselves as someone who has a lot to learn.”

It is strange, and a little sad, the disjointed vision in our own words, that we can speak of something high while being something far less.

“A humble posture of learning is the only way forward for our endeavours, and in the building of a new world. Otherwise, it will not evolve to its potential, and we too, will not.”

The discussion finished with that, and they moved on to gather and discuss the words that shone in the air above them.

“There is nothing sweeter in the world of existence than prayer [...] It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence.”⁴

They all sat there contemplating these words, as they were now naturally used to doing. Over time, they had come to realise that they needed to take the words in, give them time, and seek their meaning. They found that they had to seek the meaning of certain words, each phrase, and the quote as a whole. With many of these quotes, the soul’s interaction with the words was something the tongue could not share easily. So, they took their time, took in the words, and then, given time, discussed what they understood the words to mean. They shared what they saw in the words and awaited the gifts that came from the perceptions of others. They searched into the meaning of these words together, until a rose of greater understanding bloomed amongst them.

When they were in *communion* with the Creative Word, and seeking understanding *together*, they found themselves inspired by the essence that flowed through them. It took them more into their spiritual nature as they gathered more of its meaning.

Soon after reaching into the meaning of these particular words the people there were now asked to study a prayer with someone. Jack made a beeline for Judy. She was not of his Faith, so she would have the most to give him, he thought, and the study turned out to be much more than

mere study. Going through the prayer and seeking its meaning made him feel like he *was* in prayer; linked to a higher place. Judy found herself in the same bubble and while in that higher state, they allowed the thoughts that came to them and shared what they saw in the prayer. They smiled at each other, and at the feelings they were experiencing, when Judy said to him, that she saw clearly that seeds were like prayers. The understanding that then opened before them just blew Jack's mind and soul, and awe filled his being.

Such feelings of ecstasy overcame them that they went on to another prayer. The insights flowed, and the bliss that comes, settled deep in their beings. They did not stop, and they would not leave that cocoon of spirit when the group broke for lunch. They felt that they were in communion with something far deeper and greater. The tranquil exhilaration was tangible, and the atmosphere, changed. They sat there for a long while, until they had to, *very reluctantly*, leave that space.

As the pair walked into the eating place, they felt the noise of that place bash at the door of their peace, but it did not gain entry. People seemed to be almost *rabidly* chattering or complaining of every small thing, while the two of them were still suspended in spirit. Jack ran into the singing man and smiled at him gently as he walked past. Strangely, or wonderfully, at this point in time, the man was simply a fellow human soul, to Jack; an amazing creation of God, and a mystery of God. Fear and control of others were not to be felt where Jack was now. He was *within* love, he *was* love, and he floated rather than walked. He found his mind was completely at ease, yet *so vividly clear*, precise, and immediately available. He could see everything about him as it really was.

He and Judy got their food; Jack far less than usual, and they found a place and sat quietly eating in the chatter filled food hall. It was as if Jack and Judy moved at a different pace to all around them; their beings clear and peaceful, in amongst the din of words, cutlery, and dishes. As others interacted with these two friends, they felt *only* love, and so naturally responded with love, most not even realising why, but appreciating that it was special.

JACK HAD NOT SEEN JUDY TODAY, which was strange because they had been almost inseparable in the weeks since the day that seemed to have changed them. They did not stay as free as they had been that day, but they had changed somehow, and required more of each other's company. They studied and ate together, and Brig was with them, mostly. These friends bantered a little less and talked more about what they could do when they went home; talked less of complaints, and more about the aspects of spirit.

Jennifer too, stayed close, but was very keen to talk to many different people, as she gained a lot from talking with a good variety of people. She was like a bee wandering from fragrant flower to fragrant flower; each very different.

Just now, the Counsellor and Judy came into the dining room. They hugged like sisters; one of the sea, and one of the land. The Counsellor then intimated to Jack that she wanted to talk with him. He got up, and walked over through the lunch tables and chairs, which were all made of wood. In fact, he was only now noticing that all the furniture in the halls was made of wood. Judy smiled like heaven as she walked past Jack, and Brig got up to greet her. She said something and Brig gave her a hug, and they both sat down to talk.

It had turned out that Brig and Judy *were* blood brother and sister; not that the other way wasn't, but it made a difference. Jennifer had had no concerns in asking the brother-sister question a few weeks into their time here, and that had worked for Jack.

"Hello, Jack. I am beginning to see what is in you. The bliss is attractive, in you, and your friends."

Jack said, "Please don't. It is what it is and talking about it burdens me."

"My, my, Jack, how you have grown in these short years, since we last met?" said the lady almost in tears.

"I'm not that important, and I still fall backwards so often."

"You *are* important. You, and all the others here, are the *joy of my life*. That you have risen here makes many years of hard work and strain, *so worthwhile*. It is joyous doing the work, but to see development in souls who will be of service to this world is so *very* fulfilling for me."

"I don't know what to say," said Jack.

"Say nothing."

"Sounds good to me," he responded.

"I have found a being, who may be able to help you with your fainting spells."

"Really," responded Jack, feeling hopeful, and adding that they were more than fainting spells, as well as indicating that it was more of a *manly* illness than *fainting*.

“Yes, well, this physician can see things in people that others cannot, so we are hopeful. You will be sent through the portal.”

“I knew there had to be a portal. When do I go?”

“Now is a good time, Jack. I am told he is free. His work is very constant, so we are fortunate to access his skills,” she finished, not personally knowing that Jack had interacted with this being before now.

JACK WALKED THROUGH THE PORTAL. This was the first time that he had accessed a portal to ‘deeper’ by choice. He *had* chosen to enter deeper places by a blue door many years ago, but he had already lost consciousness when he did, so it didn’t really count. He had been escorted through portals by various Deeper agencies, but they had not been by choice.

He now walked on to a wooden platform, and he began to tear, when he saw his old friend turn around. “Hello, Jack.”

“*Hello, Doc. So, you do exist.*”

“Last time I checked.”

“*So, what is real...And what the hell isn’t?*” blurted Jack, not able to help himself, and more concerned about understanding the nature of his travels rather than his illness.

“That is a question that *countless* beings, across *countless* realities, ask every day,” answered The Doc, smiling. “Only time, or wisdom, may tell. Understanding and wisdom are born

of experience; experience and unfoldment take *time* or the development of higher *state*. That is the beauty of growth.”

“It’s really great to see you again, after all this time, Doc,” said Jack, feeling the bond deeply, and the joy of the wisdom that this being just shared with him.

“It’s been a while in *your* reality, Jack. Not so long in mine.”

“Okay, sure. But what happened here? With the Robes, I mean?”

“They are gone for now, Jack. The Joined Robes have fallen into a darkness that I can’t see into, as well as the Black Robes.”

“I thought they *all* joined.”

“Not all, it seems. The White are still about and now *far* stronger with less opposition. They thrive in all the chaos and are growing stronger. *They* created the Groundfall weapon, but the *Black* were cast into the darkness after they used it to bring it on.”

“So, the White and Black were in cahoots.”

“No. They were both at their games of domination; playing on and using each other. The Fat Man was in the middle of it all of course. Playing *all* sides, playing with fire, and making money. I don’t understand why The Creator abides him. Anyway, they are *all* guilty for the destruction, as it was the weapon which brought on the *final* Groundfall.”

“The *final* Groundfall? It was all *one big terrible thing*, Doc. There weren’t any stages in it.”

“The ground had been weakened deeper over some centuries, Jack. The Robes, White and Black, had been at work on the ground that lies within people’s hearts, for a long time. Bit by bit, people allowed it; to satiate their wants, to stroke their egos, pass judgement, or hide away from their fears. Groundfall was inevitable, just as the New Dawn is.”

“Just another cycle, eh,” offered Jack, knowing that things naturally fall and rot away to fertilise the new seeds of what is to grow in their place.

“Yes, Jack. It is a deep truth. A perspective of the wider view. But such flippancy is not wisdom. Many have fallen, living and dead. Some passing over without further chance to grow and maybe redeem themselves, and families cast into the hell of the day-to-day chaos out there. It is mostly *sad* that they did not *turn* before now, and a *great* loss, even though all develops as it does.”

“Yeah. Sure. Sorry about that,” responded Jack, quite ashamed of his lack of compassion. He also saw that humanity *could* have taken a better course, *chosen* a more mature pathway, and saved themselves from all the pain and from this cycle of *life death life*. But he could not believe how such wisdom could be *so* right, and yet so *wrong*; how his knowledge did not guarantee wisdom, and how wisdom did not even guarantee true high mindedness.

“Just resetting your perspective, a little, my friend. So, let’s look at you.”

The Doc knew what was happening to Jack, as he was once in his company when Jack had an attack. There were layers and some intricacy to his wider situation, but he talked with Jack for a short time about his current state to diagnose more fully this current affliction.

After some questions, he said to Jack, “You may yet find yourself travelling to the bridge and having these pains and feelings. But when they come on you, don’t be concerned. In time, it will pass as is meant to.”

“I’ve only travelled once to that bridge that was falling away.”

“*Ahh, good,*” said The Doc, more the help allay Jack’s concerns, but keeping it to himself that the bridge was only a small piece in the complexity of his Travels. “What is to be, will be. *Allow it.* All life is good, and *a bridge* is a sign of movement from one place to another.”

“But you still can’t tell me how it fits into things, right?”

“No, my friend. The unfoldment of your life, as crazy as it is, is perfect. If I interfere, you will lose too much of what you are to learn, and I will not rob you of it.”

“Okay, Doc. I’m okay with not knowing,” responded Jack, and it was more than acceptance; it was also a deep appreciation of the unfolding magic of life. “If we knew it all, *where would the magic be?* The magic in life, in love, in science, in growth, and in discovery. It sure creates some fun and games in life, and keeps the old laughin’ gear strong too, eh.”

The Doc looked at Jack and shook his head. “You should almost be crazy by now, Jack. You have been stretched quickly, *way* beyond your present reality; your present growth.”

“Dunno, Doc. Just doing it as I go.”

“You are most definitely more poised than last time we met. That will be helpful.”

“It’s just nice to be grounded after those two journeys deeper, even though things on the *ground* are even a bit weird now. But, even better than that, *this time* I have a *whole* planet of mates in the *same boat* as me.”

“That makes me even more confident of a good outcome to your condition, Jack.”

Jack smiled, and said, “*Really*,” as if he was a child accepting the wisdom of his father, but not having a clue about why that understanding would help his illness.

The Doc smiled, as he was very happy about Jack’s ease and acceptance. The Doc was a guardian of growth, and a gardener of endless worlds. His life was spent in The Seed; a gargantuan enclosed sphere of doors, to myriad other doors, in almost endless worlds; ones in the physical universe and ones in the Deeper Realities. Jack knew that this being was special but did not know his full nature. He only knew him as The Doc, and as a special friend.

“So, you are training for community building, I hear, on a world at the threshold of global maturity, no less. *Very exciting*,” said The Doc, in genuine joy.

“So, you’ve seen a few, eh?”

“I have seen many,” answered The Doc, yet extremely understating his experience. “The one that stays with me most, is a planet that lost its way so badly that its scientists stopped its rotation. They have come a long way since then.”

“Really,” commented Jack, feigning ignorance. He had been on that world a good time after this rotational stoppage; at the end of the time of the Giants, the ones who had perpetrated this act of madness. He just thought he might get one over The Doc.

“Nice try, Jack. I have *your file*, and I have had cause to read it more than a few times,” said the Doc, smiling.

Jack enjoyed that. The phrase “*No fishing here*” came to his mind, as he remembered back to a Giant, pretending he was fishing. It was the last he saw of this last of a kind. A funny but sad memory of a friend whose kind had wanted to win so much that they had gone out of existence. Unlike the giants, Jack didn’t mind losing, especially to The Doc, as it was the enjoyment of the game that counted.

“So, Doc, if you’ve seen this process happen on other worlds, can you fill me in a little?”

“I may be able to share *some* insights. They are all a little different in their sameness. So, where are you at, in the process?”

Jack still didn’t cotton on to the fact that The Doc knew all about the efforts to rebuild his world. Jack had been hooked and dragged on board without a fight, without even knowing it. The fishing *was* good here after all, but *he* was the fish. The Doc’s intent though was to help Jack learn, to empower him, and there was *nothing* like reflection. He was also calling Jack to gather a wider view of the process that he was now a part of, to help aid his perception and understanding.

Jack talked about the seeds and the planters, the courses and the Creative Word, and a whole lot more. All the while, The Doc simply listened and nodded. Jack tried not to leave anything out, and only after he was finished The Doc ventured with some input.

“Multiplication of the trees, *and* the evolving orchards, will be an essential start. The courses will be the engine of change, the *engine* of the whole process. They will help you grow the trees, and bring sustenance, just as the other actions that rise from the courses. The Creative

Word will turn *into* community. The courses will build the capacity in people, so each community may see to the development of its own unique reality. The fruit of the trees, the fruit of the courses, the fruit of The Message, will truly bring growth in the capacity of each individual.”

“We’re being taught to plan in three monthly phases, and reflect on what worked and what didn’t, then, plan again before moving into the next phase. They’re getting us used to the phases in the Halls, and to the nature of process.”

“Have they talked of cluster planting?”

“No. Should they?”

“I am sure they will,” said The Doc, making a mental note to talk with someone.

“So, what is cluster planting?”

“Well, it is orchards supporting each other, people moving between orchards to help start new ones, or sustain growth in them. It’s using trained people more efficiently over a wider area to plant and nurture new trees, and run courses, in new places. You will be thin on the ground at first, and the Halls will only be there for a number of years. Orchards will create communities and recreate communities. These communities will need to become self-sustaining, but for a time, help from other communities will be beneficial.”

“Any big tips?”

“Seeking the best way, or the truth of things, together; even praying together, Jack. Being caring, respectful, and helpful to each other. Being united, deepening together, and then working together. Loving each other *deeply* and walking *with* each other in humility; learning *together*. All these things bind us; and once truly bound together, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished.”

“What if you are a bit of a lone wolf though, Doc?”

“Then be united, and be of service anyway, in *whatever* way you can. Just like in anything else that grows, there is need for all kinds of specialised cells. But just remember, cells also share their energy stores, and even their life, so the *whole* can survive and thrive. There is great power in unity; and truth be known Jack, you are no loner. We are *all* connected.”

“Yep, sure, thanks for all that, Doc,” said Jack, as he somehow knew that it was time for him to return to Hall 3. He was linked deeply to The Doc in this place and knew that this being had other things to do.

“Good luck with the process, Jack.”

“Yep. Thanks. It was great to see you, and thanks for everything, Doc,” said Jack, believing it was more than likely this was the last time that he would see The Doc.

“*Always* good to see you, Jack.” replied The Doc.

JACK WENT FOR A WALK UPON HIS RETURN. Jennifer caught up with him along the path and berated him with extreme prejudice for not inviting her along on his walk. Just for fun of course. She had seen him disappear with the Counsellor and wondered where he had gotten to. So, she had set herself up in a central position in Hall 3, seeing him as he had headed out into the early afternoon sunshine.

It was early spring, and the days were glorious for being outside. Jack shared the stories of his experiences with The Doc as they walked the pathway up the gorge. Also of the recent visit,

the advice he had been given, and other insight into the evolution of the growth process. Jennifer had a lot of questions about The Doc and was amazed at Jack's experiences with him.

"I must be very unworldly and simple, to you. I talk to Judy and Brig quite a lot about you. Even the Jennifer you fell in love with, who is me, was much more than me it seems."

"*Oh, Jen.* Don't say things *like that*. Let's sit in the shade and talk for a bit."

The two friends then sat down on a log under another good tree.

Jack continued, "Things are as they are. Don't burden yourself with what you think to be lacking. Just enjoy the unfoldment, and what *is*. It's all perfect."

"You do my head in, Jack. You are so redneck, and even lost, yet sometimes so evolved. Who are you *really*?"

"Oh, man! I'm just who I am, doing what is in front of me. Like most people, I have a lot of parts."

"But you have such a seemingly extreme mix."

"I like the mix in me. It's taken a long time to accept and love my creation, and to enjoy life as I am. I just feel fortunate to have had the experiences I've had, and I'm looking forward to using all these parts and experiences when we all head home. *Everybody's* unique and valuable"

"You miss the *other* me, don't you Jack."

Jack, just sighed, "Yes, I do, Jen. I can't lie to you. Seeing The Doc today just brought her back again. Visiting him somehow made it a possibility that I might find her again."

“I have to go back,” said Jennifer, as she stood up, turned away, and headed back.

“Sure,” said Jack, a little shocked at the suddenness, but now seeing that Jennifer’s feelings were deeper than he thought. He felt for her, but knew that what is, *is*, and in such situations no words can change things or lessen the pain. To try and protect someone’s feelings, or carry things on when we are not sure, just makes things worse.

Jennifer felt so worthless, and she cried as she walked. The pain sat deep and hard in her heart, and it was hard for her to breathe. It also frustrated her that she did not seem to be enough. “*How do you fight yourself for the man you love?*” she thought. She could see the reality of Jack’s feelings right now, but she knew how she felt too. “*I can’t help...myself,*” she thought, now suddenly seeing something very clearly, and knew she had to leave this place. The courage, born in that moment, was the courage Jack had come to love all those years before.

Cruelty of fate, *or* its providence; it simply was to be.

JACK HAD BEEN DRAWN TO THE ESCARPMENT. He had got up and walked a while trying to see what he was struggling with when it came to Jennifer. But eventually he had let it go when the rock wall seemed to almost beckon him. He had often liked to free climb reasonable rocky places, but today it was helpful to take his mind away from the pain. The pain he felt for Jennifer’s pain right now, as well as the pain of letting go of the woman he loved; her older self.

“*It’s insane,*” he thought, as he now looked up at the rock wall, thankful for something to take his focus off what he could not change.

He knew it was risky climbing alone, but the ascent looked reasonable from where he now stood. He could see a good rock shelf, quite high up, and although he was alone, he would climb it anyway. He then wondered what it would have been like to climb it with Jennifer.

Suddenly, there was a flash of pictures in his mind. One was of thin cords converging through the centre of a gold ring and diverging out the other side. Another was of two light blue breasted parrots, flying across a road, and perching in a Messmate tree. He didn't really understand their meaning fully, but these pictures made him hopeful somehow, and with it, feeling a burst of energy, and he began to climb.

It was tricky even with easy climbs. You had to keep your balance forward to the rock face or have good handhold. Knowing where your feet were, was extremely important, but your centre of balance was paramount. He slowly made his way up, and was enjoying the physical and problem-solving challenge, but eventually found that his way was blocked by an overhang that he had not seen from the ground. It had been a twenty-five-minute climb to reach this high place, so he was disappointed. He loved getting up high and looking out, and the ledge he was aiming for was above the canopy of the trees, so for him, he was not yet high enough.

As he had neared it, he knew that it would most probably stop his climb, but he persevered. Just as he got there, however, he saw a thin open rock-chimney with a white gum-root winding up its centre. The chimney had been hidden from his view until now, and he wondered if the tree root had helped form the chimney, or the chimney had been an easy path for the root to grow down through. In any case, he used the chimney and the tree root to help him past the overhang, and up onto the ledge above.

There was a wide overhang above the ledge too, and it gave him shade, as he now settled on the ledge. He also realised that he had not been the only one to reach this high perch. There were little, long bead droppings of small rock-wallabies there. They were a lovely little creature, and very sure footed. He remembered climbing the rocky upturned ridges in Alice Springs and seeing so many of these creatures there. They were a very cute little animal. *“Unless you’re hungry of course,”* joked Jack out loud, then laughed to himself. He felt energised from his climb too, and as he looked around, he just loved being alive.

He now sat there with his legs dangling over the side, and his back up against the rock wall behind him. He looked across the gorge, at the tops of the gum trees, then down through the sparse canopy to the shorter, probably immature, palms nestled below them. The older towering palms that projected above the somewhat open canopy seemed ancient to him. Some were even as high as where Jack had climbed to. The *whole scene* looked ancient, especially with the palms and the rocky buttresses, and it was so hard to believe that such a small stream had cut this great gorge.

Thoughts then passed gently through his mind of Jennifer, and he came to an acceptance. He also knew that he would do whatever he could to make her comfortable, even if that meant leaving her more with Judy and Brig for a while. *“I can make other friends for a time,”* he thought, as his mind now gathered something. It was in the view to the vegetation below. The leaves were so different between the types of trees and vegetation, that Jack could see patterns in how they were dispersed. It was to do with water, the soil, the shade of the gorge, and from where they had seeded outwards from a central tree.

The clusters that The Doc had talked about came to Jack’s mind and he saw that soil and water, as well as the travelling seed would be important in the work; that things would move

organically with the conditions, and effort was better used in taking advantage of the natural lay of the land. It was about planting particular seeds, and not planting them willy-nilly. It was just as much about knowing the terrain, the reality of the people and each community.

He then spotted four large glorious white gums that rose up high into the canopy. He could see a long way from his perch, and they were over near where the Great Ship's dome rose to meet the sky. These gums were all the same height and species but had grown *very* differently. They had projected naturally, up, and outward, from their own individual potential and circumstances. Nothing was the same in creation.

Trees were amazing to Jack, he saw them like people who drew from the potential of who they were, and rose up as they developed, showering their potential out like a fountain; all their potential, growing upwards, and outwards, while they dug deeper in the soil of spirit for more sustenance. He also knew that each new community that grew out of the rubble of Groundfall, and out of the disorder born of it, would be like that.

JENNIFER WAS GONE. The three friends sat together trying to work out where she might have gone, where she might go, and they all thought of Rowdy's place, among others. While they respected her decision, they also knew that life was very different now and just wanted to make sure she was okay and reasonably safe. They decided to check the pods and the camp nearby first. They would even walk to Rowdy's if they had to. All three were now united in this single purpose. They didn't care about the work, or the Hall, they had to see that Jennifer was safe.

Jack, Brig, Judy, and Trev spent the next day checking the pods and going to the nearby camp. The nearby camp was a bit wild, but the inhabitants seemed to be working together, and so

the three friends did not feel threatened. They knew that if Jennifer was there, and had friends, she would be okay. They also knew how much she loved the community of The Halls, so they would talk straight to her about, maybe, coming back with them. But, if she chose to stay in the camp, and it was clear she was sure and safe, then they would leave her be.

It had been a long day as they walked back into the Great Ship, with no luck finding even a trace of Jennifer. They were now intent on gathering supplies for the walk to Rowdy's, hoping for some success there. Trev had suggested asking for a carpet, but the friends knew that the planting work was at fever pitch, so Jack and Judy would follow the roads back to Rowdy's, and Brig would retrace the exact route the group had taken to the Hall. Trev would stay, keep wandering around the pods, and visit the camp a few times, just in case. Judy and Brig then went off to gather food, and Jack went looking for backpacks and water. As he was walking through an upper hallway of the ship, he ran into the singing man.

"She's gone, you know," he said to Jack.

"Yeah, I know," said Jack, very testy about Jennifer, and about 'this clown' being 'all knowledgeable' after the fact.

"I know you don't like me. But I've got something to tell you."

"I'm on a bit of a mission, mate, so make it quick," said Jack, waiting for some stupidity, or manipulation.

"Jennifer and I talked a lot. She *believed in me*. She saw that I was just a man, flawed and learning, who was a bit scared of being himself; but mostly she saw beyond my lostness, and saw

a good soul. She told me what you saw in me, and I could well have been that way by what you saw, but I am not. *I am not.*”

“Well, I can’t see that; because this discussion is *all* about *you* so far.”

“No, Jack, it’s to prepare you to accept me as an honest man, because I have something to tell you. You have to believe in me as Jennifer did. *Jennifer* believed in me, Jack.”

That Jennifer *did have* a friendship with this man, even after what Jack had said about him, meant something to Jack. She had gone to talk to the man and search out his character for herself. Jack was seeing her more in *many* ways since she had gone.

“You judged me,” stated the man.

“Yes. It seems I did, but you will have to forgive me, because I’ve been fodder for manipulators and fools, and I’ve given a good deal of my life force to help lost people who really did not want to grow out of their pain or dysfunction. I am just *over* living other people’s lives.”

“I see,” said the man.

Jack felt a little sad for the man. He knew what it was like to be caught in negative thoughts of life, and ourselves; trapped in bondage to unhealthy inner sentences. He would hear the man out, and see what unfolded.

“So, what’s this about?” asked Jack.

“Can I ask you something? Before I tell you, what I came to tell you.”

“Sure, okay,” answered Jack, a little confused.

“How did you and Judy get there? To that bliss, that day?” The man waited with bated breath to hear what Jack had to say, and he now saw in the man a ‘seeker,’ and a ‘lover’, and so, he offered what he could.

“Mate, it was like the words took us up. It seems all about *full* acquiescence to the Creative Word. In humility, you can be taken to that state by them. They’re the signposts, *and the road*, to That Place.”

“Sooo?” said the man, almost beside himself with excitement.

“So, the Choice Wine to me is found in complete acquiescence to His Will. That means humbling yourself to do as the Blessed Beauty instructed, so that *every* thought and *every* action is in *complete* alignment with His guidance and admonitions. That seems the *only* way there. Prayer can take you there, and the Choice Wine can keep you there, if your thoughts and actions are in complete alignment.”

“I have never been there.”

“And I’ve have only visited there, mate. I’ve also been in that state on my journeys at times. There was also one time, many years ago, when I was given a glimpse of that *complete place*. At that time, all I wanted was Him; at that moment, nothing else, *nothing*. Focused and total yearning took me there. So, the adage in the Creative Word about ‘*Loving Him alone and above all that is*’, is a way there too. I suppose these *all* are, but this time, I saw the way there. It’s like a ladder. The Words are a ladder to deeper communion.”

“You don’t seem to be there right now?”

“Like I said, I’ve only visited. It takes practise to be ‘*a little more there*’ even, and while I can get there, I often choose otherwise, because I am not grown enough yet.”

“Why would you not choose it?”

“Anything, or any thought, that’s contrary to the Signposts will shoot you out of paradise like the bullet out of a gun. You see, the animal nature, our fears, our needs, and our ego are something we must be *totally* past, to stay there. I’ve even felt my ego want its power too, and when the ego rises...well, the power to stay in this place of pure love leaves me.”

“How do you see it rising?”

“I just saw it wanting to own the peace, the strength, and the knowledge available there. *Any* thought or desire, contrary to pure selfless love, or not perfectly in line with the Will of The Creator casts you out. There are endless manifestations of the lower nature that will shoot you out of Heaven. The animal wants are the easy ones to see, but the ego is the endlessly sneaky one when it uses your mind to bind you.”

“How do you rid yourself of attachments, and your ego?”

“You know. You’ve read the Writings, mate. *Strive*, realease yourself from the bondage of self. It’s all in the Creative Word. Growing more humility, more acceptance, more faith, more reliance, deepening in the Creative Word, and in service. Your *actions* are the clearest indication of who you are, and how close you are. So, watch your actions, and keep striving.”

“Yes. Of course.”

“But you know, *life is life*, and just living and getting *closer* is valuable, and living closer, if not all the way there. There’s also something in living on the ground to grow, as well as reaching for heaven, and I don’t understand the full measure of that yet.”

“Mmm,” said the man nodding, “But, what is it like when you *do* get there?”

“*It’s sublime. It is clarity. It is peace. Others are wonderful mysteries. All faculties are available. The mind is beyond sharp, and all the powers of the soul flow fully at your request; and the longer you’re there, the higher the state of ecstasy rises within you.*”

“Why would you want to leave there?”

“It is *a choice*, and we all choose every day; as the Blessed beauty says,

“...Free thyself from the fetters of this world, and loose thy soul from the prison of self. Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no more.”⁵

It’s all in there. It’s a choice. It’s effort.”

“Where do you *actually* go? When you go?”

“You don’t go *anywhere*. You just realise the deeper reality and your true state, and you realise closer Communion with Him. He *is* love and knowledge. He just *is*, and you just *are*. So much peace and power are available to us through the Creative Word; to take us there, and for us to bring more of it here. We just have to *choose* it and *use* it.”

Just talking of that state, and those places, took them both away a little. Both men reflected for a few minutes, and when it was clear that both were ready to talk again, Jack asked, “So what do you have to tell me?”

“I helped Jennifer leave. She has gone through the portal.”

“What! *Are you insane?*” blurted Jack, falling immediately into a deep lower state.

“It’s done. She has gone through. She said she needed to do this. She needed to find herself.”

“*How the hell* did you get into the bloody Department?!”

“I was asked, just like you,” said the man, in his defence.

Jack was angry, but the man’s words had checked him. The anger and humility mixed inside him, to become silence and seriousness.

“She left a note. She knew you wouldn’t trust me to just tell you, and she knew that you and the others would go looking for her,” explained the man, as he took a folded piece of paper out of his left side shirt pocket. “You know, I don’t think you *really* knew her. She was *really something*.”

That just knocked Jack down inside, but he did not show it. He now realised that he had not known *either* Jennifer for very long. He had given her *so* little time, and by doing so, little respect. He now reached out in a stoic way and grasped the letter from the man.

“I’ll leave you be,” said the now *not so singing* man, and he walked off.

Soul

The Cementers had been going about their work with dogged deliberate activity. They had burrowing machines that dug square tunnels, and as the rock was sent back from the front of the machine, small rocks and pebbles were out sorted, and the rest pulverised into dust. The dust was like cement, and the small rocks and pebbles were added to make the concrete. Water was added, and as the machine moved forward; another tunnel cube would be placed, by a collapsible retractable frame that almost stamped this mixture onto the rock walls.

There was no formwork or reinforcement to strengthen the cubes, but just before the collapsible frame came off the concrete, there was an intense heat pulse sent through it. It seemed to dry and bond the concrete, as well as make it extremely strong, and it left an embossed pattern on the surface of the completed section. Water was added through hoses that ran to the surface. It ran down by gravitational flow, so there was no machinery or noise on the surface, and strangely, the patterned finish on the walls somehow silenced the sound of the machines below.

“I *have* to take a look,” said the government supervisor.

“Well, if you *must*. We can’t go close to the tunnelling,” answered the Cementer.

“Why not?”

“The magnetic pulses of the machines will fry your cells. You will just dry out and end up as a pile of the dust that makes up your bone sack. We have adapted to it over many thousands of years. Only those with sturdy frames survived to pass on the genes for successful endeavour.”

The Cementers had a club-like, and yet strangely refined, way of talking, which seemed to confuse anyone who came into contact with them. Their words were layered somehow with these to disparate strains, and people simply did not know how to react to them. The supervisor did not like the confusion that they caused in him, as it made his job much more difficult. It was like they were camouflaged, somehow.

“Well, after you,” said the supervisor, intimating that the Cementer should lead him down the tunnels.

They walked the tunnels for an hour or so. The supervisor really had nothing to see, but square tunnels mostly. They had gone to the void though; to the openings at the end of some of the tunnels. The tunnels breached the void of the groundfall here, as far as was yet possible for the Cementers, and to a reasonable depth. Concrete had been poured down the void walls, and then, new lines of tunnels had been dug to these, deeper and wider. The tunnels acted like the framework for the poured cement walls; supporting the ground around it and seemingly shoring up the Groundfall walls.

The supervisor was impressed with the stepped tunnelling, and the patterned texture of the walls. He had seen the machines go down and was very impressed with the amount of tunnelling that had been completed. These creatures were masters of their domain.

In time they finished the inspection, and were heading topside, as they talked about the work. Just then, the supervisor heard something. “What was that noise?”

“I didn’t hear anything, but you humans have more sensitive ears. Maybe it is rats.”

“Could be. I’m glad I am not down here full-time. The stench that rises from this groundfall is more than nasty.”

“Yes. When we reach further down, hopefully, we will find a solution to that too,” responded the Cementer.

“Damn,” said the supervisor, as he inhaled a trace of the strongly offending odour. “*I hope so,*” he added, as he turned, and continued on, out of the tunnels.

Behind the wall, where the supervisor had stopped, were many souls. They were locked in great long tunnels built parallel to the main tunnels, and now closed off. They had been lured there, by the promise of shelter and security for their families in the night, as many in this city had still not found a safe port in Groundfall. The people had not been sure of taking up the offer of shelter, but the strange confusion that came in communication with the Cementers had somehow made them accept. The Cementers were gathering food from more than the dead and were *indeed* camouflaged. Their home was darkness, and they, masterful soulless predators.

“TREV! MATE!” called out Jack, as he walked through the pods.

Jack had filled Brig and Judy in about Jennifer, and thankfully this brother and sister had helped Jack be a little more at ease about Jennifer's decision. Jack had wanted to talk with the Counsellor about finding her, but Judy made it clear that women were as strong as men, and that, it was obviously something she needed to do. They all decided to respect what was and pray for her journey and safety.

"Keep it *shut*, Jack," said Trev, now holding a pose for the artist painting his portrait.

"You look *lovely*, Trev," said Judy, trying to reassure him.

"*Just lovely*," added Jack, with a hearty chuckle.

"Like I said, Jack. *Shut it*," warned Trev.

"That's not gonna' happen, mate. You *know* it's not gonna' happen."

Judy and Brig were smiling, and Trev was now too.

"I thought you were doing *manly* work, building pods. And here you are, all posed *like a little flower*, waiting for your beauty to be captured."

The four friends all had a laugh.

"He's a really good subject," said the artist. "He has strong features."

"*Strong* features, eh?" said Jack, enjoying the moment.

"Yep, strong features, Jack. Get your *own* artist," shot Trev back.

"Like someone would want to paint *Jack*," stated Judy, joining in to give Trev a hand.

"You look *very* fine, Trev."

“*Trev?* Don’t you mean *Nancy*,” added Jack, taking it all the way.

They all had a chuckle, and then, Trev asked, “Is it a good likeness, Jude?”

“Yep, it’s a good likeness,” she answered. Then commented to the artist, “You’re good at this.”

“Thanks. I’m painting the people here, and the Hall itself, and people around the Hall and the pods. The Halls will be leaving in time, you know,” said the artist.

“Yep, so they tell us,” answered Jack.

“Do you do this all the time, or just between the trainings?” asked Brig.

“All the time. It’s my purpose.”

“Art?” asked Jack.

“No, painting this place, and this time, and the feel of this time; for the future, and future generations. This is just something I’m good at.”

“Magic!” said Brig.

“Thanks man. I hope it will inspire people now, and in the future. It’s a gift for them, and it’s also good to love what you do, eh. Makes you happy.”

“Yep, I s’pose,” said Jack, looking confused.

“Lucky, this bloke isn’t painting *you* right now, Jack,” said Trev, having a giggle.

“You’d be right there,” offered Judy, now with more attention on Jack’s face, and more chuckles.

“I’ve never done that before. I mean, I never thought about that. I’ve more learned to accept life, and I like to be of value. I never thought of what I might be good at. I’ve never had work that gave me joy. It always just seemed like I had work to do, and I did what was necessary.”

“Maybe that’s just you, Jack,” offered the artist.

Jack had come to know himself very well, and he realized right now that, not only had he missed the joy of doing something he loved for his work, but there was something inside him that almost shouted at him to fulfil it.

“No, mate. I have *missed* something.”

“You’re a really good small group facilitator, Jack,” offered Brig, “and you are really into the new growth work. I’ve *seen* it. You’re really animated. You *love* it.”

“Yep, sure. But we *all* do. This is different,” responded Jack.

“Have you ever painted, Jack?” asked the artist.

“Once, mate. On a great wall, in my dreams. It was *very* cool. Never had time to try again. Never thought about it, really. I thought about it at the time, and saw how it could enhance life, but then, just forgot about it. Actually, all the great walls I came across were something special. One was a wall of light you could paint on, another a wall of stories, and there was a dancing wall too. They were all *so* enjoyable in their own way,” finished Jack, staring off into space.

“Listen, Jack. I am walking to the rock paintings tomorrow. Come for a walk for the day, and we can explore it a bit. In the meantime, think about what you *love*. ”

“Maybe I can *rub your back*, and make ya’ *feel better, too*,” spouted Trev, getting one in, while he could.

Jack laughed out loud, and said “Yeah, mate.”

“Gotta’ do what gives you joy. What lifts your soul and gives you life,” suggested the artist, standing up to pack up. “Doin’ whatever it is you were made for is the greatest prayer, and for me, showing the most thanks for what’s been placed inside you. If you *have it*, you’ve gotta’ *give it*.”

IT WAS EARLY WHEN THE ARTIST AND JACK LEFT. The sun was only just promising to rise, and the magic of that time came to their senses.

“This time of the day is other-worldly,” said Jack.

“Yep. There’s magic in the air, eh?” agreed the artist. “I think that’s what I love most about painting. It is seeing more of the magic of life and releasing some of your own. But even your own magic, is almost not your own power. It is like a power you were given to wield, and it can surprise you.”

“Yeah, I get that. That wall of light I created on, was surprising.”

“You know creativity and art is really *allowing* the flow, and pushing intensely, all at once, and it’s a partnership with the power of life.”

“*Man*, it must really be somthin’. You are giving me goose bumps,” responded Jack.

“It’s just something you can’t really explain. It’s in the experience, like most things.”

“Did you always paint?” asked Jack.

“No, I was a businessman.”

“*Really?*”

“Yep, I was good at management. Art’s like that too. So many other skills cross over. Even if you do it part-time, *it’s* also helpful for doing other things. It *enhances* other things and it’s great to have a pastime to enhance life. Life is for living, and for me, art elevates the soul, and helps you see more.”

“Man, you are *killin’* me. It’s like I missed out on a huge part of life.”

“Yep, but *not now*, Jack. There’s always time if you mean it.”

“Yep, but with all the work ahead of me, well, I don’t know about that.”

“All the arts can augment our work and give it more life. Stories entertain and inspire, and music lifts the soul and frees the heart. Music and singing are part of all great cultures, and it will in the new culture too. There’ll always be time if you love it, and anyway, *everything* belongs to *everything*.”

“I don’t get you? I mean, the everything belongs to everything part.”

“Well, the rock paintings we’re going to see are not just paintings. They’re life *and* spirit, *and* creative. You know the original culture here knew that nothing was really separate, and when we European folks learn that life, law, love, work, family, art, and spirit are all one thing, then, we’ll create a better world. Look at Hall 3 for example. It’s beautiful, spiritual, strong, and

practical, and endless things go on in it. Everything exists in unity. It's us who've separated everything so much, and for so long, that we forgot all this."

"Unity, eh?"

"Yep. Everything that works and lives, evolves from the power of unity. From metals, to compounds, to life forms, to families, to community; and without it, well, it's *all over*. Nothing, and no one, is separate, Jack."

"I'm glad we are talking about unity now. I have a recurring dream, or at least I seem to find myself back in a certain garden. My last visit *brought up* unity. It's *so hard won* sometimes."

"Yep."

"Is that all you have for me?"

"Well, yep. I don't usually concern myself with others, Jack. I don't draw attention to their downside or get caught up in their learning; but to me, it is better to be wrong and united, than to be right and all busted up. And, mate, unity *is work*, like everything else that counts."

"So, keeping unity is part of the work, then?"

"It's in all of life. Unity *is* the work."

"*Sure...Man! I am thick as two planks of wood.*"

"Don't be too hard on yourself. Sometimes, it's the obvious stuff that gets by us, while we're looking at all the detail."

"It's all unity."

“Yep, nothing gets done without unity. Death is what happens without unity. It is the pre-eminent requirement of everything that lives and grows.”

Jack thought about that for a while, as the two men walked the track. Then, something occurred to him, and he asked, “What if things are just crazy though? I mean, what if some crazy dynamic has formed, and it always just gets insane.”

“Well, it’s something to *strive* for. Takes some effort and a little self-sacrifice. But if it gets really crazy, I usually just sit back from it all and go find something useful to do until things change. There are a million ways to serve. I just tend to leak out to somewhere else when there’s a blockage. Sometimes, things can’t be remedied, and so need time, but you gotta’ see it as *an ongoing process*. Not walking away. Sometimes, wading in and being *real* is good, and sometimes doing *nothing* is actually an action worth taking.”

“It is a process, eh?”

“One that is worth working on, and not giving up on. It sounds like your garden has lost its order; lost the guidance that brought it to be.”

“You’re a *Department* man, aren’t you?”

“No, Jack, I’m one of your lot. I’ve been in the work of reinvigorating humanity.”

“Then, why aren’t you in the study?”

“Found what I have to do, Jack. Obviously, our times call for many workers, but somehow, I know I have been tasked to do what I’m doing. There are many things to do, and many ways to get things done, in something evolving like this.”

“Well, that’s your call, eh.”

“I move with what is moving inside me at any time. I believe you need to listen to your being; listen to your heart. What you choose to do, in big things, and small things, becomes who you will be.”

“Well sure, and like I said, mate, it’s your call.”

“I believe it’s His, Jack.”

THE WORDS SHONE, IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE, ABOVE THE CROWD.

“Man is the supreme Talisman [...] The Great Being saith: Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.”⁶

People roved through the eating hall, gathering their morning sustenance. They talked as they waited in line. They talked as they sat to eat. The gentle hum rose up like a prayer, as those who gathered there had much ahead of them. They were safe and well for now, but they would have to leave in time to face the challenges that lay out in the world.

That thought drove Jack’s comment, as he, Judy, Brig, and the artist sat together eating.

“We’re getting it easy in here, eh. Imagine what it is like out there.”

“Yep, who knows, eh,” offered Brig.

“But we can take *all this* out, and help people, eh,” added Judy.

“Well, we might find that *they’ll* be helping *us*,” offered the artist.

“I s’pose,” said Jack, but wanted more of what the artist meant.

The artist saw it on Jack’s face, and continued on, “We won’t be the experts. *They* will. It’ll be hard out there, and they’ll be learning just as hard as, or harder than, us. We need to remember that when we go out. It won’t all be courses and trees.”

“But it’s what we’re learning about, and it is key to a solid future,” commented Jack.

“Yes, but we’ll all be learning together, and working together. They know the lay of the land and their own reality, they will have learned what we have not needed to, so we’ll have to be respectful and learn from them too. People know when you don’t respect them, and if you just charge in there with your remedies, they will balk.”

“Surely, they will see the benefits.”

“Will they?” asked the artist, trying to get Jack to see.

“Well, if you show them your plans and are respectful, I am sure they will.”

“If you exclude them in the planning and consultation on what is to be done, then you will only be dragging them, and you will lose them eventually,” responded the Artist.

“Mate, you are not even *taking* the courses. You’re gonna’ do art. Why are you even talking like you are gonna’ do this work,” challenged Jack.

“I’ll be doing the work, just like I did at home. I will go out, and I will work in the orchards, consult with those who run the courses. I’ll work with local people on the particular problems of the places I go. I’ll paint, and I’ll get to know the people there, and I’ll help the communication between people. I’ll help oil the machinery of finding of a shared vision for all involved. I am a big picture person, Jack. Just because I am not doing the courses, doesn’t mean I won’t be doing the work. You need to learn not to demarcate people like that. We’ll all have to be in it and help in *any way*.”

The artist looked at Jack with intense eyes, but a gentle look, and Jack just sat back. He wasn’t happy, but his mind was opening.

“I was talking to the Counsellor,” started Judy, “and she said that we’ll have to help and support others from here as well. Ones that go to other communities nearby us. She said we’ll work in clusters, so we can be more effective, until the training develops, and the orchards start to fruit. Until communities become self-sustaining.”

“Did she?” mused Jack, remembering what The Doc had said. “I’ve heard of that before; clusters.”

“It will take the *big two* to join a community and help empower people. *Humility and unity*,” offered the Artist, with another little grin for Jack.

Jack didn’t smile but took it on the chin, as the comment was mainly aimed at him. He nodded, almost unnoticeably, with thoughtful eyes.

“And courage, and trust, and faith; and we will be doin’ *a lot more* learning out *there*, than we will here,” offered Brig.

“Well, a *man* is a mine rich in gems....So, no excuses for you *fellas*’,” said Judy, with a smile.

Jack pointed at Judy, smiled, saying to her, “Yeah, *man*. That’s right.”

THAT DAY THEY LEARNT ABOUT THE NATURE OF THE SOUL. The study talked about the soul as an unknowable essence; a bird that could be mired in the physical existence if we let it. They learnt about its association with the physical body at the moment of conception, and that it existed in its own level of existence. They learned that this life was a very small, but crucial part of the life of a human soul. That there were many implications of the reality of it being such a small part of a soul’s existence. That its journey was *towards* The Creator, and would, throughout eternity, grow its perfections.

In the afternoon, they learned a good deal about growing of the plants from seeds; how the seeds were sown, how the soils were, and how to prepare the soils. They learned about the initial nurturing of the seeds, and how the first spring of green needs to be protected. Strangely, the study on the soul made the planting and nurturing of the seeds very meaningful. Jack saw souls as seeds, planted in the soil of the material life. He was getting a real lesson on how nothing was separate.

Through all the coursework, and the hands-on with the seeds and planting, the facilitators encouraged an understanding of how the two movements worked together. The courses were the first movement, gaining the spirit, and growing the capacity of people to grow build and care for the second movement, which was the multiplication of the trees, and the development of the orchards. Both bringing the fruit. It also seemed to remind most there that, spirit *and* growing good things were the basis of civilisation, and that one helped grow the other.

It was a long day, and Jack did not want dinner, or to reflect. His mind and his body were spent, and he hit the hay early. His body rejoiced when he lay down, and his mind was glad to turn its lights out. Only a prayer for Jennifer punctuated the time between him lying down and nodding off. In his dreams, he was taken to many places. He even flew past The Garden on a carpet, and though asleep, he was so happy at what it meant for him. Then close to the hour before dawn, Jack's soul was taken to a new place.

The scene was mostly only two colours, to his outlook at least. One was the colour of the blue sky, but the most powerful presence was the endless expanse of white snow. There were great cliffs of green ice behind him, and to each side of him, and they gave way to the endless flat white ground before him. There was a greenish hue, when Jack cast his gaze to his feet, but the vista before him was one of white, and from that white, came a figure slowly gaining reality out of it. As he waited there to meet this creature, he felt a sense of calm; like he felt in prayer.

"Hello, Mister Johnston," said the Inuit lady, in white fur.

"Just call me, Jack."

"He said you were not one for formality."

"Who?"

"My brother."

"Have I met him?"

"Yes, he is a Custodian."

"I don't know any Custodian."

“You know him as The Doc. He is the Custodian of Growth. I am the Custodian of Detachment. My work is within, more so, and more in the purity and intent of the individual.”

“Hell, I was just getting into the whole everything belongs to everything else.”

“It does,” said the Custodian with a gentle smile. Then, she quoted from the Creative Word,

“Thy day of service is now come.”⁷

“Look into the white, as the choice of your service must now come. Listen to my words... What will you do? How will you act? How will you bring community, and the new civilisation?”

The Custodian’s words then changed in nature. They stopped being words, and now, seemed to blow gently to his ears like a cool crisp breeze, and as her words came out, it felt like the white was singing to him.

“What are you attached to? What fires do you build? We all burn in our own fires.

The wielding of the powers of the soul, are circumvented by the fire of ego, and what it seeks to hold for itself. To be safe, to be great...these are the fire.

The light of the soul burns with a different light, and like fire and water, they will not abide each other. The soul’s light burns for others and all.

*What warmth will you provide? What service do you seek? What trees will you plant? On these,
your soul will feed.*

*What you grow, and what you initiate, will grow. Always in the beginning, there is individual
action and letting go to love. Release the power of the warmth of love.*

For anything to begin anew, for a start to be made, a soul must be free to act on their love.

Attachment will hold you back. The wind is ever free to blow.

What will your service be? What will your part be? What fire will you build?

How will you help bring again, the Warmth?"

*Jack reflected a while there, staring into the cold white, then, found himself transported to
the Never Never. The red desert stretched on forever in front of him, but behind him and around
him, high walls of rugged red rock replaced the walls of ice, and out of the red desert came a black
woman, caked red from the dust. She spoke with a different voice. A voice of a Woman of The
Land, but it was the same spirit. Jack could feel it.*

"What fire do you make? What will you hold onto out here? Will you let go, and trust and hope?

Gotta' let go out here, brother. Gotta' be careful with the fire too.

*This is a place of spirit, here; a place of acceptance, a place of reliance. A place of each day,
and what'll come.*

Gotta' go lookin' and learnin'. Gotta go seekin' food, and knowin' the water.

How will you live any-otherwise?

What will you hunt? Who will you teach? What will you care for, and what animal will you guard?

You are part of the all. No one lives without the others. We live for each other.

*Gotta' take your place. Gotta' decide what your gift will be. No use to us, if you do nothing. No
food there, little brother. No food there."*

*With those last words, the desert slowly drifted away again, and Jack found himself
returned to the icy domain, and the Custodian smiled at him.*

*"It is just a time to choose a path of service. You may not stay on it, as all evolves, but you
need to feel where your heart is pointing now, where the need is, and seek to travel that path; to
walk with others and learn what you need to. A goal, even one continually changing, creates more
focus, more power. Capacity and focus grow from guidance; from action, and reflection on it."*

*"I reckon helping build capacity in others is my service, the courses and building the
orchards for now, and I have something else I have to find. My artist mate made me feel something
in me. Something, I didn't know was there," mused Jack, openly.*

“You will find what it is. Do what is in you now, and what is before you now. Your world is in a beginning time, and individual initiative is required. Action is required. Courage is required. Vision is required. Love is required. Purpose is required. Detachment is required.”

“They say, we’ll help each other in clusters. So, I won’t be alone.”

“Yes, but when you first go out from the Hall’s, it will take individual effort. You will learn and reflect together, but you will need to initiate, again and again. It is the way of imparting initial impetus. Momentum comes when enough continued impetus is applied. Even with accompanying souls, you will indeed walk alone. In time, the collective will rise, but for now, to be bold and initiate, is to build momentum.”

With those words, Jack woke, and he lay there reflecting over what role he would play, and what detachment and individual initiative would look like out there. He wondered what things would be like out there too, as it would be very different now. He then reflected on what it would take to even leave the comfort of the Halls. But he knew he would leave, and a joy filled him as thought about the gifts he could share.

Somehow, in the wandering of his thoughts, he came again to his concern for how Jennifer was, imagining what courage and detachment it took for her to venture off to other worlds deeper. Sadness for her filled him for a short moment, until he thought that she may be having the adventure of a lifetime in those nether places. Life was an adventure indeed, no matter where one might be. Then, his thoughts went back to how detached he would have to be, and what courage it would take to initiate things in his old hometown; *let alone* somewhere new.

With that, a question came. “What seeds would he plant?”

Flowers

It was the first day of summer. Three months had now passed since Hall 3 had touched down; much had been learned, and many friendships had grown. The hot daytime breeze now, blew in off the dry country near the gorge. The rains had been good in the spring that had just passed, but things had dried off again. The heat had been building in recent days, but the cool gentle air in the night still remained. The cooler nights would change soon enough though, as the desert summer nights knew how to make you sweat.

Those in the pods, had been trading with the camp to the south, and there was now a well-worn path through the bush, between the two encampments. The pods were now surrounded by small fields of food plants, and the early growth of the fruit trees they had learned to nurture in the

first phase. Crushed stone pathways had been built around Hall 3 and in among the pods, which were built to provide stable walking paths.

In the wet, when the rain had come, the ground had turned to mush, and with so many people here now, the rock paths had been needed. The native plants had burst into green with the rain, as life was tenuous, and every moment needed to be taken advantage of. Thankfully too, the rain had improved the moisture in the soil and built the flow of the creek, which had been helpful for growing the fruit trees, and watering the patchwork of small fields.

The Creative Word, and the training, had changed those who had participated. They felt more empowered and able, and their confidence was growing; they had well and truly settled into the process of learning within those first three months. They were also stronger in spirit, even though, there was still some trepidation about having to leave at the end of the year. But they knew that they could access a Deeper Power, that the process was only just beginning, and that they were part of a wider process. Most were slowly becoming more confident that they would be ready when the time came.

Jack and the others were beginning to understand that spirituality was not just about a heightened state, and more awareness. It was very much in the day-to-day, and that opportunities to grow arose in the changes and chances of life. Life was the perfect soil, and a good soul was not someone who walked around heightened, it was more someone who weathered life with character. Most had not realised the depth of the powers that lay within them before this time, or at least they did not see them as powers that they may wield at will. They learned that even *courtesy* is a power of the soul, just like determination, moderation, or kindness were. It was not lost on Judy how courtesy and respect were *sisters*, and *love* and *kindness*, their mother and father.

The people of Hall 3 had also come to understand the power of prayer, in spiritual upliftment, in preparation for the day, in asking for help, and as a reminder of what they held within them. Most would come together to pray in the early morning. Some would go inside the Hall, but others liked the feel of nature, and the talk of the birds around them, as they gathered outside to pray. It was a lovely gentle way to start the day, and it created a greater sense of community, and a connection with all things.

They had learned to use prayer as a part of life and had come to want to feel this *power source* more often. So much so, that some people came together regularly in small groups, in the pods, at other times of the day. There were also some regular formal prayer and reading gatherings, in the Hall, with some discussion after. These were usually followed by food, and social time. There was something about sharing food, spiritual *and physical*, that bonded those who took part.

The formal gatherings in the Hall were also a place where *The Department* people could share what they were doing around the camps, and their current thinking on things. It was a space where people could share ideas with them, and each other, and make suggestions about anything; from the courses to the pathways between the pods. They didn't know it, but they were working with the embryo of governance for the new culture that would arise.

One very enterprising soul was so inspired by devotion that he went to the camp nearby once a week, to offer the people there, a regular prayer and meditation time. He had found one person, then two, and now there were five coming along. The number didn't matter to him, as he was providing an opportunity to them, to feed *their* souls, and to realise higher aspirations of the spirit. To these five souls, and to him, it was priceless. They would talk afterwards, mainly about the needs of the camp, and what the Creative Word meant to them.

It was from these discussions, that two of them decided they wanted to plant more food for the whole camp, asking the man from the Hall 3 to bring some seeds. All three worked on the project, getting more people at the camp to join them. Another person in this small group who had been inspired by the Words and the discussions, began teaching smaller children, informally, some basic history and science. The beauty and potential of all these souls were being given more chance to flourish.

Phase Two was now about to start, and the participants had been told that they would be planting a different type of fruit tree in this phase, as well as nurturing the fruit trees planted in phase one on to the flowering stage. Judy just loved the trees, and the work. There was something about getting her hands in the soil, and tending to the plants, that made her come alive, and she could hardly wait for the first flowers to bloom. Jack and Brig liked the honest toil involved; lugging water, digging, and building good soil. Enough is to say, that life at Hall 3, and just beyond it, was moving on, and it all rolled on almost organically.

The Foundation

*“Every child is potentially the light of the world —
and at the same time its darkness...”⁸*

Jack’s mind screamed in pain, and his body crashed to the floor. He was falling again to the ailment that continued to attack him. He had entered the hall with the others, with no sign of any impending attack, and had looked up to the crystalline words of light that floated in the air. Judy had commented on it as Jack had fallen.

He found himself on the bridge again. The road span that hung there was shorter now, but that did not concern him. He was just relieved that the terrible feelings that came with his attacks had gone. The feelings of great loss and even the memory of these dire feelings, had thankfully disappeared in this place.

This time, Jack paid less attention to the bridge and the clock counting down on the cement roadway, as The Doc had allayed his fears about this place. He just looked out from the bridge;

then down, up, and all around. He and the bridge were in a huge sphere of clear air that extended a five-kilometre radius from the bridge in all directions. The shell of this sphere was white cloud, the bridge sitting alone in the middle of the open space. The clouds were a blotchy mist that he could not see through, and somehow the sun shined here, yet was not apparent.

Just then, a rainbow-coloured hot air balloon rose out of the cloud below, and out in front of him. Under it, was a huge silver gondola, with what seemed to be a teacher and children on an excursion, enjoying a day out of the classroom.

“Hello, the balloon!” called Jack, as it rose up beside the bridge, and in front of him.

The teacher seemed to say something to the pilot, and he halted the balloon’s rise. The teacher then pointed at Jack, and the bridge, and seemed to be helping the children to understand what they were seeing. The teacher then seemed to encourage them to ask her questions. The children were very engaged. Jack knew that she was a good teacher because, he had learnt that good teaching came down to the ability to engage your students; to inspire them to venture into new knowledge of their own free will, and to reach into themselves for answers.

“Hello, the bridge!” she called back, after a time, and she smiled at the children as she did. They felt so excited, and they all looked over at Jack. Joy filled his heart at the sight of all those little faces; all filled with joy and curiosity.

“Where are we?” called Jack.

“Well, you are here. We are just visiting,” she added, with a nod to the children. The children nodded back, as if they were very knowledgeable about the whole thing, like children do.

“Where is here?”

“Here, is where you are right now.”

Jack saw that he was not going to be told anything about where he was, so he ventured another question that might be answered. “So, you are a teacher. What do you teach?”

“It is ‘who’ I teach. Not what.”

He just loved that answer, and he smiled, and all the children smiled.

“So, who do you teach?”

“I teach these little ones, and they teach me. And they teach me to be better at it.”

With that, one child called, “Yeah!”

Some of the children giggled at that, and one little girl nodded her head, as if to emphasise it. Her head was just visible over the rail of the silver gondola.

Jack smiled at that little gem, and the teacher smiled and said,

“You must therefore offer praise with every breath, for you are educating your spiritual children.”⁹

Jack contemplated those words, and sought what wisdom they may hold, while the children looked on in seeming amazement. Some even began to mimic his facial expression, seemingly in an attempt to understand more about what he was doing.

After some reflection on what the teacher had quoted, and some inner exploration for a new question that he might ask, one that may be answered, he called out, "How do you teach the children?"

"Well, I help these tender herbs to mine the gems within them. They are all different, yet they are all rich in gems that exist within their beings. Each must learn to find and polish their gems, or more so, practise and to begin to wield their powers. We are all in need of education so our true nature can be revealed, and then, we can be of benefit to our kind."

Jack remembered Naomi, an Islander woman, he had met a long time ago. She talked of nurturing children until they flowered, and that no bud can be forced to open.

"Little flowers, eh?" called Jack, which had the boys frowning, and the girls beaming, making Jack and the teacher laugh. Then, so did the children.

"They are the strong foundation of the future," said the teacher, raising her arms in a stance of strength.

All the children copied; the boys with a little more gusto; well, except for one of the girls. But all raised their arms and were sure of their place in the scheme of life.

The teacher turned to ask the pilot something, and Jack had the feeling that it was time for them to go. The balloon began to rise, and the teacher and the children waved to him. Some waved all the way, until the mist cut-off their view, and Jack did too, just for the joy of it. Little ones always filled troubled and tired hearts with joy.

“THERE HE IS,” said Brig, very glad to see his friend come around. Another person was cooling Jack’s face, and brow, with a cold wet cloth.

The Counsellor was there and was all apologies to Jack. She had been informed of the nature of his illness and revealed that she should have protected him from this attack; yet she was not forthcoming on what it was, or how she might have helped. He knew that it must have been on instruction from The Doc. He knew The Doc thought it was best that he didn’t know.

The Counsellor suggested some different work for Jack over this next phase. She knew that he had studied courses on children’s education, and even trained some teachers in his Faith, so she thought that some time away from this phase’s study would be okay for him. She moved on quickly, explaining that it was best for him, for now, to spend time learning more about the bringing of the first plants to flower, and that the air outside would be better for him too.

“You layin’ around on your back again, Jack,” said Judy, coming through the small group that stood around him.

“Yep. I am a sick man, Jude,” said Jack, smiling wide.

“You *sure are*, Jack,” joked Judy, smiling wider.

He had a chuckle and started to sit up. His head still hurt, but the God-awful feelings were gone. The physical pain, he could deal with, but the feelings that came with it were horrendous.

Judy and Brig saw to Jack, and after a few hours, and some food and water, they went out to the fields for a walk. These trees grew much more quickly than any of them thought they would; they were a strong, natural, and fast-growing stock. The sprouts of a couple of months ago had

turned into growing saplings very quickly, and all the potential of the flowering and fruiting was becoming more obvious in them.

They saw a facilitator who had taught them about planting in the last phase and walked over for a chat.

“They are growing well,” commented Brig, to the facilitator.

“Yes, they are. In the past we didn’t bother too much with nurture at this stage, or even develop an understanding of this sapling phase of growth, until we realised that it was crucial to the quality of the fruit these trees will bear in time, and just as important in enhancing their ability to ward off disease. We lost a lot of trees at this youthful stage. You will learn mostly about this stage in the *fruiting* phase.”

“So, why is this stage so crucial? Isn’t *every* stage important?” asked Brig.

“Yes. Every stage is *very* important. But we found that they were more vulnerable, and mostly gathered their potential, at this stage. We realised that fertilising at this time helped the trees grow more quickly, and also grow more robust trunks and branches, for later on. They really developed when we did; the fruit crop was far greater, and they were stronger against the prevailing winds,” explained the facilitator. “We almost missed the most potential imbued time of their lifecycle, and for some reason too, these trees took their own best path to adulthood from this stage of their growth. When we allowed them to grow differently, and fill their own potentials naturally, we got extraordinarily higher yields.”

“Why don’t we plant some more of these around the pods? The more food, the better,” offered Jack.

“Not yet. It would not be wise.”

“But the soil’s good there,” argued Jack.

“We have to consolidate what we have here first. We have to plant the seeds of the second fruit tree in this phase. We could plant and plant, but not have the people and water to tend to them all properly. Better to consolidate, and then *later*, expand the seeding again. When you are out there, you will need to remember this. We failed to realise the importance of this aspect too, but through many years of action and reflection, we found that, what we plant needs to be sustainable. Too many mass plantings without enough people and capacity and the trees simply cannot be nurtured enough. It takes time and effort to grow an orchard.”

“Learned as you went, eh?” offered Jack.

“Yes. Nurturing the saplings properly, and consolidating what we had planted, were two of the most crucial things we found out in the process of growing the trees to fruit.”

JACK SAT DOWN FOR LUNCH. It was a hot day, and so, he had found himself a good tree to sit under. A good tree was worth its weight in gold after working in the summer sun. He had been working outside for a month now and felt so much stronger for it, even though there was now a low, but constant, bubbling of the feelings that attended his attacks in him. He sat on the ground, put his back up against the trunk. He ate his lunch, and after it, nodded off to sleep sitting there.

He had worked fifteen-hour days continuously in his job back at home, and over the years, he had found that a short kip at lunch powered him up for the second half of the day. He would sit in a chair, or up on a low wall on the side of the roof, lean his back against the chair or adjoining

building, and just drop his head to his chest and close his eyes. He reckoned that he could sleep in a tree if he had to, as he had learned how to prop and position his body, so it did not fall when he nodded off to sleep.

It had been a while now since he had worked that hard. Over the years, he had found himself doing casual work, so he could fit in more work in the building of a new civilization; to get to the meetings and trainings. They were always learning in his Faith; just like here. He had gained so many new skills and met so many great people. He had also met a few annoying ones, and ones that made him a bit crazy at times, but that is the nature of working with people. It was something in the nature of inner growth, and in learning how to be united. Being more united was a *process*, like everything else; one that seemed never ending. And as fate would have it, he was just about to learn a little bit more.

“Jack,” came a voice.

He woke to see the Counsellor, and one of the ladies of *The Department*; one he had met some years ago, when he wandered in the deeper places.

“Hello, Mister Johnston,” said the lady.

“Hello,” he replied.

“We have a small problem, so we need to send you back, *deeper*.”

“You want my help? That’s new.”

“We are requesting your service,” answered the lady.

“It will be a good training for you, as you are missing out on this phase,” offered the Counsellor.

“We see you are a deliberate man; well *at times*, and that is what we need. We believe you may have the skills, or more so, the unknown quantity, that may bring a resolution to our problem,” explained the lady.

“I’m happy gardening, thanks. I’m enjoying the freedom of spirit, and the mental rest. This last month has been helpful to me. I thought that’s what The Doc ordered for me,” answered Jack, not sharing all that was going on with him.

“We are here to *consult* with you, Jack.”

“You are here to ask for *more*. I have known *that* reality all my life, in life, in service, and in deeper places. There seems *no end* to the asking of more.”

“You have rested. We don’t understand,” questioned the Counsellor.

Jack sighed and opened up to the two ladies. “I don’t have *any* more to give. The attacks are getting more present. They’re now almost continuously bubbling just under the surface. The feelings low grade but threatening to bust through. I can hold them back, but they tire me. I don’t know if I have the will at the moment to take on anything big.”

“I didn’t know, Jack,” said the Counsellor. “But maybe the task could help take your mind away from these things.”

“And you once seemed to *love* going deeper. As I recall, it was *easy* for you,” added the lady of The Department.

Jack sat there with his eyes down and straight ahead. He was tired from the heat of the day, and even though the last trip to the bridge *was* magical, he was tiring badly from the constant bubbling inside him. It wasn't just these feelings though. The heady nature of continual change and learning over the years was also taking its toll. Jack felt sick to his stomach from the constant challenges; physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. "*Why do people always ask for more, and more, from me?*" he thought. It seemed to be the story of his life.

"We promise you rest after this service. We did not realise your current state. You seemed so uplifted, only recently," offered the Counsellor.

"Trust in the power of The Creator. He will uphold you," added the lady.

"I have wandered deeper, and worked hard for the Cause I love here, at home, over many years. It all seems to have caught up with me. *Your words* about God upholding me are empty to me. You care little for me. Is that not *obvious* to you?"

"I think we should leave this man be," suggested the Counsellor.

"Mister Johnston, we have no choice. If you can trust in The Creator and complete this task, we would be in your debt. We have no other way to get sustenance to the people here," said the lady, with some love and care.

The sick feeling in Jack's gut fell away, as he stopped thinking about himself, and started thinking about all the others here.

"*How deep is your love, Jack?*" asked the Counsellor, now a little more hopeful.

Jack just weakened at that. Love for The Creator broke through all barriers, made all things possible, and even created unity itself. His love was always strong, even when his body was weak

and his emotions holding sway. He *was* a deliberate man, at least in part. He knew that it took genuine effort to get things done; actually, it took sacrifice.

“Is it *that* important?” he asked.

“It is crucial to our work here. We cannot lose momentum now,” answered the Counsellor.

He sat there for a while and took a swig of some water. Then he sighed, and said, “Okay. What’s the job?”

“We will brief you on the way,” said the lady of The Department.

BRIG AND JUDY HAD FOUND JACK GONE, and had gone to talk with the Counsellor, as they knew that he had been struggling and wondered where he had gotten to. Like most times, only those close to someone really knew where they were at. Jack was not a man to share his pain, but these two knew him, and they had a way of *watching more* and *talking less*, which gave them greater sight.

The Counsellor held great trust in Hall 3, and as they talked, her words fell gently. Her integrity was unfailing, as was her love. She had earned the respect of the people here, and it had nothing to do with her position. Yet, she was the essence of that position, through and through, as she could easily inspire, encourage, and share understanding without formality. Her love was real, her respect for others was real, and she lived in honesty. She also had no inner struggles that ever blocked this gentle honesty.

As she had talked with Brig and Judy, she had made it clear that Jack was safe, but that she could not share the nature of the work he would be doing. Trev had not been happy *at all* when

Brig and Judy eventually shared the news with him. He had gone on about the fact that two people were now missing, and that he was not *at all* at ease. Judy and Brig thought it was all well enough, as Jack had travelled before, and they trusted the Counsellor. So, after a little time, Judy managed to settle Trev a bit.

Today, Brig and Judy were entering Hall 3 for another morning session of phase two. Another group had begun phase one, a month ago, when this first group had moved on. Those of *The Department* were very organised and systematic in their work. There would be eight groups passing through the training over the two years that the Halls would grace the planet. Brig and Judy's group were now learning to plant the second type of fruit tree, while they worked a little from time to time on nurturing the first trees. This new phase was about nurturing the spiritual nature of children, and how to encourage them to use that nature in their lives. As usual, the words sat in the air above them.

“Let the teacher be a doctor to the character of the child, thus will he heal the spiritual ailments of the children of men.”¹⁰

“And women,” said Judy to Brig.

The facilitator heard Judy, and said, “You haven’t heard of the nature of any word that demarcates gender in the Writings?”

“No,” answered Judy. “It’s all *man*, and *men*, and *mankind*.”

“Any word referring to man or men, also means woman or women. All are mankind, and while it is fine to use humankind, we don’t want to make changes to the Revealed Word. It is often a slippery slope that leads to watering down of the Message. Also, any reference to The Creator as male is simply to use the words current here. He is beyond gender.”

“That makes a lot of sense,” said another man participating in the study.

“To you,” said Judy, smiling at man, then looking to Brig with a look that meant ‘*Okay. But we’ll see*’.

“Have you ever felt a gender bias in this Hall?” asked the man of Judy, more as a statement, and seemingly needing her to see.

“Even *the Counsellor* is a woman,” offered Brig.

“It’s okay, gentle-men,” said Judy, letting it go, as that was all she needed to know. She just had to have a parting shot.

The man smiled, as he now brought their attention back to the coursework.

Over the next two weeks, they studied intensively. The facilitators wanted the participants to experience intensive learning, so that they could use it beyond the Halls, when it came time. They got the study done more quickly, but it was because they studied it for more hours in each day. So, the time in the number of days was shorter, but they spent the full number of hours that the course required. This way, the full content was delivered and experienced, but over a shorter span of days. Nothing was lost, and time was saved, increasing the speed of the momentum of the work.

The time passed very quickly and at the end the two weeks, they were getting close to the end of the unit of study that they were working on. Each phase had books, and each book was made up of a number of units.

“So, because the human reality is beyond the laws of nature, or while it partly is, it can also rise above them, it is able to *choose* what is *constructive* or what is *destructive*. It can sink lower than an animal, and be the vilest creature, or it can exalt itself by using real character and true understanding. By choosing spiritual love and knowledge, it can be the most sublime creature. We all need to be educated in the spirit, or in the powers of higher human character. So, how we educate our children is crucial. Education is crucial.”

“It’s a good word, *character*,” said Brig, out loud.

“A special word,” said Judy, adding emphasis for the rest of the group.

“Let’s meditate on that word in light of what we have been studying,” suggested the facilitator.

Some closed their eyes, some wrote notes, and others looked off into nowhere. One person sat on the floor in a meditative position and settled in for a time, which seemed to give the others permission to take longer. The facilitator saw the mood of the group, so allowed them to follow the flow.

“Maybe, while you meditate on what that word means for children and their education, consider well as, what it means for those who choose to educate them. What does *character* look like, in *all* involved, and what would the quote above you look like, *in* the classroom?”

JACK WALKED PAST SACKS OF FLOUR. The warehouse was huge, and it took a while for him and the lady to reach the daylight at the other end. The sun was strong in light intensity, but gentler in heat, compared to the outback summer he had just come from. He looked up at the sky as they emerged, and something high, and a bit off in the distance, took his eye.

It was Alabast's sky miner. Jack's heart jumped. Alabast was an old man Jack had run into on an unscheduled visit on his last journey. He was a hard-working old man, and Jack had taken a shine to him, even though he had a very short time with him. He remembered the skinny old man's words and pictured him saying it. "...take home in yer' heart, and live yer' life. Yer' soul and yer' mind'll just grow natural like." Jack wished he had heard that in his childhood.

He continued on, following the lady who had come through the portal to Hall 3. Seeing the sky rig had picked up his spirits and he was now glad that he had decided to come. Realising, that sometimes, we don't know what we need. He was starting to see that he just needed something focused to do, or at the least something to take his mind off the rumblings of his emotions. They had fallen away as they went through the portal and a good deal more as the lady briefed him on the situation.

The problem was very different to what he had imagined. It was about the food supply to all the Halls. This was the final staging point, and they were having trouble with some *automatons*. Apparently, they were different to robots. Sometimes, it just comes down to words that mean different things to different people, but sometimes it says everything. The automatons were designed to get the flow of goods up to the level required, but they could not compute the organic units, the *people* working with them, and so had expelled them progressively from the supply management. This had taken out the flexibility in the system and slowed flow of supply.

“Machinery is great, the efficiency it provides is wonderful, but it needs to be in service to the process, not running it. It needs be in service to human outcomes, and there seems no way around the programming,” finished the lady.

“So, what do I say to them?”

“We don’t know. We are just hoping you have something we do not.”

“That’s the plan?!” With that, Jack laughed out loud, and added, “That’s the *whole* plan?”

“We call it faith. I prayed on it, and you were the answer I received. We have exhausted all other avenues in solving the problem, *we believe*. It is either you uncover a solution, or we destroy them. We need them, but they are running themselves, and even turn themselves on and off these days. It got out of hand very quickly.”

Jack had no idea at all how he was going to deal with this.

“We don’t *want* to destroy them as they do help the momentum of the work, and do play their part,” added the lady.

“Can I get to know their workings, and their protocols?” asked Jack.

“HUMAN UNIT FAILURE!”

Jack went back to work fulfilling his role like a cog in the system again.

“HUMAN UNIT HAS REGAINED CORRECT WORK STATUS.”

He had been there with them for a few hours and tried many things that had failed dismally. He was already tired of the mindlessness and seeming intractability of these machines. These automatons were short in stature and made of a dull black metal. They had no shiny or painted surface. Jack thought they were very unimpressive at first, but when he spent time learning about their workings and protocols, he came to see their limits. They were well built and very capable, but their basic learning parameters were too small, so their vision was narrow and their flexibility a little non-existent. They all worked on the input, programmed words, of the original plan, and were not able to deviate. They would just repeat the words of the plan to each other and to the human workers; over and over, and *over again*, while they failed to see that all the human workers had gone, and that the process was halting.

The first problem was how they were programed with the plan, locked in, and word for word. The *human units* were learning, and seemingly taking things off-plan, so, the automatons took them out of the process and continued on; all the while, repeating over and over again, the language of the plan. The plan was much more than they could see, and it also evolved with experience, but they seemed to only see it in a certain literal way. The work was slowing because the human units could not work with them, and backlogs were forming in all the food production sheds. The system was designed to evolve forward, but because there was no flexibility and less and less human workers in it, it was actually making it fall backwards.

Unified language makes for unified effort, but being locked in a certain view of them, even though the reality of experience in the evolving work shows more depth to them, is in no way helpful. While Jack worked there, the constant slogans and the *seeming* pride in being able to recite the words of the plan, made him a little sick. He had heard endless slogans before in his life, and they usually came out of the mouths of those who did not think for themselves. The endless

repetition sure didn't help the human workers, as eventually, it wore them down and sent them packing, bringing the work to a lower and lower momentum. The automatons would not shut down to be reprogrammed as they computed that they had not deviated from the plan. The automatons were completely sure...Then Jack got it. *"They are sure of the words of the plan,"* he said to himself.

"ERROR. ERROR," called Jack.

The nearest automaton came up to him. "NO ERROR DETECTED."

"ERROR. ERROR. REMOVE AUTOMATIC UNIT."

Another unit came up to them. "AUTOMATIC UNIT WORKING WITHIN PARAMETERS."

"ERROR. ERROR. FAILURE OF TWO AUTOMATIC UNITS TO FOLLOW THE WORDS OF THE PLAN," sprouted Jack, almost enjoying himself.

Then, a huge, and much larger machine with a conveyor belt and circular opening as its middle, rolled over on its large tracks to the work area where Jack was.

"NO DIVERGENCE DETECTED," came from its speaker.

"ALL AUTOMATIC UNITS MALFUNCTIONING," continued Jack, knowing their protocol language. "DIVERGENCE FROM WORDS OF PLAN UNDETECTED IN ALL MEMORY UNITS. CLOSE DOWN PROTOCOL. CLOSE DOWN,"

"NO DIVERGENCE DETECTED," repeated the large and very mobile robotic conveyer.

"DIVERGENCE FROM PLAN DETECTED. PLAN REFERENCE 303.9."

“NO REFERENCE 303.9. INVALID REFERENCE.”

“RESPONSE INVALID. INCOMPLETE MEMORY. ALL AUTOMATIC UNITS OFF-PLAN. ALL ACTIVITIES INVALID. SYSTEM FAILURE.”

With that, the automatons powered down, and shut down.

The lady of The Department and a few others came over to Jack. They were overjoyed, as this had been a big problem and a mind-numbing struggle for them.

“It seems that we are not so crazy. Our plan to bring you here seems to have worked very well,” said the lady, and then, she smiled. “Thank you, Jack.”

“It was a bit of fun actually, *and* I don’t seem to be feeling the internal bubbling anymore,” said Jack, surprised and relieved.

“We were told that bringing you deeper may help with your current symptoms and reset you a little.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?”

“This was explained to us *after* you were set to work. We were *concerned* for you, so we sent word to your physician.”

There was more to their plan than he had thought. They had learned on the run and shown more caring than he had imagined they would.

“I was sure getting sick of those words repeating over and over,” said Jack.

“That was the major problem with many of the workers. It was the mind numbing, and heart destroying, repetition, as much as it was the intensity of the work. We are not robots, and yet, we have not been *so unlike* them. There have been times, especially in the early centuries, that we would mimic the words of The Plan. We saw them as key and sought unity of thought, but we did not realise that we needed to internalise them, and understand them, and create our own language for them. We found that *human units* are not all the same. We would educate, and educate, because people weren’t responding to the plans; when all we had to do was listen, allow, and learn from the varied expression of the *human units* in word and action.”

“All part of learning about growth, eh,” offered Jack.

“Yes; and gaining more humility. It’s all about balance, really. Unity of thought is more than required. A common language in the work is almost essential, but like all things, they can be taken too far. The ego too, can lodge in tight around even a good structure, and any system can lose its flexibility, closing down creative process *and* vision.”

The Budding

“Hey, Jack man!”

It was the Surfer, and they were on the beach.

“I thought I was going back to Hall 3?” questioned Jack, surprised, but glad to see the Surfer again.

“The Doc says you need to hang here for a while. He reckons that some time *deeper* will prolong the time between your attacks in the future. Anyway, you need to chill a bit.”

“*Chill*. Why?”

Jack thought he *was* chilled. He was *happy* to see the Surfer and was happy to stay here. It was just the fact that the Surfer had said that he *had to* chill, that got him fired up a little.

“You know, Jack, you are a *funny* man. I taught you some poise, but you ain’t usin’ it, and you really need to return *home*, relax, and live from there.”

“What do you mean? I have to stay here, don’t I?” asked Jack, now more confused.

“Your home *inside, man*. You need *lay it back down*. Get your centre. It’s where you live *from*, that counts. You let *everything around you* call the shots on your *state*, man.”

“Are you playin’ with me?” asked Jack, still feeling at ease, but feeling some annoyance with the Surfer, and maybe himself.

“I *sure* am. Just checkin’ on your poise; checking that spiritual blood pressure. You are still easy to unbalance, dude.”

“Can’t be on top of your game all the time,” said Jack, annoyed that he had let the Surfer’s words get to him. He did need more poise it seemed.

“I get that, man, but there are some more things you *need to get*,” responded the Surfer, smiling loud.

“And *you* are going to *help me*,” stated Jack, as he let go and laughed, and so did the Surfer.

“I *sure* am, dude. Now that you’re all humbled up, we can learn some things.”

THE PORTAL IN HALL 3 OPENED. The Counsellor, Brig, and Judy waited for Jack to come through. The lady of The Department who had taken Jack deeper came through to tell them that he would not be coming as planned, but she turned to present someone who was following her.

“I found this one in the vortex as I came through. Is she one of yours?”

It was Jennifer, and the friends smiled as they moved towards her with their arms out, but she didn’t respond. She shyly and humbly said hello, looking around like she had never been there before. Brig realised who she was, and said, “Are you looking for Jack.”

“*Yes! Jack! Yes.* Is he here?”

“No, he’s gone, but we know where he is.”

“*I never* knew where he was,” said Jennifer, smiling.

“So, *you* are Jennifer,” said Brig, smiling back.

“He never forgot you?” added Judy, also realising that this was the Jennifer who Jack had fallen in love with.

“Forgot me? We were just together,” said Jennifer, looking confused.

“That was eight or nine years ago, for Jack,” said Judy.

“Wow. I just left him. I had a very quick and interesting stop in between, and then, I was shot here. *Where is here*, by the way?”

“It’s Hall 3, dear friend. Planet Earth, and if you are a contemporary of Jack’s, then it *is* nine years after you left him,” explained the Counsellor, obviously not aware of how Jack had met her in places deeper.

“So, what...” started Jennifer. Then looking totally confused, stopped talking.

The time confusion, and differing perceptions of those in the conversation, blew her mind a little. *Her* bearings were simply trust and courage now, as it had always been in her travels, and many early on even remained unremembered. The chaotic nature of her early travels had grown these two deeply in her. Trust was like having the stars to guide you in strange waters, courage was the integrity of your hull; trust and courage together meant not being afraid of taking a new breeze.

“It seems that you need time. Just relax and sit a while. There is plenty of time,” offered the Counsellor, trying to help Jennifer settle into her new reality.

“Thank you. I need to talk with Jack, though. How long is he away?”

“He is away for a time. We are not sure,” answered the Counsellor, gently.

“Come on girl. Come an’ have a sit down and a cuppa. We can fill you in a bit,” said Judy.

Jennifer seemed to settle a little with that. She immediately felt right about these people. She had an intuitive sense about people, but the fact that they also linked her to Jack again helped. Not only because of her feelings for him, but because he was the only one who sailed the same sea as she did, and the one person, of all the different places. That made him like an anchor, and a friendly shore.

The four of them talked for hours. They sat, drank tea, and went for a walk in the gorge. Jennifer filled the siblings in on a few of Jack’s not so great moments, and some stories of her own travels in nether places. Brig and Judy had always been very accepting of Jack and his stories, but when the Halls came, and now *this* Jennifer, they were realising that there was a lot more to the man they already knew so well. She now began to share a story that Jack had related to her.

“*Really*,” said Brig here and there, growing in respect for Jack, as he listened. Jennifer was telling a story of Jack and the Lady of The Green, on a battlefield, in another world, and what had happened. “He never told us this story. You must mean a lot to him.”

“I think humility wouldn’t let him share it with you,” offered Jennifer.

“He must have been wanting to *impress you*, girl,” chimed in Judy.

Jennifer laughed easily and gently, and she blushed just a little.

Judy liked that. It showed the nature of her.

“I hardly know him, but he means quite a lot to me,” said Jennifer, to explain, but knowing in her heart of hearts that she did know him.

“You both walk the same dream. *Of course*, he means a lot to you,” said Brig.

Jennifer cried a little at that. Brig had seen her situation and reality, very clearly, and it meant the world to her to be a little understood.

“WHAT DO YOU SEE, JACK?”

“I see a small plant that’s a bit withered, and a child sitting on the dirt beside it. She seems to be malnourished too.”

“What do you *see*?”

“They both had potential to thrive but have fallen on bad ground, or the rain has not come to nourish them.”

“What do you *see*, Jack?”

“The spirit of the material will be withdrawn from both of them in time.”

“What do you see happening now?”

“The child has a *being*, beyond the spirit of the physical. She is being replanted. The plant’s essence is becoming the essence of soil, of compounds; as is the child’s physical body.”

“What do you see?”

“She is a great tree! She is a great and mighty tree! Her soul is flying high through many heavens. She has gained so much from her very short time.”

“What do you understand, Jack?”

“Physical life is a short time for all of us, and so small up against the immensity of our true existence. The physical is simply a way to grow the spiritual. We are not physical. There is no loss, only gain.”

“*Now*, you are beginning to see. Stay with it, Jack, allow it, and follow it.”

Jack sat there allowing the flow of understanding as his inner vision opened even more. The flow of it was impossible to recount, yet, it could still be understood, and its sublimity felt deeply.

He saw that we all come into the physical life with potential and measures of all kinds, from aspects of the physical, the intellectual, and in spiritual abilities. We all had the same things, but in different measures and mixtures. He also saw that some had very little, and only got hardship, yet did much, while others were like great trees that bore no fruit here. He saw the integration and disintegration of matter; constantly forming, breaking down, and reforming; spirit infusing and diffusing, and souls entering and leaving this place.

In his mind’s eye, he saw the material reality like a mist, and souls were rising from this misty garden, grown to the measure of their potential in relation to their spiritual effort. He saw that the pain and loss of life here, was only in physical loss. All falling away to be as nothing, as did a life of success and material wealth. The mist of the shadow world sat in time space, and souls

who had been planted here and eventually released from it, were eternal and of a greater reality. He saw that suffering was indeed a *gift*, and wealth a great barrier to *true wealth*. He also saw that the soul is the *reality, which lives on*; the physical reality, only a mist that forms and then *falls away*, as by its very nature, it must.

“Do we *have to* suffer?”

“Yes and no, but that’s a question every dude *and dudette* needs to address in themselves and in the world. So much is *not* necessary, and humanity has a way to evolve. But as long as we *grow*, dude.”

“Easy thing to say when so many suffer.”

“Sure, that’s why suffering should be taken seriously, and remedied. But the hard times also change us and drive us on. They humble us, and bring us more to love, man. *Luv’ luv’ luv’*,” finished the Surfer, chuckling a bit.

“So, why *here*? Why *this* life? Why *this way*?”

“Free-will existence in a material reality is a gift of endless understanding and an opportunity. Does a baby turtle ask why, Jack, or does it just go out and do its thang’? We are God’s mystery, and it’s all in our hands. Fate, like the sea, does roll along as it is bid, and things come to us for our learning, but the treasure is in how much we choose love. It’s the struggle and effort that burns off our impurities. And, you know, if you get good at it, you can break free a little more, and you can begin to create more.”

“I have a long way to go to even get to the level I think I am reaching for.”

“Relax, man. It’s just a process. Everything’s a process. It’s *all about* how you deal with what comes.”

“Sure. I get that.”

“True Understanding comes first, and then all we have is our striving; to make more of ourselves and the world around us. Knowledge is first, volition is second, but *living it* is where you come to *own* it. That’s where it *becomes you*, dude. True learning’s in the effort, and sometimes in the confusion. It’s a process; it’s being attentive, and making effort, as you allow it to take its course.”

“So, spiritual growth is in how we live it on the ground. That’s how we evolve.”

“Your soul lives in the spiritual realm, but it is now focused here. This life is a part of an eternal progression towards Him. When we leave here, we go on to the where we’ve earned; deeper and higher existence. This first life, this free-will life, is the *greatest* opportunity.”

“I *am* centred, and I can see what you say, but I always struggle to stay here. You know, in the higher places within me.”

“There’s always *another* higher place or deeper place, and you can visit a certain state, but to reach a certain station is to *live there*. You gotta follow the Map to it and *live* there, you got to want the Creator’s Will over yours, man. It’s a selfless place, and it’s *all* poise.”

“Poise. I learned that when you taught me surfing.”

“*Sure*, you did, Jack,” commented the Surfer, with a wry smile that said ‘*Well. Did you really?*’

Jack just looked at the surfer knowing there was *more*, or had he missed something?

“*Of course*, you’ve missed something, dude,” chided the Surfer, now clearly in Jack’s thoughts like the The Doc had been. He was wondering why Jack was still questioning and not just going there. But it wasn’t strange really, as Jack was like everybody else. The lesser being in him was trying to *work* it, and *own* it, not the higher one *simply surrendering*.

Jack was a little confused now, but sure that in time, and with effort, he would eventually get it. Even though the Surfer was shaking his head and glaring at him. He smiled wide at the face, while in amongst his mind’s gentle confusion, a small dose of clarity came in wondering why he was surprised that he had missed something, or that there was more. *There was always more*.

“Of course, there’s always more, but you *aren’t* listening with your soul right now man, man.”

Jack fell to a little frustration. Mainly toward the Surfer, as he thought he was still in a good place inside. He felt his frustration drawing him out of his spiritual poise, saying, “This is frustrating me,” in an attempt to stop the Surfer. But his beach loving friend was going to keep testing him.

“Things happen *all the time*; *this*...and that, heavy conversations and situations. Turn your face to The Creator, in that inner place, where you know you are a human soul. *Then*, you’ll have the time, and the poise, to respond, and not just react. You react from the animal, but you respond from the spirit. Sit on your board man and just look to the shore. Be in the highest and most aware place, and your world, and reality, will change.”

“I get there. I’ve been there, but I get distracted,” said Jack.

“Jeeze, Jack. It’s not about what’s happening *outside* you, and *all* the details of your life, it is simply about being in your soul,” continued challenging the Surfer. “You learnt about distractions the last time you were here. Get out of your *head* man.”

“Sure,” said Jack, now *really* struggling to gain any inner poise.

“The focus is inner, and you have to be centred *there*. It is not a place of concern or fear. Distraction—fear and want—is *outside* in the physical, and, in your focus *on* the physical, or your ego. The physical is just a shadow from which our souls eventually fly home. The ego is a place we fly home from too. You can fly home *here and now* or you can wait until your death. It’s a choice.”

“But how do you stay in that state?” asked Jack, relaxing again.

“You know the answers *to that*, Jack.”

“I do. But help me cement it.”

The Surfer had seen him regain his poise, and humility in the question, and was quite proud of him, so he answered, “Focus on Him. Focus on Him and He will draw you back to your true essence, your true home, your true station. Ask yourself continually, “*Where are you?*” If you are outside your deeper self, return. Each day, each moment, re-centre *inside yourself*, my man...in the *spiritual world*. Live from there.”

“What do I do there? I mean I get there, and I feel all alone. No one around me seems to live there.”

“That’s your lower nature and its emotional needs feeling lonely. Feeling like it will miss out. Man, missing out is deep drive that holds our souls in all kinds of hells. It’s hard to stay the

heavenly place inside all the time for us mere mortals, but the more you live there, the more you will see that there is nothing lacking there. It will make all your relationships *better*, man. It even opens up *far greater* possibilities in the material world. That is, if you don't want things physical or the lies of your ego, over the beauty of a spiritual existence."

"I get all that, but I think..."

"*Stop thinking, dude. Stop...It.*"

It seemed that even in this conversation Jack constantly moved in state, in and out of the spiritual. He then returned his focus to The Creator, sitting in his higher nature, and in silence for a good while. He waited there, then began to reflect on what he had been given and on what life in that higher state would look like, when a question came.

"Do you reflect on your day? To make sense of all the learning?"

"*Sure do.* Reflection's a *doorway* to seeing and growing, *man*. Like going over how you took the last wave, so you can get better at it. We need to check in with ourselves, on what we're learning, what we've chosen, and what the results were. I do it every day."

"So, you reflect each night?"

"When I wake up the next day, actually; before I hit the beach. I find that the night makes so much of the previous day clearer to me, and I've usually shaken off distracting emotions. My dreams seem to cleanse stuff a little and make things clearer. But do it how it works for you."

"Evenings seem to be my time, and if I go for a walk in the morning. *Actually*, yeah, I do sit down and read a writing and talk to God a bit in the morning."

“Yeah, I just like to do it fresh in the morning, and somehow, being a little way away from the actual day is good for me. Distance allows more poise and vision, *for me*, man.”

Jack sat there, for a good time, just being in his being. He allowed time to be and sat in that place. Then, a ripple came.

“So, you live *in your being*, and you *act outwardly*. You don’t *go out* and act.”

“Yes, yes, you got it. But remember, attachments will pull you *out*, and things like trust, faith, acceptance, and contentment will *anchor* you there.”

“I see.”

“What do you see, Jack?”

“I see questions. Where are you? What are you attached to? Where is your focus? What do you see?”

“You *just* have to make *the choice*, Jack, or make it over and over. Freedom of the spirit or bondage of the self. What do you *really* want? I *sure* know where I want to live.”

IT HAD BEEN SOME WEEKS, SINCE JACK HAD LEFT. Jennifer now just *had* to see him and talk to him. She had witnessed something and on the small sideroad she was sent down before coming here. She had gone to the Counsellor, on the second day, after she had come to Hall 3, to ask for permission to see him. The Counsellor had been most gracious, curious, and a little concerned, so had promised to arrange a meeting with Jack. Jennifer insisted on it being sooner

rather than later, and the Counsellor had simply said to her at the time, “Trust the system, it works. Trust the Design, trust the Creator, I am sure He has all things well in hand.”

Jennifer now sat in on one of the courses. She was with Brig and Judy’s group for now, as it was determined that it was better for her to be with them, even though she had missed phase one. Each phase built on the next, and so much could be missed by not gathering the earlier skills and insights, but occasionally flexibility was required. The three friends sat together under today’s words and had only just begun silent contemplation of them.

“The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music.” ¹¹

In the last few sessions, they had been learning about songs, storytelling, games, and artistic expression in the education and nurturing of children. Jennifer loved the storytelling, and Judy loved the art. Brig was a very poised soul, and simply went about enjoying the learning in his own way. All those in the course learned so much from seeing the spiritual nature of people from this basic perspective. Seeing through the eyes of a child also made much seem new, and quite powerful, and it was more like *they* were being educated. Many of those who were being trained in the Halls would decide to become teachers when they finally left, as the joy of tending to the young, and the insight they could gain as teachers, was alluring to them.

They got to practise their skills with the children of the encampment and the pods, finding so much insight in these little souls. Some things that came out in doing a class with them were a

revelation for those who taught them. They also found, more so than anything else, that they had to *engage* the children with *their own* joy for a song, or in their enthusiasm, and in their expression of a story. Engagement was a powerful skill, and they found that questions were a big part of it; even asking questions in amongst the telling of a story. Questions, and engagement, seemed to be the connective place where knowledge and love could be shared, where empowerment was created in these young souls.

The children, being children, would find distractions, even with good engagement, so the teachers learned to be flexible, and move on to an activity if the little ones were restless. It seemed that the more they had planned the lessons, the more flexible they could be with its parts. Even role-playing the planned lesson, before they gave it, helped them find blocks in the flow of what they had planned, or show things they had left out. It also reminded them of things that they needed to take along. Preparation was paramount and powerful.

Even with all this, there were bad days, and classes of absolute chaos. But they turned out to be the classes that taught these new teachers so much. What goes wrong, is as powerful as what goes right, in learning.

IT WAS A GLORIOUS DAY. The summer was mild here, and light showers swept the beach, as Jack and the Surfer found a spot on a high dune, under a stand paperbark trees. They sat on the ground with their knees up and their elbows sitting on them, like two young waifs. They just looked about, as it was early, and they were just taking in the beauty of the morning. They sat there a long time, both, in thought and reflection.

In time, a realisation came to Jack, and he said, “You know, I was so intent on work, and the Faith’s work of growing the courses, I kinda’ didn’t grow. I didn’t have time and focus to learn poise. I was just *playing* it, instead of bein’ it.”

“You would have learned plenty, Jack. Believe me. You would have come a long way, in other ways, and further than you might think in poise.”

“Other ways?”

“Sure, dude. It’s not *all* about poise. Some people don’t ever get poise, but they live good lives, and they do good things. Anyway, inner poise is not as important as the amount of love and giving to others. Your service was driven by *your heart*, man; your need to do what you did was driven by love of the beauty you found, and for benefitting others. Love is *far more* than anything.”

“But surely poise helps us love.”

“Sure, but no matter how crazy or unbalanced you may be; poise means nothing if love doesn’t drive you. Love is what you came here to nurture. Poise is only valuable if it *serves* love and allows more love to flow through. Even the arrogant can find a kind of poise, *Jack man*; but if selflessness powers you, real love, then whatever you do is suuuub...lime.”

The moment the surfer said this last sentence, a small scud of rain came and went suddenly, and a small part rainbow appeared out in the ocean as the rain headed out to sea. Both men appreciated the confirmation, and were sitting in a state of grace, when two figures came into sight. They were walking gently along the shore, close to the lapping waves. They were women, and they wore no shoes.

“I know those two,” said Jack, knowing he did, but they were too far away for him to fully recognise.

“I know ‘em too, dude. I bags’ the pretty one on the left,” said the Surfer, smiling.

Jack strained, and then said, in a surprised tone, “*It’s the Counsellor.*”

“And she *sure is pretty*, Jack.”

“But, it’s *the Counsellor.*”

“She’s my squeeze, man. *She’s* people, Jack. She’s *beautiful* people. We’re all *people*, dude.”

“Sure,” said Jack, realising his lack of vision.

“Can you make out the lady next to her?” asked the Surfer, smiling.

“I know her. That’s all I got...*Jennifer!*”

“Freaky, *eh*. You and me, hangin’ on the beach with our *ladies*. *Happy days*, dude,” said the Surfer, smiling his biggest smile for Jack.

“You’re crazy, and Jennifer isn’t my *lady*,” stated Jack, but smiling at the Surfers way, and so glad Jennifer was back safe and well.

“Are you *sure* about that?” asked the Surfer, more in the way of a statement, as he got up and started walking to the water’s edge.

Jack got up and followed. They walked down to the water and towards the ladies. Jennifer saw Jack, and ran up the beach, and hugged him strongly.

“It’s great to be with you again, Jack,” said Jennifer, with her head burrowed deep in Jack’s chest.

He wasn’t sure what to do. He just held her; unsure. Jennifer looked up at Jack and said, “It’s *me*, Jack.”

“Jennifer?”

“Yes, Jack. *It’s me.*”

Jack took strong hold of her and held her like he would never let her go.

THESE WORDS HUNG IN THE AIR...

*“A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit,
it clotheth the words with meaning,
it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding...”*¹²

...as the group were just finishing a long discussion, on the practicalities of introducing the spiritual education of children to the people and communities they would serve. Each place would be so different, and people needed to be respected. There would be many varied ways of living being espoused in these places, as communities of all sizes tried to regain a sense of order, community, meaning, and future.

“And that is where working *with* people to gain a vision of what *they* want for their children, and what kind of community *they* need to build, comes in. We have been kept away from the process of change that has been going on out there. You will have to get to understand the nature of the place you serve, and respect it, even if you lived there once. You will not be writing on a blank slate,” offered the facilitator.

“In the Creative Word, it talks about using words ‘*as mild as milk*’, also, using them in relation to the capacity of the listener. *That’s* respect to me,” added Brig.

“Can’t stand people talking *down* to me,” ventured one woman.

“Yep, and *sharing* a vision of the nature of children, and *asking* what that would mean to their future and their community’s future, would be an essential subject,” offered one participant.

“And exploring the reality of *human nobility* with them, and where it rises from,” added Brig.

“It will be a process though; maybe a very slow one, and hard won. Commitment and carrying it out will be part of the process,” said the facilitator.

“You know, *it’s about the children*. It will *be* about the children, and the *love* their families have for them. Mothers love their children, and want them safe and strong, and in a *nurturing* environment,” said Judy. “And they a natural and solemn trust given to any community, so it isn’t an intellectual process. It’s about *love*.”

From the nods in the room that followed Judy’s words, and the shared insight from the study, it was plain to see that those who would go out from the Halls would be armed with love. They would carry the sword of kindness, and their battle cry would be a call to nobility.

The Fortress

The Surfer cleared his throat...*twice*. Then a *third* time, but much louder and longer.

“Okay,” responded Jack, releasing Jennifer.

“*Man*, a carpet snake has *nothing on you*, Jack.”

The four of them had a laugh at the thought of a python’s grip, and Jack then naturally turned to walk off with Jennifer, but she did not move. He had assumed that they would go off and talk alone for a while. He turned back to see Jennifer, the Counsellor, and the Surfer looking at him. They all had serious looks.

“Are you kidding me? *You too*, Jen? You all *know* something I don’t? *What?*”

“Actually; you know something we don’t; or at least *someone*. We need to talk to him.”

“Who?”

“Death,” answered the Counsellor.

“Reaper?” asked Jack, almost *matter of factly*.

“Wow, Jack, *that’s cool!*” said the Surfer, very impressed. “*Who Reaper?* Like you’re on first name terms with *Death himself*, and just *keepin’ it all cool.*”

“He’s okay, and he’s only *one* of his kind. At least that’s what I took away when I met him. He calls himself the *messenger of joy*, you know.”

“Cool,” commented the Surfer.

“In any case, we need to talk with him. Jennifer has a very disturbing insight into some aliens that have come to this world. We will need your friend’s help,” explained the Counsellor.

“Your friend, DEATH!” chuckled the Surfer, nodding for a while like he was listening to music, and smiling full beam.

“*WHO SUMMONED ME!*” came a horrible spine-chilling voice.

“He’s behind me, isn’t he,” said The Surfer, shrinking a little. He pulled his head tighter to his shoulders, as if expecting a scythe blow.

The three friends and even Jack was amazed at how quickly Reaper had come, and they all found themselves *very* up-close and personal with the great black robed figure. He stepped forward and towered over them. He stood with his head bowed down above them, making them feel tiny and inconsequential. They felt powerless, as they looked up into the seemingly endless emptiness of the face of his hood.

Reaper was bigger than Jack had remembered him. He was at least another foot taller, so he really towered over the three friends.

“I don’t like beaches. Too much life here,” said Death, as the dark hood turned and seemed to look around.

“What’s wrong with *beaches*, dude,” said the Surfer, but beginning to cower again as soon as he said it. He was sure that Death was not to be trifled with.

“I *like* him, Jack. He has spirit,” said Reaper, as gently as a Reaper could, as he pulled back his hood.

“*Phew*, dude, you were *killin’* me,” said the Surfer, beginning to relax.

“Killing you? No, I only eat your meat suit,” said Reaper, with a ‘you know I will’ look for emphasis.

“*You’re keen, dude...Lovin’ it, maaan!*” expressed the Surfer, nodding his head, smiling, and really getting into the *whole Reaper vibe*.

“Thank you,” said Reaper, simply, a little perplexed at the attentions of this beach waif, but beginning to appreciate the Surfer’s vibe.

“Good to see you, Reaper. So, how’s life?” said Jack, with a cheeky smile.

The Surfer broke down in fits of laughter, and Reaper boomed, his full belly being eased from the laughter. The ladies smiled and waited for the three of them to settle down. It took a while.

“You look bigger,” said Jack, finally.

“I’ve been feeding, Jack. There’s more than a little death out there right now. So, what calls me to you?” asked Reaper, as he sat down on the wet sand.

His sitting was not about being sociable. He was very full and needed to digest. The Reaper sat on the water's edge, with his back to the ocean, and the others sat on the dry beach above him.

"Ladies," said Jack, offering them the floor, and Reaper's attention.

"Well, sir, we need to know what you know about some aliens that have come to our planet," requested the Counsellor.

"Ummm. Not feeling well, right now, but tell me your story, and I'll consider helping. There are rules too, and boundaries I cannot cross."

The recent shared laughter and the respectful spirit of the question had gentled his steel. You see a Reaper with a stomachache is not usually a friendly creature *at all*.

"I was in a cave, and the Black Robes had a weapon, and they fired it," started Jennifer. "But the Joined Robes somehow created an energy field around themselves, and the weapon, as it fired. It changed the nature of the weapon's effect. The Cementers, the ones we need to know about, were onlookers that day as they were in league with the Black Robes; but it seemed that they had also shared other information with the Joined Robes. The Joined Robes screamed in their disembodied chorus...

"We will destroy what we *cannot have*."

"We will destroy what is not *The Way*."

The weapon exploded, and the bubble blew out. Then it collapsed in on itself, and *all* the Robes were gone.

The Cementers cheered, and danced, and walked in a circle saying, “Bones. Bones. Bones,” over and over again. I suppose they didn’t dance really, they just walked stiffly, but they were excited.”

“*CEMENTERS, TAKING MY FIBRE!*” boomed The Reaper, as the ground rumbled beneath the friends and tossed them around.

As the Surfer was still rolling and bouncing around from the small quake, he said, “Hey, know what you mean about the fibre, dude.” No one could say the Surfer did not have good poise.

“They’ll be *buryin’ meat* too,” he grumbled. Reaper was *angry*, and luckily for those present he had someone other than them to take it out on.

As the Surfer gathered his balance, he commiserated the Surfer with Reaper, “Sounds like they don’t even *eat meat*, dude. *That’s cold*,” like he was *all in it*, and part of the Reaper gang.

The Reaper boomed again, “*CEMEMTERS!*” even louder, and was gone.

“*Crazy, dude!*” said the Surfer, trying to get up during the second quake that came with Reaper’s anger. It was like he was trying to surf the shockwave, with a big smile on his face.

“Well, that went well,” said Jack, when everything had settled, and the friends were back on their feet. They were brushing off some of the sand they had been rolled around in. Well, except for the surfer, he lived on the sand.

“That did *not* go well *at all*,” said the Counsellor, seriously.

“We needed to know what he knew,” said Jennifer, as she continued dusting off the sand.

“Now, we will have to go scouting, to see what they are up to,” said the Counsellor.

“What do you mean?” asked Jack.

“There was more to the story. The Reaper didn’t give me a chance to finish,” said Jennifer.

“So...?”

“Well, the Cementers sat and talked about their plans to gain from the destruction before they left the cave. They talked about taking the living, and from what the Counsellor tells me, the Seeders from one the Hall’s here in Australia have come across *at least* one somewhat camouflaged tunnel mouth. The Counsellor tells me that these Cementers have *even* made agreements with some Governments.”

“And they’re loose on the planet!?” exclaimed Jack.

“Yes,” answered the Counsellor.

“Brig and I saw a ship on our way to Hall 3. It must have been theirs. He had a *bad* feeling about it. He didn’t say as much, but it was written all over his face.”

“I was shot through the Hall 3 portal after The Cementers left the cave. I think I was somehow caught in their ship’s energy pathway here. I wanted to talk to you about all this first Jack, but this lady noticed my growing discomfort. Her kind ways opened me up; thankfully,” explained Jennifer.

“We need to investigate. We need to go,” said the Counsellor.

“Okay, let’s go,” said Jack.

“You aren’t going anywhere, Jack,” said the Counsellor. “You have some weeks here yet. Come, Jennifer.”

“I’ll look after him for you, Jen,” said the Surfer to Jennifer, and then, “Go get ‘em, Naomi,” to the Counsellor. “But be careful.”

“*Naomi?*” said Jack surprised.

“It’s a family name. Started from a sailor who was in my line a long time ago. We carry it on,” said the Counsellor.

Jack loved the connection this made with the teacher, Naomi, he met on an island many years before; an island that he assumed was in the future. The Counsellor saw the recognition in Jacks’ eyes, and would remember to ask him about it, but they had to go.

As the ladies turned to leave, Jack realised that he was still not okay with this arrangement, “I *have* to go with you. I *have* to protect you.”

“The *ladies* can do it, Jack. Get with the times, man. The ladies are *strong*, dude.”

Jack was naturally a protector, or more so, a shaker. He was a change maker, and shook things up when change was required, but it mostly rose from a strong drive to protect.

“I’ll be okay, Jack,” said Jennifer, gently.

That calmed him a bit, and out of respect for Jennifer, he said, “Just, don’t use *all* your courage, eh, girl.”

“I’ll make sure I stay a *little bit* scared, Jack,” said Jennifer.

“We will take care. The Halls are here at the behest of The Physician, so we will only scout, and then pass the information on to the relevant authorities. We can’t intervene. We are here to build, so this is not really our business anyway,” explained the Counsellor.

“These Cementers must be from deeper, so it *is* your business,” challenged Jack.

“They have linked up with influences that run deeper, but they must be from your level of the existence. We have rules about how we may intervene in the free-will reality.”

Jack let it go as he knew there were laws, and the Counsellor was just doing as she was charged to. “Be careful, Jen, and don’t disappear on me again.”

“I won’t, Jack,” said Jennifer. “*You either,*” she added, as she turned and walked away with the Counsellor.

IT WAS VERY LATE ON THAT SAME SUMMER AFTERNOON. Jack was lying asleep in his long board. He had gone for a paddle and had stopped and sat for a time beyond the breakers. He had lain back to look up into the sky and reflect. He thought about Jennifer, and the danger of the work she would be part of. He felt useless, but eventually a solid feeling of acceptance rose in him, and he nodded off to sleep.

Jack woke in the midst of night; long rolling waves waking him. He sat up and looked around for the beach. It was not there, and a storm was rising. The swelling waves were growing quickly, and he realised that he was in *real* trouble. The waves rolled and swelled and built and built. As they got more extreme, he lay himself face down on the surfboard, rising and falling with the growing swell. He held his head up and gripped the surfboard tight as the rain now began to pelt down. The storm kept building. He gathered his resolve and prepared himself for a long tussle, but he also relaxed his muscles a bit and went with the roll of the waves as best he could.

The storm lasted all the hours of night, and Jack just hung on. This night was not about poise. It was about tenacity and the will to see the battle through. The waves grew and grew, smashed together, and smashed Jack. He fell down the front of great waves and was shot up over others. He rode through a great torrent that night, and it bore him out into the deep ocean.

It was just before the dawn when he saw it. The waves still raged, but it towered beyond them. Its great white circular wall was unaffected by the mighty storm, taking all that the ocean could throw at it. It seemed him that it could take any barrage that was cast upon it; its walls unassailable. Jack was not so lucky though; he was now in the water, just hanging off the board, when the sea finally dislodged him and cast the board away. He battled on until the morning light and that was all he knew until he woke.

Hard rocks in his chest woke him, and he coughed up some water. He was unable to move, as he was so exhausted, and the muscles in his arms did not seem to want to work. He found more strength available in his legs, so he pushed himself up the slippery rocks that lay a foundation around a great circular white wall. Looking up at the great high circular wall was awe inspiring. It was as high as a large lighthouse, but it had a somewhat bigger circumference, and the battlements on the top of it talked clearly of the reality of its purpose. Jack now stood up with his back to the wall and made his way very groggily around its circular base, as he looked for an entry point. The lack of sleep also taking its toll on him.

Soon, he found a large gothic gateway that seemed intuitively to him to be on the seaward side. It was at the joining point of three great stone jetties, which radiated outward from it at even angles to each other. They projected out all the way to the horizon. There were large mooring posts, with steel rings hanging from them, at regular intervals along each side of each jetty; at least

as far as his sight allowed him. Strangely, there was no gate in the gateway, but there were words over the arch in a language and script Jack had never seen before. It did not seem to matter though, as somehow, he knew what it said, “The Fortress of Wellbeing”.

Jack lay on his back on the flat dry floor under the great arch and laughed. *Wellbeing* was definitely not his experience so far in this place, and he was so exhausted that he fell asleep right there.

Jack was a little surprised to be here right now. The Garden was frozen. The cold was there, yet the sun made the place a little warm. He waved to Thomas who was a way away and walked over to talk with the Queen’s mother. She was working on the foundations; well just sitting looking at them really, and Thomas was still in one corner of the Garden nurturing some small plants that did not seem well. The Queen’s mother did not seem well either.

“Are you slowing down, old girl?”

“Mmm, yes. I’ve been doing this for a long time. I have failed to build anything in this Garden that lasts. I am past pointing fingers, and I can see my failures.”

“We all have them. But you’ve done a lot of good beyond the Garden. Thomas has told me how much you gave to others. Not thinking of your own comfort, and helping those who were different, downtrodden, or lost.”

“Yes, but I have built nothing here. I can’t do any more, Thomas just tends to frozen plants, and the others have gone.”

“Then stand aside for those who’ll come, and if you are still here, lend a little of your experience,” offered Jack.

“You are here and gone again, all the time, Jack, and there is no one else coming, it seems.”

Thomas had come over and had been listening, and he said, “It is, what it is.”

“No truer words were spoken, Thomas. Acceptance is a powerful thing. A place to regather, a patient place, but we still have to grow,” offered Jack.

“This is all we have right now,” said Thomas, very strongly.

Jack could see how frozen this place was, and how frozen these two souls were. He looked around and knew that when growth did happen here it would not be driven by one person, carried by one person, or with people all going in different directions. It took a number of people, intent, fired up with love, and willing. He knew any endeavour, or relationship, required the effort of more than one person; and without a will to grow, a garden, a marriage, or a community would only become a stagnant stream. One that could not bring life and abundance, to its surroundings.

Acceptance was a rock, but the will to grow, was life. He found himself walking out of the Garden, down by the beach and along the road a way. There he saw another Garden. One that had also struggled, but he saw life and some activity there, so he joined them. It seemed like a wind, a gust of grace that had blown him there. Those in this Garden explained that it was the Grace of the new plan, and that new plans bring up the sun, new rain, and growth to the Gardens of Law. They explained that these plans created a new vision every several years, and helped the Gardens grow stronger.

He stayed in this other Garden a while and helped them build a little. He ran some courses there too and felt very content and alive. He also helped nurture some young saplings, running a

small empowerment course for young teenagers. He had learned how to do this service in the real world, with the training courses of The Running Man there. He had even trained others in how to carry out this magical service for younger souls. There was no time of growth more exciting than this time in a person's life, and he recalled the conversation with the gardener of the saplings planted near Hall 3. It was a very important time, and the energy, and curiosity of the youth, filled him with joy.

“SIR. SIR. ARE YOU WELL?”

It had been many hours now, and Jack felt much better. His arms and hands ached, but he knew he had rested well. He told the boy that he was okay, and as he slowly got himself up, he now saw great swathes of small ships tied to the great stone jetties, and crowds of people disembarking in the late evening light. It was certainly a sight to behold.

“Who are you? Where is this place?”

“It is a place in *all the world*. We sail home each day. We return to our homes within. Come,” answered the young man.

Jack followed the young man, and a few others who walked ahead of them. There was only a stone floor inside of the great circular wall. There were no buildings, or rooms, or stairways to the battlements. It was empty. Then, Jack saw the opening. He blinked his eyes, as they had seemed to be playing tricks on him. There was a second archway which was there and not there. They walked through the second arch on the landward side. It was directly across from the other archway, but he knew that when the sea had deposited him there, there had been no gateway.

Through the gateway, it was day, and there were rolling hills, trees dotted around fields and flowing streams. There were small thatched-roof houses, and two and single storied, white flat-roofed houses, dotted around the scenery. In the distance beyond the second fold of hills he could see white towers reaching up into the sky.

There was a main pathway into this beautiful gentle place, and all kinds of pathways leading off it. They were made of cement, pebble, sand, or dirt. But some were wooden planks set in lines and others set out as steppingstones. They lead to the dwellings he could see, and to many homes that must have been beyond his sight. The call of birds came here and there, and as he looked around; he saw a family of eagles, sitting in very tall tree near the archway. The archway was set in a great wall that stretched from East to West. The wall was easily fifteen meters high and was made of a pale and patterned green stone. Jack knew that stone, and was taken back, as it was a stone found around his hometown, and even named after it.

“What stone do you see?” asked the young man, in curiosity.

“I see the stone of my home.”

“As we all do. You are new, come and stay with my family.”

Jack just followed the man, as nothing seemed a problem here. There was an ease that one feels when one gets home from work, or school, that settles the soul. There was also a sense of family warmth here that scented the air.

The first night, Jack ate with the young man’s family, and he slept well. The strange, yet very natural thing was that the sun continued to shine here. The family had eaten together and talked, or like they said, ‘consulted’ on various things to do with the family. It seemed that the

marriages here were the same; consultation was a core element in communication. It was honest, compassionate, and seeking the best way for them. It was seeking the truth of a matter so the best solution could be found, or the most beautiful creation could be made between them.

They shared their joys and challenges at the table, sought solutions together, and laughed a lot. After the meal, and the cleaning up, they settled down to play a game together on a round table of stone. They all worked with varied and uneven pieces of wood, working with each other to build a solid structure. It took skill and cooperation, and all enjoyed the challenge. Apparently, no resulting structure in this game was ever the same, and no one won, they all shared in the satisfaction of what they had created.

The next morning, Jack sat with the parents, and they explained the nature of *the fortress* to him. It was a place where a children could be nurtured mainly, and families grown stronger. It was for keeping out bad influences and allowing children to grow strong. They saw their marriages as fortresses, and they made sure that only love existed within. It was not that there was no challenge, or that there were no problems, but it was a place where all could be sorted out through allowance, expression, and inclusive consultation. The parents were its guardians, and most of it was in their hands, but the spirit was one of open understanding and love.

Later, Jack and the parents walked in the fields, as the younger ones spent time with their friends in some of the other houses. As they came over the fold of a high hill, Jack saw more of the great wall that stretched far in each direction to the horizon. As he gazed at the wall, he missed the sight of Jennifer, who was walking with a mother and some small children, on a diagonal path to Jack's. She looked straight at Jack but did not react at all. Jack missed her *altogether*, as the

designs of life would have it. Sometimes, we are blindsided, so we move along a desired pathway, just as sometimes we are nudged into the right doorway.

Jennifer had been cast here, with no memory of anything before that day. Providence had brought her here though, and she was being cared for in this safe place while she gathered herself. Something dire had come to pass on her travels, and her memories had been left in the dark place that she had escaped from. This was the Jennifer that had left Hall 3 and escaped through the portal. She had ventured off to find herself, her older self. She *would succeed*, but only as we all do, travelling the journey to become the Jennifer who was now scouting for the Cementers' tunnels.

Meaning is the reality of 'Deeper', not time and space. The reality of *deeper* is created by connection and meaning; bonds of love, and cycles of understanding of all kinds, that are large and small. So, these two souls passed each other in *this* place; a place important to their own journey of understanding, and in time, even to their connection.

The mother was now explaining to Jack that the fortress was built firstly on character, as love itself was not enough. Even love for The Creator and the Creative Word was not enough of a foundation for the fortress. It did not matter about one's love if character was not strived for. The character of both partners created the foundation on which a fortress of wellbeing could be built, and respectful consultation between them grew a garden within its walls. Exploring another's character was the duty of all who would seek to build a fortress for the nurturing of children; so that their children were kept from destructive influences, encouraged, given boundaries, and allowed to grow and bloom healthfully; to bring forth more character, and to explore what was naturally theirs to give to an ever advancing and evolving civilisation.

“In my world we gave up a *culture of character*, for a culture of *personality*, outer appearance, and the selfish pursuit of things and experiences; a lifeless pathway that only disconnected people. Now our ground is falling, and there is a lot of pain and chaos. Character is definitely a foundation and the core structure of real ground,” expressed Jack.

“I am sure you will learn. All systems learn and evolve. See to the coming generations. Teach them good things and nurture them. Teach them the lessons of the past,” offered the father.

Jack suddenly woke on his long board, and he sat up quickly. The sun was disappearing, and he was relieved that the beach was easily in reach. He lay down on his chest and paddled in. Now that he was deeper, it seemed that he could travel again. It made him happy in a way, and yet in another way, he craved the work at home. To be on the ground. Helping in the planting and nurturing of a new civilisation at this time of great change was more than satisfying to him.

He had been here on this beach for long enough, and he wanted to return home. But what we want is often held away from us, or at least for a time, and life would hold him here for a good while yet.

Fruit

The scouting was done on the regular systematic planting runs. They covered good swathes of land in the systematic planting, as well as in the regular checks on the growth of the seeding trees. Jennifer flew with the Counsellor and one other, all on their own carpets. The Counsellor hadn't been sure if she should take Jennifer along at first but was pleasantly surprised by the natural way that she had gathered it. She loved the freedom, well, once she got used to not having something to hang on to up there. It took faith to ride the carpets. It also took love to fly them, and Jennifer had a good deal of both.

The Counsellor had often gone out with the Seeders, as her work was overseeing the growth of the seeding trees, as well as the growth of the participants. She was there to support the Seeders,

and hopefully, inspire the new participants in their study. It was a crucial role, and this lady did it with grace and eloquence.

The systematic scouting for Cementer tunnels, had been going for the last two months, and though a little weary from the flying, Jennifer and the Counsellor were in good spirits. They were now deep in conversation as they flew, and Jennifer was exploring the particular nature of the Counsellor's work.

“So, you don't plan?”

“Well, yes, we do, *most definitely*, but in my work, it is somewhat like the water cycle.”

“The water cycle?” asked Jennifer, a little bemused.

“Yes. Our learning is like water. The water flows off the land, and down the rivers, and into the sea. Then, it is lifted up as the clouds form. They go over the land, and the rain falls on the land, and the cycle continues.”

“So, the learning comes off the work on the ground, and then, into the rivers. It flows to your councils?”

“Yes, and we evaporate off what has been learned, from *all* the lands and rivers that flow into the Centre.”

“And you send it back as rain to those on the ground.”

“Yes, it is a cycle; this way, we all learn from each other. No matter what land, or river, or sea we are on, we learn from each other. All the Halls are connected. We are one thing, all with our own part of the process, and our own expression within the whole.”

“So, the learning happens on the ground, really. Not higher up.”

“There is no account for high or low. Our service is to the process, and we just have different roles. We are all one. Such considerations of high and low are offensive to us.”

“Do you always learn this way?”

“We are all guided by the Creative Word of The Physician, and by the vision of the latest Plan, but yes, it is a process. It is organic.”

Jennifer went back to enjoying the feeling of flying, and the fresh early Autumn air on her face lifted her spirits even more. They had done many flights, and had covered a very large area, yet they had found no tunnel entry points at all. Those of the other Halls in Australia had found only two areas with multiple tunnel entries. They were nearer to two of the old state Capitals, and near each other, relatively speaking. It seemed that the Cementers had established beach heads there. The Halls in other countries had found the same strategy being used across the planet.

The Mistake

It was a time past. It was an older time when the saltwater clan was strong. Many thousands of years before the tall-ships came. It was time for the young ones to enter the Sacred place. It was a time to move on to adulthood. The children of twelve years old would be taken to the initiation and were considered adults when they came out of the challenges, and in successful learning of the ways of the tribe. When they were sixteen, they were considered to have learned enough.

They were taught that they were to be of service to their tribe, and that they should never consider themselves better than another. There was no separation of life, law, and spirit. They learned of the law that they would be subject to and were taught the dreaming by the elders; at least, as much as the wisdom of the law allowed at that age. The land, the stories told these young ones of things, and the songlines, helped them find food places and their way to here and there. They had to be of value to their tribe, or they would be cast out. It was important that all did their part, and the 'Old Man' looked down on them and watched out for the tribe.

“IF THERE IS *NO SELF*, WHOSE *PAIN* IS THIS?” asked the old man, as he moved his dodgy knee and grimaced.

Those around him smiled; some laughed, and so did he.

“It’s just that we are helping these *young saplings* to understand the nature and value of *selflessness*.”

“But we *all* have value, don’t we,” offered one man, trying to say that people of all ages should be included.

“And we can *all* be exceptional,” added a lady.

“Certainly, but we are learning about empowering youths of *this* age, and about an *attitude* here. To take the comfort of others ahead of ourselves is the cornerstone of what we are all trying to build. It is an attitude of love, and not about denying the gifts each have to give. *In fact*, this attitude can only bring *more* of these gifts out.”

“Kids of that age are more interested in themselves, aren’t they?” asked a man.

“No, they aren’t, mate,” said Jack, walking into the study hall. “They’re just developing their own sense of the world. They love being a part of the adult world and doing service at eleven or twelve; they learn so much about life, and themselves, by doing things for their neighbourhood or community. They’re *powerhouses*, mate.”

“It was the great mistake of several generations here. Many cultures dropped the ball on bringing these kids to adulthood when they should have. There are still rituals in many places and in some cultures, but less and less youth willed to take part in them.”

“But they are still just kids,” offered a lady.

“Even just a few generations back, right here, many people started work at the age of twelve. If they’re now generally selfish and not growing up, then, that’s society’s failure,” added Brig, and nodding at Jack as a welcome back.

Brig had been an animator of the spiritual empowerment courses for these young adults for many years and had helped run summer camps too. Jack had run a couple of small weekly groups, but had mainly facilitated the adult training courses’, for this and other activities. Brig was passionate about this age group. He saw great hope in them, and anyone who did this service was just blown away by the potential they found in these kids. The youth would take the reins quickly and move with real energy and passion.

He shared some of his experiences, and as he came to an end, he explained, “All they needed was to be invited into the adult world, not left as children. Leaving them in the mode of children for too long, especially in the shifting sands of the modern world, was a mistake. Treating them like fully blown adults even earlier was *also* not healthy. We left it too late to initiate them, or didn’t initiate them at all, and we left them alone at the mercy of consumerism, vanity, and polarised ideologies.” Then finishing, “We needed to teach them to actively put into society, to seek solutions and think for themselves, but they were left to unending social drama and the allure of the manic material world.”

“But they *are* still children,” challenged the lady again.

“Sure. They won’t truly be mature for some years,” answered the facilitator, “and we should still protect them until the age of maturity, but these years of youth, and especially the years twelve to fifteen, are crucial for them. They are *no longer* children.”

The facilitator pointed up, as the words in the air changed; these, and their conversation, giving much for the participants to ponder.

“Having arrived at this stage it acquireth the capacity to manifest spiritual and intellectual perfection. The lights of comprehension, intelligence and knowledge become perceptible in it and the powers of its soul unfold.”¹³

THE PRESIDENT SAT AT HIS DESK. The General sat on the couch, and just then, the door opened, and a businessman walked in. Two men in black suits escorted him into the room. The businessman looked around at his escorts, nervously, as he was gently forced into that room.

“Take a seat, Frank,” said the President.

“*Seems*, we have a problem,” said the General.

“You mean us, *or me*,” responded Frank.

“I mean the *whole damn planet*, you *dipweed*,” spluttered the General. “As if we don’t have enough problems, Frank. Now we find out that your Cementers *are predators*.”

“Those Hall people have been spreading their propaganda, haven’t they?” said Frank, working the angles.

“*We checked*. You’re the *worst* kind of human being, Frank.”

“But I helped you with the fundamentalists,” offered Frank, as if it might help, while one of the men who had escorted him in, just breathed out through his nose, not believing the stupidity of this man.

“That was before all this, *and Groundfall*. We’re weakened. The world’s ability to react to invasion *is weakened*. Tell me, you had an exit strategy.”

Frank looked to the President, and the President gave him the look, that said plainly to him that he had no support and nowhere to go on this one. So used to playing the game, this man still tried to strategise.

“I have an exit plan,” he said, in desperation.

“You got zip, Frank,” said one of the men in a black suit, reading him.

“*I have*,” said Frank, trying again, but with no confidence. He seemed almost like a child in trouble and lying badly.

“You are going away, and *staying* away,” said the man in the suit.

He finally realised that these men weren’t going to go for anything he could come up with. They read people for a living and knew that his words were empty. Frank was just a silly greedy man, not a sociopath, so the lies and games stopped there, and the bargaining began.

“Give me my freedom, and protection, and I’ll tell you all I know about them,” said Frank, sweating a little.

“Give us all you have on them, and maybe we’ll consider *feeding* you where we’re sending you,” argued the General.

Frank finally knew it was over, and knew his best bet was to cooperate.

“Well, they come from a long way away. Only one ship made it through the portal that got them here. There was a fleet, but they misjudged the stability of the portal; that, or Divine intervention. Actually, *that idea* scared them a little, and let me *tell ya*’ they don’t fear much at all. They don’t want to go back, they just want to feed. It’s *all* that drives them. The thing is they want to destabilise the earth even more, so they’re stronger. Their tunnelling is really only making things worse; it’s also just a place to hide and breed, as well as a food storage facility.”

“What *the hell* were you *thinking*?” charged The President.

“I was thinking of the money. That’s why I brought them to you. It was a big mistake, but I learnt most of this after the deal was made. They liked the idea of trapping me in my own ignorance, and I had to go along with them to survive, in the end.”

“How the hell did you come into contact with these creatures?” asked the General, almost totally lost in the new information.

“The Fat Man.”

“The Fat Man? What kind of hogwash, ridiculous, kinda’ name is that?”

“He *knows* things. He took me to a place he called *deeper*, made me aware of a weapon, and what it was going to do to the Earth. But the Cementers double-crossed us all, which changed the intended effect of the weapon, resulting in more widespread Groundfall. They had *all of us* on a leash, and we didn’t know it. It wasn’t supposed to be so devastating. The Fat man said that there would be enough balance, so we could make some good money, but the blast was more than even he had reckoned for.”

“You’re a psychopath, Frank,” said The President. “Take him away, gentlemen.”

“No, I can get you in touch with the Fat Man. He might be your way out of this.”

“In my experience, the way you got into something, is *never* a good way out of it,” said the General.

“The Fat Man *will deal*. He didn’t want this.”

“We don’t want him, Frank,” said the President. “Take him away.”

Just then, there was a flash of darkness. The whole room turned pitch black, then the light returned, and there was The Fat Man. “Hello, gentleman. I have been listening, and *I do* have an exit plan.”

“We can’t trust you, and something tells me, we may have to agree to whatever *you* have planned. We can’t give you that kind of power,” said the President.

The Fat Man just ignored him, and went on to the remedy, saying, “Support the Halls. I helped them to get here too. It’s the nature of my work. This is my last hooraah, here or anywhere. My time is up, it seems. The Mercy of the Great One has run out for me, and that’s saying something, because *it’s limitless*.”

“Support The Halls?” questioned the General.

“They carry *The Remedy*. The Remedy is the Spirit that powers all the work they do. Their work is simply an outer expression of that deeper force. It was unleashed by The Physician, and only it can renew and solidify the ground again. The Cementers can’t dig in solid ground. That’s why they dig around Groundfall and around your cities. The ground is weaker there. The Remedy

can rebuild the spirit of those lost places, and with it, in time, heal, and strengthen the ground again. The Cementers will be forced to the surface. It will all take time, but you *will* defeat them.”

“This just sounds crazy to me,” said The General.

“No. *It’s solid*, General,” informed Agent Deveroux, in the black suit.

IT WAS A LOVELY AUTUMN DAY, and Jack and Jennifer went for a walk along the road to the northeast. He needed a sense of space, and for some reason, an open road always settled him. He wanted time alone with Jennifer, and her with him.

They had walked beyond the great carpark just beyond the mouth of the gorge. The bitumen road stretched into the distance, giving way on each side to red soil table drains, and beyond them more red ground with sparse vegetation. They couldn’t see the gorge from here, just the open road ahead. The sky was clear and there was a gentle breeze, and just being outside and walking together was energising for them both.

“I still don’t get how one Jennifer leaves, and another one returns. I know how deeper works, but I never experienced that before. You’re not the same.”

“I may *be* her, Jack.”

“I know you are, but how could that be?”

“Well, early on in my travels is a bit of a mystery, and I only remember some of the places. It seems my flightpath beyond is just different to yours. We are connected but our pathways are different.”

“Yep, it’s a bit crazy being a Traveller.”

“Yep. One of the places I *do* remember from early in my travels was a fortress.”

“*Really*. Where was the fortress?”

“I don’t know. I only remember living inside its wall.”

“What type of stone was the wall?”

Jennifer smiled at him, and said, “I saw a *sandstone* wall. There were many sandstone buildings in my hometown, and I always loved them.”

“I like sandstone. I’ve been there too. I saw the pale greenstone from home.”

“You’ll have to show me the greenstone one day.”

“I just *may* do that,” said Jack, with a big smile. They both knew what each other meant, as the nature of the fortress was clear to them both.

“Do you think you *will* return home, Jack?” asked Jennifer.

“Brig and Judy are definitely going back. They’re linked to the land, and their mob. I am too, but not like them. I could go and be of service wherever they need people.”

“I would like to go where you go, Jack.”

“I would love that, Jennifer.”

Jennifer looked away, then back again smiling, and they held hands as they continued up the road.

They walked for a while, and talked about what they could do, what they hoped for, what they liked, and what they needed, when suddenly, they saw what looked like a warping in the scenery. It was like the trees and the bush were a cover on a book; a facade that was hiding something behind it. But the trees were real. Then, a bird flew to a small tree, and disappeared into what seemed like a liquid portal. It allowed easy entry and return, as the bird flew out again, and went on its way. The warping, it seemed, was created by things passing in or out.

They looked at each other, both *knowing* that they were going through. Jack and Jennifer walked through the liquid portal, which was not there, and simply moved to another place. The semi-desert bush gave way to a barren, purple landscape with shadows, and then, with the next step they found themselves above a small encampment. They had come out beside a great stone Gaelic Cross that stood high on the hill overlooking a camp. The camp sat on the edge of a lough; a large lake nestled in the green hills of Ireland.

“Remember where we came in,” said Jack.

“How could we forget that?” asked Jennifer, as the cross was on a wide flat hill, and the green, open rolling ground, around it stretched a long way. They both laughed and walked down to the edge of the camp.

“Hello, the camp,” called Jack, as they now stood respectfully at the threshold.

“Ahhh, an Australian wid’ *good manners*. Well, *I’ll be*,” said a cheeky looking old man, who came out of a canvas and wood dwelling. He stood there for a short while, then waved them in, saying, “Well, *in yer’ come*.”

The old man led the way to a large circular fire pit, in the middle of the meeting place of the camp. The meeting place was a large, half-moon shaped, sandy area, beside the water. The water was like glass today, and the green hills reflected in the water, creating a lovely scene. It was a beautiful and magical change from the brown land they had just come from.

“I would offer you a good stiff drink, but there is not so much of the makin’ o’ that, these days.”

“We don’t need one,” said Jennifer.

“So, what brings you tru’ our door?” asked the old man.

“You know about the portal?”

“I know about a lot o’ t’ings. My *vision* is wide. Maybe we can explore *a vision* together?” said the old man, with a knowing smile.

“What vision?” said Jack, confused.

“A vision of what we can build, or how we can build it,” said Jennifer.

“Ahh, someone with a few brains. It’s okay, darlin’, when he’s older, ait’ll kick in,” said the old man, feigning sympathy for Jennifer.

Jack just shook his head and smiled, as the old man and Jennifer had a good chuckle, as they all settled in around the fire pit. Jack really felt quite buoyed, as it was quite special for him going somewhere with another Traveller, and Ireland was the place of his ancestors. It was special for Jennifer too, as she was a product of the people of both lands.

“So, let’s get on to that vision, eh,” said the old man, as he seemingly opened a large round window in the air beside himself. It was a view of a small community somewhere in Australia. “So, what a’yer goin’ ta say to these people when ya’ get there? How a’yer goin’ ta *open* the conversation? What *kind’a* conversation is it goin’ ta be?”

“A *genuine* one, and more about listening,” put in Jennifer, enthusiastically.

“Sure, that’s very good ta’ start wid’.”

“I was talking to a mate of mine, and he made me aware that people will have been building without us for a good while, and that we need to respect them and their knowledge. So, I wouldn’t even have a conversation. I’d join them, and work with them for a while, first,” offered Jack.

“Yes, it’s all about *real* bonds, so, when we *do* give...well...it comes from the heart, and it’s respectful,” added Jennifer.

“Let me give you some words from the plan, about gaining a vision for a community; well not really words from the actual plan, but words sent by the Plan Makers to reinvigorate tired hearts in the work of renewal.”

“I’ve heard of this plan,” said Jack.

“You mean *these* plans. They come out from time to time. Dey’ bring us a vision of the next step forward; as we evolve; as we rebuild civilisation. They use da’ learnin’ on da’ ground, and the guidance o’ da’ Word, and they grant us a shared vision. Then, comes the work, and *collective* effort.”

“So, we use *this* vision, to help give people *a* vision?” asked Jack.

“Yes, but you have ta’ work *on* one...*with* them. Not give them one.”

Jack just shut his mouth and waited for more understanding, and it showed in his body language. The old man smiled and began to quote a small part from the plan, and as he did, the words appeared in the round viewing portal that he had opened.

“Explore together *how better to contribute to the material and spiritual welfare of others and build a society in which the innate talents of each individual can flourish [...]*
Ponder together *the true purpose of the world of existence and the life of man; consider the beauty and efficacy of a society founded on the principle of unity in diversity [...]*
deliberate on that essential nobility of the soul that enables the individual to see his or her own happiness in the happiness of others.” ¹⁴

The old man stayed silent, and when Jack tried to speak, he put his hand up to say no; to stay quiet and reflect. The three of them sat there a good while, looking at the words, and at the camp through the small portal. The interaction of people going about their day and the words of the Planmakers together made for some good reflection.

After a time, they discussed the words and the nature of this small community, and what they meant to each of them. Many beautiful buds and flowers rose from the shared exploration of the words, or more so, the vision they imparted. They talked mainly about what those plan words might look like, there, in the community they saw through the portal, as well as in the work of the courses and growing of the fruit trees.

They found that the discussion was about small communities, or sections of larger ones, and what action *those* who lived there saw to take. It was about people working on their own behalf in neighbourhoods and villages. Taking active charge of life again, in simple ways, not just mouthing grand ideas. A rarefied atmosphere of spirit grew around them as they discussed what they felt and saw. Their inner state changed as they rose higher and higher, floating there gently until the study and discussion came to an end. This discussion, it seemed, was a prayer. It seemed that any work they would partake in, would be too; one of active devotion.

The old man then bade the two visitors to go back through the portal and walked with them up the low green hill. It seemed that there was to be no instruction on the words, as it was more about the vision the words imparted to the soul and the mind, and the vision they had gathered from the reflection and discussion. It was made clear by the old man's actions that the *words* would only unlock, become clearer, grow, and evolve, as they were *acted upon* in the community they were going to. The power of these words would be found in the actual process of building, and in reflecting on what had been *done*. They were not just words that ended in words.

As the three walked up the hill to the cross, Jack asked where they were. The old man informed him that they were near Tuam, in County Gallway. He added that his family roots were here in this vicinity, so this was where he did his work. He also told the couple of the many people who had left Ireland to go to many lands, many of them to Australia. He spoke of the great connection between these two lands and two peoples, and that *it* had created the portal. Great populations of Irish had gone to Australia to find peace and wellbeing. Jack knew that the cheeky nature of the culture of his forebear's homeland came from this spring, and it had fit well with the people of the great southern land.

“We’re thankful to the People o’ the Land, as many of ours gained their freedom from hundreds of years of oppression by going there. We caused some of their pain, and for dat’ we’re sorry; but to us, we’re all kin, and more so *thankful* to them for their sacrifice. And the truth is that our spirits have mixed deeply in that wide brown land.”

“ONE FITS WITH THE OTHER,” commented the tutor.

“And youth of this age can gather this concept really well; it powers them up,” added Brig.

“Everything we do with these youths will have *this* understanding running at *its core*,” added the tutor.

“Everything? *Really?*” questioned one of the people.

“Yes, those who mentor these youth always need to ask themselves...How what we and they are doing, is growing a sense of this two-fold moral purpose in them?”

Judy and Jennifer walked into the study hall late. They had gone for a walk together in the early morning and had been running on ‘bush time’. They excused themselves and sat down.

“Welcome ladies, we are discussing the two transformations. The transformation of oneself, and the transformation of society; that these are a twofold moral purpose of all peoples. We are talking about them in relation to the spiritual empowerment younger teenagers again, and in the channelling of this power of adolescence.”

“So, what do you mean by transformation?” asked Judy.

“Well, umm ...”

One lady chimed in, which was not strange in these classes, as the facilitator was just one of the participants and they all had things to learn, “It’s about developing yourself spiritually, and helping develop a better world; that these are the basis of life. We have been learning that the two transformations work within and with each other, and that we need these young ones to understand that they *can* grow themselves and develop a better world.”

“The Creative Word is the energy source for these two transformations. It can create new vistas of understanding for human souls to develop themselves, *and* their communities. It can power a spirit of good intent within a soul and energise any group to take charge of their own community’s development,” added the facilitator.

“The thing is, that these young teenagers can *really* run with the ball, *if* we throw it to them,” added Brig, sharing more of his experience. “They can *lead* healthy change and new growth, because they’re very idealistic, they have a lot of energy, and are less afraid of change,”

“People don’t listen to kids this age,” interjected a man.

“I get that, but people will *see* what they can *do*,” offered Jack, “and it’ll change their view of these young ones. When these youths act on *this* view of themselves, these understandings, and get purposed *outside* of themselves, possibilities *will* grow and the world *will* change,”

“Service *has* to be a big part of any courses they undertake,” now added the facilitator. “So, they feel empowered, and explore the latent abilities and talents within them. In any case, I would imagine many of this age are already busy, and at work now, in communities all over the world. I think they will already be out there doing the necessary work to help their families survive and make do. Things have changed less for us here. We have to *realise that*.”

“Yep, it’s sure going to be a challenge when we leave here,” said one lady.

“Well, get a hold of these young ones wherever you go, and let them show you how to deal with it. They have a lot to show us,” suggested Brig, smiling wide.

The music for tea and coffee break came wandering through Hall 3, and people started to rise. The facilitator called out, “When we return, we will talk about how we can create an atmosphere of exploration with these young ones too, so they can form their own ideas, express them well, and how by doing service projects they can uncover their natural talents, and seek out what service they may undertake in their communities.”

The Window

Jennifer looked through the window. She knew she was dreaming.

A very gracious lady, in pure white, stood a little to the side of the window on the other side.

“It is the last window. By the completion of fifteen warm seasons, most of the work will be done. The structure and parameters of their moral code will mostly be set, and the exploration into the reality of life, and their perception of it, will be done. Much of what they are to become in adulthood will have been set down here. These years after the eleventh warm season, and before the sixteenth, are ‘The Last Window’.

A person’s condition is virtually set in this time of adolescence. Moral character and their personal view of the world are formed here. If left to pernicious forces, during this time, the flowers will not fruit. If not guarded from the grub that comes at flowering, their eggs will make the fruit rotten. The parasites that await them will take away all they could be, and all they could give. If they do not know hardship, and so, drive their roots deeper, the drought will take them. We know of it as ‘The Important Time’.

At this time, the child blooms, and their reality comes to fruiting. All that came before it, allows them to fruit, as their ability to observe explodes far wider and far deeper. They are no longer the flower and should be set free from childhood. If they are forced to stay, and they are not allowed to develop into fruit, the flower will simply rot and fall to the ground. The nature of this time must be understood by all who tend to them, and those who are about them.

There are two seas that come together in the reality of men, the physical and the spiritual, and the personal exploration at this time in life will form the basis of the nature of these two seas' relation to each other, within each of these human souls. Those who educate them, need to educate in the sea of spirit, as the prime purpose of the human creature is to bring love and justice to the human system. It is a requisite that cannot be afforded by the self or the lower nature.

The ground has fallen in your world because the sea of the animal, the ego, the self, was given precedence. These new generations must rebuild the spiritual ground deep within the human reality and create its expression in the collective reality of humankind."

THE COUNSELLOR STOOD AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM. All of Hall 3 were present. There were meetings like this, occasionally, that helped the participants gain a wider perspective of the training and the work, and sometimes a deeper perspective. She was just finishing, with some more understanding that might aid those who would be part of the work ahead.

"...The Department evolves and learns, as you and your orchards must. Only in humility and effort will we nurture these trees. Please remember that you are not involved in an event in your history, we are involved in the process of your history. The trees will need to be nurtured, and brought to fruiting, and beyond. We will need to run the courses, and train new generations of

such nurturers. The trees will feed the ground, just as the fruits of them and The Word will feed the hearts of humanity. The Spiritual Essence must be shared in the courses and the trees will respond to it as they grow. As they grow, it grows, and as it grows, they grow. They are truly one.

You will need facilitate the courses, and then, accompany others in all aspects of the growing of the fruit, and in the growing of the spirit. Material abundance will rise off this spiritual base, as the skills and insights will raise the capacity of any human group to care for its own future. Education of all kinds, sciences, and the arts, and skills will too need be developed, and shared, but the core courses and spirit of the Creative Word will power this process and provide the solid ground. Every garden needs *light* to grow and prosper, every garden needs rich healthy soil to thrive.

So, *accompaniment* is also our charge. *A spirit of humility and learning*, walking with those we work with; *these* will serve us well. Remember, we need do the work *with* others. We must not only let talk, or knowledge, be our place, as once off the ground and away from the *doing* we will lose knowledge and miss opportunities; we may even lose track of the core purpose if we are led by our limited knowledge alone. The ego, and the chattering of the mind, will also challenge our focus, but I am sure that we will continue to learn and do what our kind requires of us.

It is a time of change, a time of great renewal. This is *not* about *us*."

The people in the Great Hall then rose, and the chatter began. Jack sat there contemplating what these insights would all look like when they got on the ground. He also wondered if anyone else had heard what he had heard. *To him*, they seemed almost oblivious of what the Counsellor had just shared, and only seemed to want to talk. He looked around and saw that there *were* a good number of souls who sat reflecting. Two of them were Brig and Judy. But he remembered that

everyone had their *own way* of learning; so, he checked his ego, and his strong penchant for evaluating people aside and continued to reflect a while.

One thing that struck him as he reflected was that, maybe these *others* had the right idea, because these words, like the words of the plan, would only flower and become better understood in the actual work.

This realisation got him up, and out into the early afternoon sunshine. As he was walking out of the Great Ship, he remembered back to his first journeys, now long ago, when he had learned those great words, “*It’s not about you.*” The Counsellor had reminded him of it at the end of her inspirational sharing, and he knew that *these* words would carry him through many struggles when he went out.

The autumn day was beautiful, and he needed time to wander out into the great garden of nature. This planet was richly blessed, and humankind had been very tardy in their care and stewardship of her. Jack had been almost totally ignorant of her rich nurturing embrace in so many ways before his travels. She provided life, food, protection, abundance, inspiration, aesthetic joy, and emotional relief for all who knew her, and all those who didn’t. There was so much wisdom written into her. “*So much beauty. What lovely classrooms we’ve been given,*” he now thought.

“Hey, Jack,” called out a man, loudly, grabbing Jack’s attention away from his surrounds.

“Hey...*artist guy,*” said Jack, as he saw the artist walking towards him.

“It’s *Isaiah,*” said the artist, with a smile.

“You up for a wander in the gorge, mate?” asked Jack.

“Yes. *Definitely.* We could explore your missing piece.”

“Oh, that. It doesn’t matter. I’m good.”

“It’s good to know who you are, Jack. You’re studying about adolescence in there, aren’t you? You’ll need to help them find their talents and abilities, so how can you do that, if you don’t know how to find your own?”

“I believe the service will make that stuff apparent. But, sure, I suppose I’m open to learn more that might help.”

The two men walked and talked. The man surprised Jack with the questions he asked. He didn’t start with what Jack might like to do; he started by asking what he loved. He also asked him what got him mad, and what he spent his time on mostly. It seemed from these questions that Jack was very happily, a real *tragic* for his Faith. He spent most of his free time on it. Almost all of it, as he loved its beauty and wondered at its continuing unfoldment.

He also found that people misinforming people about anything made him angry. But especially keeping souls ignorant of their true nature. It made him the angriest because, as *he* saw it, our whole lives stemmed from that premise of seeing ourselves as either physical or spiritual beings. He saw people lost in lesser things, and that he was no stranger to that either, but at least he had a choice by knowing he was both, and he had a way to freedom.

“You seem to be doing what you love, but you said the other day that there was something missing,” offered Isaiah.

“Does it matter? I mean, the work is so very important, and no matter how good I might be at something, the rebuilding is more important now.”

“There’ll be a lot of people out there with hidden talents that may help bring this world to a better place. Knowing more about what *you* have to give is also part of the equation. I think it’s *all* important. So, what did you love doing as a young child?”

“I don’t know. I loved making up stories when I was a kid. I loved watching movies. I reckon, I could have been a really good actor. You know becoming someone else and getting into character. Yep, that makes me feel good.”

“So, did you ever act, or write stories?”

“Well, only when I had to at school. Mate, I just *don’t* have any experiences with that kind of stuff...Oh we did this huge backdrop for a theatre musical with an art teacher once. Loved that. Big colours on a huge canvas,” the joy in Jack, as he shared this, was quite telling to him and Isaiah.

“Well, sounds like you have missed *your* boat *altogether*, Jack.”

“Mmm, maybe, but those things were never taken seriously, and they aren’t practical.”

“They are all *very* powerful if they express *meaning*, *beauty*, and *truth*. Such things can start a fire. Can’t you *feel* that? They can be way more powerful in informing people and in helping them explore their reality. You missed the boat *big time*,” responded Isaiah, shaking his head.

Jack just sat down on a rock and started to water up. Then, he started to tear up more as he sat there realising the power of this hidden part of him that he had considered as nothing. Isaiah gave him a short time, and then said, “You can start *any time*, Jack.”

“What if I’m bad at it?”

“No one’s bad at art or writing, especially if it comes from their heart. We all have something *different* to give. Just do these things, and the acting, when you can. See what comes naturally. I’ve got a feeling you’re natural at all of ’em.”

“Where do I start?”

“*Just start*; and go with the flow of what comes out of you. You’ll naturally learn the skills, and you’ll reach for others, as you go.”

“How?”

“Do them in the courses you will facilitate out there, wherever you end up, in the way of activities. It provides a safe learning place for you, and for others to explore all kinds of things, especially for the youth.”

“*Thanks, Isaiah. It might be fun.*”

“It’ll be *great*, Jack.”

“WE HAVE NO INSTRUMENTS, SIR.”

“Well, just *man up*, look around and get your *bearings!*” ordered Agent Deveroux.

Wat and Deveroux were agents who Jack had met while deeper. They were not of *The Department* and a bit of a mystery to him. They had protected him from the Robes, and now, they were working on protecting the Earth from the Cementers. They were flying a nondescript army helicopter that looked like it was out of the 60’s, and they were swinging all over the place.

“They must have jammed our tracker too,” called Wat, amidst the noise of the motor and the powerful blades cutting the air.

“Do you remember where they were on the scope?”

“Yep.”

“Well, work it out. We’re goin’ in hot!”

“What?!”

Deveroux laughed a booming loud laugh, and called back, “I just always wanted to say that.” He continued laughing, but did not lose focus on his flying, while Wat figured out where the signal would have been coming from.

“*Over there*, Sir.”

“*Good work*, son. You just have to trust what’s in you when you lose the guidance system.”

“The guidance system is better at it.”

“We’ve all got an inner guidance system. We all know the *right way* when we cut out the white noise of our own whining and the noise of battle.”

Deveroux was a hard man to be around and was all action, but he also had a lot of depth; depth that was not very often apparent, especially in his line of work. He was a courageous man, and knew himself, and his capacity. In any case, Deveroux was Deveroux, and even though challenging, Wat was very glad to have been made his partner. Just then, the chopper hit the ground, and the two agents were out and down a Cementer tunnel. Attack helicopters flew over the tunnel entrance two seconds after that, and the troop choppers came on their heels. The troop

choppers landed, and the men poured out and raced into the tunnel in formation. The attack helicopters started scout runs over a larger area, while one stayed aloft with a line of fire to the tunnel entrance.

The battle was heated, and the Cementers did not yield easily. They took a good deal of bringing down, as they were built to take great heat and strain, but they had finally capitulated. That capitulation gave Deveroux some cause for concern, rather than joy. He knew there had to be other longer-term plans afoot, as from his information, they always fought to the last. The mop up eventually began though, and the Cementers were led out of the entrance and onto transport trucks that had now arrived. The tunnels were searched for any human survivors, and for stray, or hiding, Cementers.

Deveroux and Wat came out of the tunnel entrance a full four hours after entering. Wat came first, clothes smoking and coughing loudly, as he lay down on his back and breathed in the good air. Deveroux followed at a steady gait, swinging his stun weapon, and with a broad smile on his face.

A Captain in the strike team came over to them as they emerged, saw Deveroux's smile, and said in a very Army fashion, "You like that a little *too* much, Agent Deveroux."

"Man's gotta' have a hobby," he answered, smiling a little wider.

"Anytime you want to be on my team, just say so."

Wat coughed some more, and Deveroux said, "*Get up*, boy. You're *embarrassing* me."

Wat laughed, then coughed some more, and Deveroux was happy that he had given his partner some relief. He had been an Agent for a long time, and he knew how to wind his people down after the heavy action.

Deveroux was from a very rough place; a place that taught you to know yourself well, and quickly. He had decided early on in his youth that he was going to protect people, even though it took him a while to break free of the dysfunction around him. He saw others who blamed their environment for giving up; or adding to the pain of that place by allowing their own bad behaviour. He saw these as weak-willed people. He knew that there was a power inside him, and he used it, inside and out. He knew that you could raise any place, make it better, and he started with protecting the people there. In time, more courage grew in that place, and more souls believed in the powers within them. That place changed, and that was when he drew the attention of his new Boss.

The Creative Word had transformed him after he had providentially come across a small book, and he had helped *transform* his small part the world; then, and ever since then. It worked in a dynamic way, as these transformations were part of each other, and each added to the growth of the other.

The Power

Jack stood there, watching The Queen's Mother and Thomas, in a small plot digging up the frozen ground. The Garden was more frozen than before. The air was very chill, and he shuddered a bit as he walked over to talk with them. There was not a sound in the air, not even the call of birds.

"Hi, Jack," said Thomas, doing his best to sound chipper.

"This place is really frozen, now," commented Jack.

"There's no joy here. No young ones, no people, no energy. We can't even grow anything," complained The Queen's Mother.

"We just have to accept where we are at," said Thomas, very frustrated from constantly having to restate it.

“What are we going to do?” asked The Queen’s Mother, almost in desperation.

“Maybe some kindling is the way forward,” offered Jack.

“Kindling?”

“The Creative Word; and acting on it can start a fire. The power of prayer, and assistance is there for us to use too. Maybe, we’ve been using our own power, and our own designs, when His are way better.”

“We’re old, and there is too much to do. Where are all the young ones?” cried The Queen’s Mother, seemingly oblivious to what was said, and making Thomas even more frustrated that she could not see that no amount of words could change ‘how it was’.

Jack looked down, and said, “I think we were so busy with our own designs, and being right, that we failed to build a community. If there is no community, there is no youth, and no life. We built this frozen place, but we can warm it up with some Kindling, and light a fire, and then, maybe when the Sun returns, we can grow some fruit.”

“But we will have to be realistic,” argued Thomas.

“Don’t you believe in the power of prayer, and the spirit in the Words of Law? What about Divine assistance? We just need the will to act.”

“Maybe we can talk about it,” said Thomas, himself now hiding in words alone, and the Queen’s mother sighed, in agreement.

“We have to act; and act together, or there will be no future; no Spring,” offered Jack, and when there was no response, he added, “You are so full of fear. How can anything be built on fear?”

Thomas exploded. He raved on about how Jack was never there, and always trying to control things, when he did turn up. The list of accusations was long, and they were all a slight on his character. Jack had thought little of these two at times, and had certainly judged them, but never had he attacked their character.

He now felt like he had never known Thomas, and Thomas had never known him; or was it just the hidden talk of a number of souls over many years manifesting itself. Then Thomas minced on about how Jack needed help, and that he and the Queen’s mother had just had it with him.

Jack’s will broke; not that it had not cracked many times before here, in this place, but this time, it broke away. Disunity was indeed the great destroyer, and he could now clearly see how deep, and how pernicious, this cancer was. He knew that there was no way he could provide a remedy, as he was considered the enemy. He could almost taste the fear in the air, the opposite of faith. He also knew where any talk would end, in more talk and no real action. He was not going to, or simply could not, endure another cycle of dysfunction; another cycle that only ended in words, and him worn down from the futile effort.

There was no life here, only inaction and phantoms of the mind. There was no ground, no soil. There was no will to gather the Power Source available to them, and act on it; or more so, that they held their beliefs so tight to their chests that it could not light a fire. Jack had totally lost heart, as there was simply no more resilience left in him. He severed his heart from this place and left by the front gate.

There are many things that can trample, again and again, the tender herb that seeks to spring from the soil. Communities can be like that. He knew that he too had failed and held nothing against those who remained there. We all have our varied realities and pathways out of ignorance, and toward True Understanding. He would lend his effort to other Gardens nearby, as best he could, as he knew now that this dream could never end for him. He could never truly let, The Dream, go.

He also knew that this Garden would surely grow in time, as its true power was not in the people. It was infused into the nature of life when The Spirit of the Age re-created the nature of things. It simply awaited the human channels that were free enough of self, inner wounds, and the world, to allow its power through. Be they, these people, from lessons learned, or others that would come; the Garden's success, in time, was inevitable.

JACK WOKE EARLY AND HEADED OUT FOR MORNING PRAYERS. He loved early morning prayers. They buoyed him and energised him. He knew it would be just the thing he needed right now. Communion with that Greater Force somehow released him from many forms of malady, blockage, or strain.

There were more morning prayer gatherings throughout the pods now, as well as the one inside Hall 3. Some walked up the gorge to various spots to share the morning, and one devotional took place each morning between four great white gum trees which formed a perfect square beside Hall 3. It almost seemed as if they had been planted there by providence for this purpose.

This particular space reminded him of a garden he had visited on his travels. It was a square garden with four great tall palm trees at each corner, and there was a fountain in the middle of

them. The fountain was other-worldly, and seemed to hold a power, and a presence, that he did not understand. The four palm trees also created a special space in which thoughts could be gathered, ordered, and problems solved, somehow. It seemed to him, that it was also a portal of some kind. He now recalled that that garden, that place, had many nuances of spirit as he had wandered there.

Those who prayed here loved the fresh still morning air, and the songs of the birds, as they prayed. It was also very informal, which naturally suited those who communed here. They formed a few circles within the square of the four white gums. The first row of people sat on the ground, the second on the ground or on log seats that were interspersed around this circle, and the third row had seats from the Hall, or simply stood. He now walked over to sit on a log with Jennifer and Judy.

There was silence for a while after everyone was settled. Then those there took turns to read from the Creative Word, say prayers, or sing them. Some though, simply spoke their own prayer, or recited ones of their various Faiths. Some just sang parts of songs that had meaning to them, some quoted secular words of wisdom. Brig shared a dreaming story that he loved that morning. Something he did, on occasion. When they finished, people started drifting away, while some small groups stayed talking a while.

There was a sense of community built here, each morning, and it lifted the spirit of the daily work in Hall 3. People would talk about all kinds of things and commit to helping each other in various ways. They shared their reflections on the coursework of the day before, chatted about life, and just bonded. The sense of oneness grew daily in this place, and the bonds of love did too. There was also a growing sense now, that it was only three months until the first wave had to leave, and that they would struggle to leave each other.

Today, Jack, Jennifer and Judy had decided on a quick walk after devotions. They thought that they would fit it in before breakfast. They were heading off into the gorge, when the Counsellor came up to them and said, “Well, Jack Johnston, it seems you have been summoned deeper again.”

“The Doc?” asked Jack. “No. Someone deeper.”

“Deeper than the Doc.”

“Yes, and you should be honoured. He has a single word name, he is *Education*. He is deep in *The Department* and was even there before the inception of *the Department* in its current form. He, others before him, and others with him, saw it into being on the instruction of the Physician. He was one of those who fought back a great darkness that sought to usurp the power of *The Department*. He is the last of his compatriots. The others have passed even deeper now. Treasure your time with him Jack; *treasure it* and avail yourself of his presence deeply.”

“HELLO, JACK!” said the large old man, sitting comfortably in his leather armchair. He was right at home amongst all the books that were strewn around him on the table and the floor, and amongst the great walls of books and bookshelves that filled that room.

Jack loved this old man. He had met him a few times on his journeys, and he always treasured his time with him. He had not realized this creature’s great reality though, and when he went to greet him, he choked up. A strong feeling of happiness, and at the same time sadness, began to enter his being. His eyes just teared up as he fell back on another leather armchair, and

he could not shake it. He felt weak, and humbled, in the grip of whatever this thing was, and he just sat there looking at the old man.

“It happens sometimes. You have been travelling a long time. Grace is plenteous, but the work can ask much of us,” said the old man, as he let Jack be.

The old man then began to read aloud from the book he was reading, and as he did Jack’s tears grew, and then, in time, they fell away again. Even in this strange melancholy, or in this release from the great strain he felt, he enjoyed listening to the old man’s slow and gentle voice and began to wonder why people didn’t read to each other more. Only children seemed to be allowed that joy; at least before Groundfall. He thought that maybe there was more of it now; now that the electronic music and screens would be almost non-existent.

“We need more reading to each other, more storytelling, singing, and acting in our lives,” expressed Jack.

“Yes. I was hopeful that the arts would help fill my courses with joy and bring out hidden talents. A new culture needs new expression, and *The Running Man* is much more than we can yet see.”

“Even you?!”

“Even me. I am not The Physician. I am merely an essence in service to all good. So, what are you learning *now*, young man?”

“We’re just finishing up on the spiritual empowerment for adolescents.”

“Ahh, *the youth*. All of youth is a powerful time. A time of great flux and change. It is like a ripple that constantly brings with it the collective future. That age shows clearly, what may come

in the years yet beyond us. They have been left to predators for a good many years on your world. Real empowerment is essential.”

“Real empowerment?”

“They need to bring a spiritual revival and be catalysts of that revival. Each wave needs to add their impetus to the renewal work. They have a keen sense of purpose and can clearly see the nature and significance of this time. Many youths sacrificed their comfort, and many their lives, already, to bring your Faith to the people of your planet, and it was not simply this sense of purpose, or vision of healthy change that created such sacrifice. It was the love for a Power greater than them. It was a love for The Creator and His Beauty that drove them. It is always this impetus, reinvigorated by the Creative Word of each age, which energises those who bring change and creates civilisation.”

“There’ve been many great civilisations. But they grew from trade, and other things. Wasn’t religion just part of the social order?”

“The Spark is always before the fire. All great civilisations began from the spark of The Creator. The Holy Spirit; The New Messenger; The Remedy; The New Infusion. The Light.”

“What about the Greeks? That was a growth of the mind, science, and philosophy.”

“In your Holy Writings it says...

“Empedocles, who distinguished himself in philosophy, was a contemporary of David, while Pythagoras lived in the days of Solomon, son of David, and acquired wisdom from the treasury of prophethood [...] Hippocrates, the physician. He was one of the eminent philosophers who

believed in God and acknowledged His sovereignty [...] After him came Socrates, who was indeed wise, accomplished and righteous [...] After Socrates came the divine Plato [...] Then came Aristotle [...] one and all acknowledged their belief in the immortal Being Who holdeth in His grasp the reins of all sciences.”¹⁵

The Mohammedan universities brought the Renaissance to the darkness of Europe. Christianity brought light to the failing Roman Empire; an Empire that was rotting in its own flesh. There is *always* renewal, and these are *only three* stories of the Power of The Spirit. There was always The Holy Spirit first, Jack. That there was gold, or water, or spice, or a trade route, was only secondary, and developed within the order and unity that was born of The Spirit. Just as civilisations that *lose* their Higher Spirit begin to get sick, crumble, and die, so they must also be reborn of the Power of The Spirit.”

“Wow, are you serious?”

“Perfectly. Nothing can be renewed without it. *Every* system needs regular energy input in nature, and the human system needs the regular sustenance of The Holy Spirit; the renewal of true understanding. Just as the sun must rise to give daily energy, True Understanding must again dawn on the human world so it can grow. So, attach these young one’s hearts to The Spirit, and they will truly be empowered to bring on a new and greater civilisation.”

“I think The Doc told me something like that, and I’ve seen its influence on young souls. I ran a couple of adolescent youth groups, and it does power them up; even more so those who *weren’t* of my Faith. I didn’t know about the Jewish Faith’s relation to the Greek philosophers, or about the universities of Islam.”

“There are endless cultures, and endless wisdoms. There is endless knowledge out there. One needs to make the effort to look well into things and take knowledge from valid sources. Aid the young souls to not gather from, or live on, hearsay, the slogans of fools, or just skim the surface of things. We all need cast our net *wide*, and *troll deep*, for true knowledge and deeper understanding.” advised the old man, gently, as he waved at the endless tomes all around him. “You would do well to share these insights with the others who study with you, as these young souls who will create tomorrow, and they need to be powered by The Remedy.”

“You know, there are others who’d like to have the benefit of coming here to see you.”

“That is not possible. Only you can come to this place. There is more to your story than meets the eye, and we are simply taking advantage of these propitious circumstances to share understanding more directly, where it is useful.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Your situation is very clear to us, and you are a mystery also. I cannot say more.”

“Oh, that again. Ever since I began travelling, I’ve been hearing that.”

“It’s the way it is. It is for a reason. Trust us, trust Him. His designs are perfect. In any case, we have been given the opportunity to directly share insight, and maybe some inspiration. As I said, I am simply taking advantage of it while we have a window.”

“Okay,” said Jack, feeling very fortunate, but still lost in the mystery of Travelling. But he trusted this man, and his wisdom, and he trusted the designs of The Creator.

“I want you to visit me regularly, throughout the next Phase. It’s the phase of the Running Man. You will learn more about the training courses. I call it The Institute, and it is an instrument of limitless potential. We would like you to share these insights with those you study with.”

“Okay. Sure. I *get* why I’m here. It’s not about me.”

“No, it certainly is not. It is about *us*, and *all* good. It is about *love*. Freeing people’s hearts, and the world from its pain. It is about a burgeoning future and the great prayer of humanity; it’s *striving* forward and developing evolution. There are wonderful things *ahead*, Jack. *Wonderful* things.”

WHEN JACK RETURNED, IT WAS JUST BEFORE DAWN. He had been away almost a whole day and night but was in no way tired. He was full of energy from his time with the old man. He decided not to wake anyone and went for a walk in the early morning light. The cool of winter was just beginning to come, but this morning was foggy, and would be a warmer day. He walked, and reflected, watching the birds, and a few scurrying wallabies. It was always good to be out there after so much learning.

He was thinking of youth, and how it was a time of beginning to think for oneself and beginning to understand one’s purpose. He also saw older youths, and how that was a time of thinking of marriage and starting a family. Then, he thought of Jennifer. He now found a deep knowing in him that they should be together, and decided it was time. She had not known him long, but he had known her for a long time, and anyway, they had come to that place together on their walk along the road before they entered the portal to Ireland. This clear decision made him turn and walk back to the Hall, to see Jennifer.

As he turned, he saw a great white rainbow in the now lightening fog, and neatly perched within its arch, he saw the moon in the morning sky. It sat within the rainbow and right in the middle of the great white arc. He smiled, and thanked providence. Signs and confirmations were very real to Jack; from the wind, all the way to someone turning up to help with something when he had decided to act on something. He had imagined many signs over the years as humans can tend to but was less concerned to even *find* them these days, and surer when confirmations came.

He got back in time for prayers and joined his friends. He smiled at Jennifer, and she saw in that look, Jack's intention. They prayed together. Both praying for a good future within themselves, and when the prayers ended, Jennifer said, "I think it's time too, Jack."

"We'll *have* to find a *good tree*," said Jack, smiling.

"And build a *good fortress* around it," said Jennifer, smiling back.

Judy and Brig saw and heard the goings on, and came over, and hugged them, and congratulated them. Jack's face went into 'smile mode', and it did not go away all day.

In time, after much ado, and some long consultations together, they were married under a good tree, and began their life together. It lifted the spirit of the camp for a while, as all the marriages there had; just as these happy events do in any place. In any case, this community was growing every day, more and more, into a real community; a community of light.

Maturity

“We have been given instruction to take you out to the first orchards,” said the Counsellor.

“What orchards?” asked Jack. “I thought you were just being kind, allowing me to fly again,” he added, as he looked down from his carpet to the red-brown land below that gave way to the dark green of forests and light green grasslands closer to the coast, then he looked toward to the dark green of the impending coastline. They were very high, as they were on a long-haul run. The strange thing was that the sky was not that beautiful light blue anymore. It was becoming more blue-green every day, as the Halls all over the planet had continued to pump out the green gas.

“We have been working with local people on developing the first orchards near Groundfall, and *away* from it, to understand what is the same and what is different. We are learning; learning

that is being put into the training in the Halls. True learning comes from work on the ground. As you know, we only have eight groups that we can put through the training before the Halls are to leave. We must arm you all with all that we can.”

Jack and the Counsellor first visited a large apartment block on the outskirts of a major city. A city on the coast, which he had visited a few times. To him, it was built on a hard, and stark energy, and was dry somehow, as it seemed to hold no water. He didn’t know why he felt that way, but it had always felt very empty, and in a somewhat different reality, when he visited. He had felt it shift each time he visited here. It was like its spirit was gone, slowly but surely drained away over time, even though it seemed quite alive. On and around the more open water here, was different though. There was a life energy that still remained around the great bay, like it was an oasis in the midst of a desert.

The people in the apartment building they visited talked of how things had changed for them since the carpets had come. They had built and nurtured an orchard, from the seeds of the seed trees, and they had begun to study the courses of The Running Man. They had two children’s classes, and two youth empowerment groups, and they were amazed at the enthusiasm, and results of the youths’ service efforts. Community was strong, and the free elected council of the building, seeing the transformation in the youth who had taken part early on in the process, made it a requirement for all youth living there to participate.

They stayed there for the night. They prayed, and ate, and then talked with people until late. It was a joy, and Jack knew that he was experiencing the first fruit of a new civilisation.

In the morning, the Jack and Naomi went for a flight. She was always a Counsellor, but she was off the clock for this small flight; it being more social in nature. The city had suffered a

huge groundfall, and as they flew over it, he could not believe the extent of the devastation. Great swathes of shadow where the ground was gone, some with great broken buildings sticking out, some just great holes of darkness. Around the groundfalls were buildings in all levels of damage. He had seen his own town in ruins, but to see this great city, this way, just slammed home the immensity of what had happened. Part of him wondered how we could come back from such destruction, and then, he remembered the apartment block.

They saw many things that they wished they had not seen that day. Some places were safe, while others were still not. They could see people making the best of their situation, others sadly not. Chaos is an ugly thing, and the world had known enough of it before Groundfall, but now, it had taken a far greater grip on the planet. The stark horrifying energy, rising off parts of the city below, came from the course reality of animal survival, and it was tangible to both of them; a stench to the soul, and a spiritless thing.

“Better a bad government than *no* government. Better *some* order. Order is required in the human system for there to be *any* peace, justice, or soil to nurture the young. Nothing can be built in chaos,” offered Naomi.

The Implement

The two carpets rose higher and moved to the north. It was about seven hours flying time by carpet to Naomi's home village. It had been a long time since she had left her home. She had joined The Department many years ago and had flown the carpets since then. Jack had only flown for a short while, but Naomi was a young teenager of great spirit and she had flown high in service, even when she was young. Her selflessness, and radiant spirit, had attracted attention, and she had committed to The Department when the call had come.

They now flew over the island, to the other side, and they banked back in a semicircle onto the beach beside the village. As the carpets came towards the ground and glided in, they both stepped off their carpets in a fluid motion, as if it was as natural as breathing. Naomi went down on her knees and pushed her hands into the sand. Her service was in Hall 3 for now, but when the Halls finally rose back to Certitude, she would come here; *home*.

She rose and gathered herself. She was here in a certain role and needed to respect that. Jack just smiled as he walked up the beach with her, and he turned off the beach before she did towards her family place. She looked at him, curiously, but he just smiled. A feeling filled his chest

as he remembered his visit here, sometime in its future it seemed, and time with a future generation. It filled him with hope, as he knew what would be built here. Now looking to the blue-green sky, and the two moons becoming more apparent in the early evening, he also thought of Johandis and his family, and he knew that all this world would one day be magnificent.

“Jack, are you okay?”

“I have seen this place, Naomi. I walked this beach in the future. I also met others, in another place, but here on Earth. It’s like this time is the beginning of a great cycle, and *that* time was its fulfilment. There *will* be a new civilisation here, a very *magnificent* and gentle one.”

“So, you have been *here* on your travels?”

“Yes, but the blue-green sky wasn’t here then.”

“The blue sky will return in time. The *essence* will become a part of all life on the ground in time. But it will be a while.”

Jack now realised that his visit here was later than his visit to the spirit scientist and Halin.

“That’s good. Just wouldn’t be right otherwise.”

“Yes. I love the blue sky too.”

“You know, it seems I’m connected to certain people. Your line is one of them. I think love creates bonds and links, beyond time and space. Something like gravity, I think.”

Naomi was taken by Jack’s depth; well, at least for a moment.

“*Deveroux, you big girl!*” suddenly yelled Jack, loudly.

“Hey there *girly man!*” responded Deveroux, with a bigger smile, as he reached Jack and gave him a big man-hug.

Naomi just shook her head. She would never understand Jack. He was just so...*Jack*.

“Seems we keep running into each other,” said Deveroux.

“Yep, but not so sure it’s a coincidence,” responded Jack.

“Are you gettin’ *smarter*, boy?” asked Deveroux, as beautiful dry insult, and then, a smile.

The General stood beside Deveroux, and Wat stood to the other side of the General.

“Hello Mam. I am here to see how we can lend support to the work of your people,” offered The General.

“Well, follow us. Learn what we are doing, and *do as you will*, General,” said the Counsellor. After a small pause, she added, “And, *maybe*, we are all, *our people*.”

It was said with eloquence and power, and yet, in moderation. The three men were truly impressed, while also being very clear on the lay of the land. It was to be, *what it was*. Things would *evolve*. There was to be no control, just people working together for good; for the future.

NAOMI HAD BEEN WELCOMED. She was welcomed home as a daughter of the village, and welcomed as a representative of The Department, formally. A time of celebration began with ceremony, dance, and song, then a feast; and after it, came more songs and more dancing.

The village's life had not changed as intensely as it had changed in other places. There was more of the spirit of community still alive here when Groundfall had come. A place that was once seen as undeveloped, was now showing its power clearly. It had its challenges, but all had pitched in together, and still having a Chief, and Elders who were respected, was a great aid to their ability to work together in a unified direction.

The courses, and the planting, had come more naturally to this place. There had been much consultation when the first Seeders came, and when the first facilitators arrived to begin the courses. It was made clear that the courses were an implement for rebuilding community. The Chief had allowed it, and the people had taken it on to see how it would be. Some were not sure, but over the last nine months, the whole village was clear on the spirit that animated these courses, and they named the courses, The Great Implement.

The village had eaten together and celebrated that evening, and Naomi was now just finishing a small talk with the people.

"...Pure intent is the spirit which animates life. It can be drawn from the Spirit of the Holy Word, and its light is in us. There are many who call the Creative Word theirs, but that anyone says so, or call themselves Its people's name, does not make it so. That someone acts in great service does not make it so. A pure heart, a pure intent, makes it so," finished Naomi.

She had managed to say this in a way that showed she was just a conduit. She was never its owner, and there was no hint of shame inferred by her words on the people. In fact, it was given as a gift, and lent inspiration to those who listened. There was a beauty in this great lady. The spirit that animated her *was* the spirit of pure intent.

"So, how goes The Implement?" she then asked of the people gathered there.

People stood and told their stories of how it had influenced them, created great experiences, and built other outcomes; and other stories, of how they had struggled with it. There were many people who stood to talk, and much learning was shared in that place. There was no debate, there was only sharing and truth. It was a shared space where all could give honestly.

In the end, the Counsellor asked where they were going from here, and so again, people stood and spoke. Those who had come here to facilitate the courses said nothing, and just noted down what the people were saying. There had to be a unified way forward, and these tutors had become coordinators, as servants of the process. There were also many activities now beyond the study groups, so these coordinators would support them and all the souls running them.

Jack listened to the stories, and later at the meeting with the coordinators, heard about their challenges. This village was originally to be the only village with the courses and the seeds, but they had both naturally spread to four more. The people here shared easily, as it was in the culture, and a tide that could not be held back. The Implement had created many more local people with the ability to facilitate the courses and teach the growing of the fruit trees, than was expected, as well as a growing number of children and youth groups. The level of coordination had to rise, and much would need to be learned here about its nature as the courses and trees spread to yet other villages.

This learning was going to be crucial for the renewal of community worldwide, while understanding that each place had its own tides, and its own organic nature, the art of coordination would be more universal. In time, even schools, social and economic endeavour, invention, and much more would grow off this spiritual and agricultural base. Everything could grow off the strong ground created by the courses. The courses were there to build the capacity of any group of

people to take care of their own spiritual, intellectual, *and material* wellbeing. The Halls would not do the work of all this growth, the people of the world would, and it was very clear to Jack that the future was in the hands of *all* people now. The time of giving away power or farming off responsibility to others was over. The time of maturity had come. To him, it seemed, the human world was being forced to grow up, and he now knew for sure that people had the ability and higher powers to bring that about.

JACK LOVED TRAVELING TO THE TWO COMMUNITIES, but he was buoyed as they now saw Hall 3 in the distance.

There was a strange thing about flying; it gave one a greater perspective of reality. From this high vantage point, he realised again, how small we all are, and how interrelated and united all life was. He understood again the beauty of the thin ribbon of life that enveloped this great rock as it was hurtling through the cold and nothingness of space; how this *precious* system protected and sustained them, and all else. Such a view could only drive a need to protect it, and the contemplation of it, even in the mind of someone who did not look to The Creator, could only leave them with a sense of awe and thanks, a sense of wonder.

Jack was looking forward to seeing Jennifer again. She was a joy to him too, and he knew she would love to hear the story of his trip. She was so gentle and yet so strong and lifted him inside whenever they were together. She had an energy, and love; it was gentle, and it calmed his being. He could hardly wait to see her.

The cold air of winter was more than here now, and very apparent in the very early evening as they neared Hall 3. "*There'll be a frost in the morning,*" thought Jack, as he remembered the

icy windscreens, and frozen water hoses, in the early mornings of Western Queensland. The cold was just another part of the charm of the place, to him. Jennifer raced over as they landed, and she jumped into Jack's arms. The force brought them both to the ground. They both laughed out loud at where they had found themselves. What a strange and wonderful thing is, two souls happily brought into union with each other; a truly wondrous thing.

Happiness radiated out of the couple as they walked with Naomi into Hall 3. Judy, Brig, and Trev had been out catching the remaining sun of the day with Jennifer, when the two riders had arrived back. They now followed the others into the Hall, all smiling from the happy reunion. Had they known what was being planned high above them, they might not have been so buoyed. High above the earth, in the late daytime sky, sat the Cementers' Mother Ship. It had good defences, and was answering all the questions asked of it, as the forces of the earth tried to bring it down. It was well fortified and seemed to be able to distort its position somehow.

The Cementers knew they were losing on the ground, and they knew they needed to get more of their kind here to succeed. Like all successful predators, the Cementers had been watching their prey carefully, and had realised that food was coming in through the Halls. They had hatched a plan to get back through one of the portals, find the Black Robes, and work on getting the other ships through. They knew the weapon best, and its specifics had got one ship here, so they knew it could still succeed at bringing others. Maybe too, destabilise the ground even more. The Black Robes would be angry at their original deception, but with some incentives, and after the sacrifice of a few lower caste Cementers to appease their anger, they would deal.

They thought that at the least, they could get more troops on the ground here by accessing the portal in Hall 3, and then, accessing others beyond it. The new ‘beach head’ on planet Earth was to be — *Hall 3*.

“...THAT QUOTE.”

“What quote was would that be?” asked Education, gently, as he put down a book among others on his side table.

“The part that said, The Creator holds the reins of science. What does that actually mean?”

“Well, that is very relative to the understanding of each person. There are no interpreters of the Words of The Beauty, in your time. But, to me, I would say that there are three meanings. One is that the *hidden* flow, but great release, of knowledge at the inception of a new Message is gathered up by greater minds. Another would be that The Creative Word holds the secret of sciences within it and should be mined. That some souls can gather from those two places makes them quite special. Einstein was a believer in The Creator and saw evidence of Him everywhere. He tapped into the great flow of hidden knowledge through the power of the mind and inner vision.

The third meaning, I believe, is that true science, is set freer to explore at the time of the coming of the Messenger. Great explosions of knowledge have always come from a new will to explore reality that comes with the New Impetus, and most definitely with the cutting of the reigns of special interest.

But, Jack, this is just my view, and knowledge is set free in myriad ways by the New Infusion. You need to contemplate this on your own, and of course there is the treasury of

understanding left by the Two Interpreters who have left now your physical world. I am sure The Creator, The Beauty, and The Interpreters will lay bare the truth of various things if you ask for their aid.”

Jack was so awake, and yet, so relaxed, as the slow talk of the old man caressed his ears, mind, and soul. The old man had now paused for a while to gather something else that had occurred to him. Jack could see him gathering and he awaited what was to come.

“The great minds, and the great souls, of your recent history like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Junior, were all gathering from this hidden flow. I believe they were all drawing down from the Spirit of the Age that was released with the coming of The Beauty. It produces at a deeper level the winds of change and it pervades the whole of the planet. Wilberforce of England was blown along by it, and the tide of it washed Abraham Lincoln into, and out of, war. There are many others, large and small, who by the Spirit of the Age, and due to its powerful currents, bring change to the world. It is all pervasive,” finished the old man. “Now, young man, back to the Implement of Limitless Potential.”

Jack and his group had now been through two months of phase four; two months of learning about how to facilitate the courses for others; the courses which his group had been previously taken through. This was so that the courses, as well as knowledge of the nurturing of the fruit trees, could be constantly expanded to others, and from those souls to even others; an ever-expanding system, just as it had been on Naomi’s island home. The last training book of the seven books of The Running Man was *about* training people how to facilitate learning. This book ensured multiplication of the activities, and a constantly expanding pool of trained souls. It was to raise the capacity in people for the building of community from the most essential levels of spirit.

“You see,” said the old man, “It renews and multiplies itself as the number of participants rise. The growth of a new world starts on the ground and grows by two movements; the movement of knowledge, and of effort. Just as the seed has the knowledge of how to multiply its cells, and the ability to go on to ever more advanced and changed functions of those cells, in leaves, flowers, and fruit, so too will the process of the courses. But the activity of creating the various new cells that will serve the development of the plant, comes from effort.”

“So, the knowledge inherent in the Message grows the courses.”

“Yes, but there are two *movements*; the numbers of those moving through the courses, and the resultant growth of the activities they produce in communities, as this new plant seeks to grow stronger and reach for greater complexity. The courses, in time, will continue to map and enhance the growing complexity of the development of the new society. Over time The Running Man will sire endless new courses valuable to the evolving organs of an and adult world.”

“So, it will constantly evolve. Its hard to know where to begin.”

“At the beginning, Jack. From doing what you have grown the capacity to do in these last few months,” and the old man quoted some partial lines from the Plan. “By you all simply acting and working together. By you and others growing the ability or capacity...as it is said...to...

“...nurture the tender hearts and minds of children [...] channel the surging energies of junior youth...” [Hold] *“...circles of study, open to all, that enable people of varied backgrounds to advance on an equal footing...”* [and] *“...explore the application of the teachings to...”* [your] *“...individual and collective lives.”* ¹⁶

Start and you will be amazed at what can rise off a simple beginning.

Do you remember the Doorways from your first journey deeper? They are the doorways to the future of humanity, and to a responsible role in its unfoldment. It will be for *all* to be responsible, as the time of the *few* has passed.

Do you remember the runners? Great effort and strain will be required to build this system. Much will be asked of those who labour, but the outcome will be a potential laden new civilization. The world of the soul will be planted firmly and forever in the ground of the earth.”

The Pioneers

It was late Winter now, and Spring was beginning to threaten the release of new life. The last three months had flown for all those ending their time in Hall 3. They had learnt much about the trees and the building of community. Those in the first wave, were now well aware that they had to leave to begin the work of shoring up the ground. They now began to gather for their final meeting.

There was sadness, and some fear, but these would pass when action called them forward. For Jack, intensive action, and change, were sometimes faced through a ring of fire, or truly fear, on occasion. Courage, not knowledge; love, not self, pushed him through such burning mirages of the shadow world. Once sure of his spiritual nature, with energy drawn from a deep love for the Creator, and an abiding belief in the healing power of The Remedy, he knew he would be able to do things that his puny ego could not even imagine.

“Nothing hard, just different,” he said out loud, as he readied himself. They were roughly the words of a Guardian of his Faith, and they were always useful.

Jennifer smiled, as she turned her head and looked up at him. She was holding his arms around her as he held her from behind. “We have to trust we will be helped and trust each other,” she added.

“Yep,” responded Jack, as they stood amongst the crowd, now gathered in the Great Hall of Hall 3.

Judy and Brig were there, and Trev was just joining them. He was going back with Brig and Judy, as he had learnt a good deal about carpentry and rudimentary power production from his work in the pods, also from some inventors of necessity in the camp nearby. He wanted to help with the youth empowerment, but simply to teach them these skills. The man of the land, who had shown Jack and Jennifer around the gorge at times over the year, was there too. He had been a guest speaker for the various groups on the nature of kindling; in the way of producing fire to cook, *and* the fire to serve, as it turned out.

“Well, it is time for you to go out,” started the Counsellor. “A sad time to see you leaving, and yet, an amazing time, a *great* time, for the future of our planet and our kind. Life is now *yours* to see to, as it is for all the people out there. We are *all* responsible for the future, and what it can bring. You have the Creative Word, the Spirit, and the capacity to help build the embryonic foundation of a new world.

If you trip, regain your balance. If you fall, stand up, and go again; always. The most powerful learning tool is often our missteps. Come to understand the power of action, process, and mistakes. They are the way to the treasures of understanding. There must be no more *problems* for you, only *objects of learning* to seek understanding of. Reflect on them together; seek the guidance of the Creative Word and use your experience, *and* the experience of others.

Pray for assistance always. Look to all others in curiosity and humility. See them as the mysteries of God and forgive them if the need arises. See them all as unique, help them draw forth their gifts and higher nature, and nurture their potentials. The fruit of *love* is *service to each other*. The fruit of *service*, and of *humbly* walking on varied paths *together*, will be the *peace* and prosperity of *the world*.”

The speech was small, but so much had come before it, so it was more than sufficient. Brig, Jack, and Jennifer then headed out to walk the gorge, at least to the water hole. They would have a swim, no matter how cold the water was, and the winter days here were warm anyway. They walked, and chatted as they went, and they had just made it to the swimming hole when the attack started with a mighty shudder of the ground; then another, and another. There were five in all, as five metal cubes, about as square as the length of a minibus, smashed into the ground at intervals around Hall 3.

Fear filled the air, as the cubes smashed into the ground. Thick hatches on each of the cubes burst open, and about ten Cementers filed out of each. The Cementers were stunned from the impact, as they had underestimated the solidness of the ground here and looked quite ridiculous as they struggled to find their way out of the cubes to the ground. Most of them were like footballers or boxers trying to regather their feet after being hit hard in the head, with no will to fall. In one sense, it was almost admirable, but their intent was most definitely not.

The people of Hall 3 were builders, they were not soldiers, and The Department disallowed weapons or the harming of others in any way, so the Cementers met with no resistance as they walked towards their goal. They walked stiffly, but with purpose, with people scattering in all

directions, or hiding for now. For predators, they were slow, but it was their words that confused their prey, and their size that backed it up with force.

It now seemed that, by this *one bold move*, The Cementers had cut off of all good that could flow from Hall 3 and brought forward the destruction of humanity itself. The new beachhead would be established here, and they were now very confident as they came together about ten meters from the threshold of the entrance to Hall 3.

The Counsellor and Judy walked out of the entrance and stood in front of the largest creature. They stood their ground with no fear. From the stance of this creature, it was clear that it was the leader, and it towered over the two ladies. Then, it took two steps closer, to stand over the top of them. There was to be no deceptive talk today, as the creature said, smugly, “I will feast on your bones this night.” As he did, some saliva landed on the Counsellor’s shoulder.

“And I will be feasting on you,” said Death, as he appeared, and stood behind the ladies, but also over them, up close, and face to face with the beast.

The Cementer had to look up a little to Reaper, and it did not like it. It trembled a little, but then, a confidence came to its face, as it said, “We have known your kind before, and seen them at their work. Only the sick and dying fear you. Your place in the order is well known. There is no resistance here. We have our victory, and *we will have our feast.*”

Then again, just as quickly, The Cementer’s face changed to something else. These humanoids were very sensitive to vibration, as it was a strong part of their ability to hunt in the dark and useful to ascertain the geology of where best to dig in the ground. This vibration, though, was in the air; they could feel something coming, and Death smiled at them.

Jack and Brig were at full run through the bush, and Jennifer was somewhere behind. They had felt, and heard, the cubes crashing near the Hall, and had begun to race back. They felt this new shudder in the air before the Cementers had, as it was nearer to them; it grew louder until the old chopper with two Agents in it raced over the top of them. There was a 60's song playing loudly inside, as Deveroux and Wat went into battle.

The Cementers knew this particular shudder; and *they* shuddered. The leader, then, pushed through the two ladies, as Reaper kept them from harm. The fifty strong unit of Cementers followed their leader, as they made for the portal in Hall 3. They made it a way into the Hall, just as the agents landed and jumped from the old chopper. Both Agents sported pulse staffs, and they raced in after the Cementers. The Counsellor came to a real appreciation of the bravery of these men, as they had just followed fifty Cementers into an enclosed space.

Deveroux and Wat were Protectors, and they and Reaper knew something that the Cementers didn't. A small twenty-man unit of Protectors had emerged from the portal inside Hall 3, and the battle began.

A crowd waited outside the Hall, but mostly people stayed together in the pods. When Jack and Brig got back, they pushed through the crowd, then, tentatively entered the Hall. There was black smoke, flashes of pulse weapons, grunts of men being hit, the shouting of orders, cries from the Protectors, but the wailing of the Cementers chilled them to their bones. It was chaos, and suddenly, out of the smoke, came a Cementer at full charge. Jack braced for the hit, as Brig sidestepped like a spirit out of the path of the beast.

The Cementer was right there, inches from Jack, when it seemed to suddenly freeze and shake. It fell on top of Jack as it received a pulse in the small of its back, with Deveroux saying, “No you don’t, *big fella.*”

The humanoid laid spread out on Jack, with its face over his. It was like being crushed under a huge pile of rocks. The beast’s eyes then opened, and Jack’s heart and mind went into shock. The creature, then tried to get up and run again, but Deveroux’s quick reflexes and pulse stick simply dropped the bellowing beast back onto Jack again. This time it was out cold.

Deveroux got down on his haunches, so that he was close to Jack’s face, and with shake of the head, and a huge smile on his face, said, “They just *won’t stay down, Jack.*”

THE SMOKE WAS CLEARING IN HALL 3. Reaper had graciously extricated the fallen Cementers from the Hall by this time, as he was the only one who could lift them in their unconscious state. He had to remove all of them, as the fight had only finished when the last Cementer was pulsed unconscious. There was no quit in these creatures this time, and even Deveroux was a little impressed by that.

The Cementers were being corralled in a light pen about a hundred metres from the Great Ship. The light pen was made of four silver posts with five thin light beams between them. A break in any beam would set off a pulse that would stun all, within this enclosure. No chances were being taken, and Deveroux had explained how it worked to Jack, as he set it up around the great pile of Cementers. The other Agents watched on, keeping an eye out for any movement until the last Cementer was in, and the light pen was operational.

“...Cementers can’t jump, so we’ll only need the rails to keep ‘em in,” finished Deveroux.

Reaper came over to the two men, just as Deveroux stood up from his work. He found himself looking at Reaper’s upper midriff.

“Boy, you *are* a big fella’, *aren’t* ya’. Thanks for the heads up.”

“So, you guys work together?” asked Jack.

“Not until now. They *upset* me. They *shouldn’t* have upset me. I *watch* predators for a living,” said Reaper, plainly.

“And I am *so* glad you do,” said Deveroux, smiling.

Jack now saw that Reaper must have been watching these creatures and informed the Agents of what they seemed to be up to. Also, that they planned to let the Cementers into the Hall, so away from the people here, and somewhat bottled up.

“They thought they got *by you*, eh, big fella’,” said Jack, smiling.

“So many creatures think they are getting *by me*. No one *ever* gets *by me*,” responded Reaper.

Deveroux and Jack smiled wide at that, and the Reaper allowed himself a tiny glimpse of one.

THE NEW PIONEERS LEFT HALL 3 ONE MONTH LATER. It was the first of the eight waves that would venture out; nine waves, if you counted those of The Department returning to their

hometowns, after returning the Halls back to Certitude. They all headed out in time, and the great Moonship stayed in orbit. It, and the great scars in the ground, would remain; so that none would forget. Humanity's adulthood was hard won, and as it became an adult, history would always be remembered and learned from.

In time, the Cementers were eventually beaten, but it took many years, and it took the lives of many courageous souls to protect the new communities from them, and *sadly* from many *human* predators. Many pioneers from the Halls met their deaths too, as they ventured out, due to the nature of the realities of travel, or as they met with ignorance, rogue humans, and even the violent controllers of various communities. It was called the Age of Heroes.

As time wore on though much was built, but to rebuild a whole world takes lifetimes. The momentum slowly increased, and the growing strength of the communities boded well for the future. Many pioneers who had gone out, went out again from those places. Others inspired by the courses, and the Creative Word, had gone out from their home communities too. Now, those of the third generation since the Halls had left the Earth, were working on all aspects of this burgeoning New Civilisation.

The Age of Formation had well begun as a very old and feeble Jack, lay in bed remembering; as the old are wont to do. He and Jennifer had gone out to help develop community in the west. They had set up three orchards and trained many who would train others in the regeneration. They had three children, one of which was a daughter, who bore a son called Johandis. He was Jack's first grandchild, and Jack had insisted on that name. There was joy, hardship, and many years of work, and there were endless things to give purpose to each of these new generations.

Eventually, Jack, Jennifer, and some of his younger family members returned to his hometown. This older couple were past sixty years when they returned. They continued to help where they could and lend some insights also. They spent time with Judy, in the following years, as Brig had passed on before their return. Jack and his grandson Johandis spent many of their days on the riverbank. He told this young one many stories of his travels, and as the young man grew, they mused together on the realities of things, while watching the turtle, and the fishing birds.

Doorways

Jack was eighty-nine now. Jennifer had gone some time ago, and he lay on his death bed. His mind wandered here and there, as two young souls walked into his hospital room; two souls who were obviously very taken with each other.

Jack had realised quite a while ago that he didn't want to change a thing about his life. He did not want to send any message back in time for himself or inform his grandson about his own future. He wanted the young Jack to *live* his life, and for Johandis to live his *too*. He had learned that it is in *living* life, in this great school, that grants us what is beyond us *and* what is inside us. He knew how much *not knowing* was powerful and led to more learning. Knowledge is truly good, but its unfolding nature is a kindness. To him, the system was perfect, and the *stuff* of life was always in the unfolding of *life itself*.

After a conversation on simple things, Jack told these two that he would see them in the future. It took a bit of telling, but he got through it. "Just pretend not to know me when I visit you; it's important to me," he finished.

"*Sure*, Grandad," said Johandis, to Jack, as he winked privately to Halin.

Johandis had heard many Jack's stories over the years, and loved them, but he could never be sure. It would only be later that Johandis would find the fire to chase the vortex, and finally the reality of Jack's stories.

"I *mean it*, both of you. *Promise me.*"

"Sure, Grandad," answered Johandis.

"Sure, Grandpa Jack," added Halin.

Grandpa Jack was Halin's own name for Jack, and it would stick, and go down the generations.

"Well, it seems that my time is almost done," said Jack, receiving an inkling that it was now time.

"Not a bad life, old man," responded Johandis, thinking he only meant soon.

"No, not a bad life," said Jack, a little breathlessly. "I've walked a few roads, some more than once. That many roads you get to know yourself, and the nature of roads. But your soul's path is the same path, no matter what roads."

"That will make sense to me later," said Johandis.

"It makes sense to me now," stated Halin.

"Trust your soul, but the trick is that your mind may be going somewhere else, and your emotions another. Take the road of the heart and soul. Be true to it and trust it."

Johandis and Halin smiled and nodded. Then they wept, as the old man simply turned his head and passed away in front of them.

JACK FOUND HIMSELF ON THE BRIDGE. The bridge that was slowly falling apart as bits fell off upwards. It had been *so* many years since his last attack that he had forgotten about this place. The timer was just about out, and all that was left of the bridge was the one steel uprights, and a piece of cement a few meters wide to stand on. Most of the clock was gone too, just two digits counting down the last seconds.

A great horn sounded, and a great green ship appeared far below on the sea. It was much further down than the bridge's height would have been. As Jack watched, he could feel and hear the goings on inside it. The Ship was seaworthy and strong, and it had many decks. He saw people going here and there, busy and excited. Its hull was rounded and looked as if it could take on any sea, like the boats of the North Sea fisherman; but it was huge. Its antennas were in full working mode as it prepared to receive the New Plan.

It had come here to receive the message. In time, the message came, and when all was passed to it, the Great Ship went under way immediately on its way across the ocean.

“Hey, Grandpa Jack,” came a voice to Jack's right.

“*Suwna?*” said Jack, totally surprised.

“I'm a traveller. I travel the vortex. I've been looking for you for a long time. *Found you,*” she said, breaking down, and with tears running down her cheeks.

Jack reached over and pulled her away from the edge that was now closing in on them. The bridge's clock had hardly any time left on it. He gave his great granddaughter a hearty hug and said, “It seems we have *very* little time.”

Suwna gathered herself, “Well, any advice then?”

“Don’t live your life hoping your way to the end. Go with purpose. Find meaning, and *act* on it. Other than that, open your heart, and just live. It will teach you all it’s bid to.”

With that the bridge’s main support started to crumble, and a voice from above came saying. “With me Mister Johnston. You had better go Miss, this place is collapsing.”

The voice came from a young man, in a round portal, with in the main steel structure. *“It’s collapsing, Mr Johnston. Please go, Miss. Please, with me, Sir.”*

Suwna hugged Jack one last time and jumped off the bridge. Jack certainly did not understand why, until coloured lights seemed to catch her in ever increasing ribbons. They gathered around her and folded inside the now forming white sleeve of the vortex. The colours could just be seen as hues in the outer white skin, as it bore her away.

She would never forget that young man, as he was there to help her Grandpa Jack. The young man too was intrigued by this young lady, and her way of travel, but went about getting Jack up through the portal that was a little above him.

As they got their feet just beyond the portal, they watched the last of the structure fall upwards into oblivion.

“Hello Mister Johnston. My name is Jeremy Jones. I am a Protector, at least, one in training. I have been asked to pass something on from the higher ups, and then, I would ask that you step into the light.”

“Okay,” said Jack, looking forward to seeing what was beyond the last veil of the physical life.

“The message is a little strange.”

“Go ahead,” said Jack.

“Seems you’re never where you should be, Jack Johnston. See you on the flipside, girly man.”

Jack laughed, and then teared up, as he felt appreciation for this friend Deveroux and the many great souls who had graced his life.

“This way Mister Johnston, your children are waiting for you,” said the young man, as he proffered the way to the golden light.

“*My kids!*” he called out. The pain of separation from his children had been the curse, the illness, that had assailed him those many times, and he passed very impatiently through the portal. In that golden light, he heard these words ...

“He is the Blessed Perfection. The Word is perfect. His Cause is perfect.

Trust and act.

He sees all things. There is perfection in all things. The Remedy has been given.

Trust and act.

Set yourself free of control. Rely on God.

Trust and act.”

IT WAS A SPRING MORNING WHEN JACK WOKE. His daughter was curled up in his arms and his son was reading them both a story. Jack felt like he was in a cage because the bed railings were up, and he had wires, and tubes, and a breather restraining him.

“*He’s awake!*” called out Jack’s son.

“*Dad!*” cried his daughter.

“Hey, kids,” said Jack, very slowly, and muffled by the oxygen mask.

A nurse came over quickly. It was the same one as had tended to him all those years ago, when had had his heart attacks. She lifted Jack’s little girl out of the bed, and asked, “What is your name?”

“Jack Joshua Johnston,” said Jack. “What’s yours?”

Jack’s children laughed. It was simply their father’s dry as a bone silly humour, and they knew it well. It didn’t matter that no one else got it, but somehow this nurse did, and she smiled and said, “My name is Robin. You were in a car accident, in a storm. You have been in a coma for five weeks.”

Jack remembered back to that stormy night and blasting through that lightning bolt. He was so relieved, and amazed. He had *lived a whole life* that he had not really lived, and *what a life* it was. Thankfully he had lived *completely* and said his goodbyes, and now, returned to his children, he was *very* happy.

“So, what are we going to do when we get home, Dad?” asked his five-year-old daughter.

Jack smiled with delight at his daughter’s words, and also at his son’s look of ‘*she just doesn’t get it.*’

“Well, it seems we have work to do. Maybe we’ll do some building, and some gardening, eh.”

“Heaven can wait, eh, Dad?” said Jack’s son.

“Yes, mate. Let’s work on bringing it here instead.”

AFTER A LOT OF HUBHUB, VITALS CHECKING, AND TALKING, Jack’s sister took the children home, and he slept deeply. It was some days later before he could walk and had to stay in hospital for a while.

One night, as he was dozing off, he heard, “I’m still here, Jack.”

It was Jennifer’s voice. It hit him quite hard, but he had known a long life with her, and knew that whatever it was that he had experienced, it was gone. The words had woken him now, so he decided to go for a walk outside to get some fresh air. He didn’t like the air in hospitals. As he walked past the next ward, his being gathered something his mind could not, and he turned and looked in. He walked over to a bed in the corner, and he stood there a while, in the half darkness.

Then, he sat just down in a chair beside the bed, took a hold of the patient’s hand, and got himself comfortable. Above the bed was the name, ‘Jennifer Thompson.’

AUTHOR'S OTHER BOOKS

As human beings we learn, discover, evolve, and grow, and what I can give as an author at the time of writing is subjective and relative; and so, does not seek to be absolute. There is much in these books that is symbolic, so readers can hopefully find their own perceptions of the concepts, which they may or may not agree with. My main hope for these books is to awaken investigation and discussion; even self-reflection, while also entertaining those who read them.

James D

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH TRILOGY

The first book of this series, "*The Department of Truth*", is the original adventure of Jack Johnston, who is taken away on a journey of discovery, that he wanted to take, but did not realise it. Its main theme is the search for truth. It is an existential journey, and seeks to explore the nature of truth, and intimate that the continuing journey of humanity is full of promise. It is a wild and wonderful journey that wanders to many different worlds, and places deeper, as it explores universal themes. It hopefully mimics the feelings of awe, questioning, confusion, and realisation, of a spiritual journey.

The second book, "*Expectations of Happiness*" seeks to explore the nature of a human being, the nature of this life, and therefore, the nature of happiness here on planet Earth. The main character, Jack, is struggling to get the great things he learned from his first journey, on the ground in life,

and is again drawn to places deeper to find answers. “*Expectations of Happiness*” is about meaningful purpose, and connection in life; it is about striving and acceptance; it is about seeing ourselves as noble and working at that. It makes it clear that happiness is not something that can be sought within itself, and is not, only an inner, or only an outer experience. The book is mostly about the *personal transformation*, which is required for any *collective human transformation* to occur.

The final book, “*The Halls of Certitude*” attempts to meaningfully explore aspects of finding a sure way forward for humanity, collectively. The human race and its future evolution is a wondrous story to me, not one of darkness that most seem to believe lies ahead. There may be some big tremors, some chaos, and outmoded ideas we have to deal with and cast aside, but the way forward is ripe with new fruit. There is much to share on this subject, and we may find that the answers to building a *new civilisation* are more about local communities, very much simpler than we might have imagined.

The *Search* for knowledge, *Growth* of that knowledge within us, which transforms us, and action in *Service* to others, therefore transforming our world, are key building blocks of life; *the* building blocks to a new future for humanity. “*The Department of Truth*” turned out to be seminal in that way, as its three secondary themes have become the main underlying themes of the three books, respectively.

THE STORYTELLER TRILOGY

This is the author's second trilogy and continues on with what will be a series of nine books. It introduces many new characters and renews our connection to some old ones. These books lift the storytelling to new heights.

The first book of "*The Storyteller Trilogy*" is, "*The Storyteller*". It is a story of the passing into adulthood of two young souls, Able and Eedra, while Eedra's world and all its peoples are in the same process on a planetary level. It talks to some of the nature of this time in the life of a person, and this time in the evolution of a planet; the challenge, upheaval, but great beauty and potential of these '*passings*'. This story holds other stories within it, and all between its covers attends to the theme of crisis and victory.

The second book is, "*Letter to the World*". It is a prequel to "*The Storyteller*" and talks to the story of good versus evil. It is a look at humanity through an angel's eyes, and a street kid and two visitors who get caught up in His mission, the story shows the disjointed psyche of the world, and the distractions that take us from ourselves: mostly our own minds. Also, how we need to battle the forces of decay, by seeing them clearly.

The last novel of the trilogy is "*The Traveller*". It is a prequel to "*Letter to the World*", and explores civilisation; its great power, and how we mere mortals may wield that power in our own neighbourhoods; no matter what our own ignorance, or the social norm seeks to put in our way. It also seeks to portray how the great dark force of self is our enemy, and that we are all friends; a human family now finally being united in one river, and one future.

THE KNOWLEDGE TRILOGY

James D Connolly's third trilogy completes a series of nine books, whose characters and storylines intertwine. These stories are again, like all the author's books, wild, untamed, and joyous adventures. They attend to big themes in enjoyable and symbolic stories, leaving readers spellbound and reflective.

The first novel of this trilogy is "*Knowledge*". It asks us to talk honestly, yet with respect, about what ails us as a society, as we are responsible. It asks us to open our minds to more exploration, to more open communication, in a more and more ideologically tribal world. It challenges the clichés of apathy and shows how a small group of people can take part in community building; no matter their age or outlook; no matter how seemingly ordinary. It has a good hard look at the world, through common, day to day eyes, as well as spiritual ones. It seeks to show how we have the power of initiative, and how we can utilise growth engines to transform lives and communities.

The second novel is "*Volition*". It attends to human will and its nature, and looks at different stages in life, finding our vocation, relationships, family life, and child rearing. It looks at three core times in life, and how the knowledge we use underpins how we will act. It also seeks to create more understanding of the power of consultation in all parts of our lives, and free ourselves from the rising noise around us.

The final book of the trilogy, "*Justice*", looks at the boundaries of human life, and how the ego can seek to subsume the greatest within us and threaten take people away from their high destiny. It talks to the inevitability of a mature, just, and unified humanity: and explores the power, and nature, of our link to the Creator as humankind.

CRASH and THE HUMAN CONTINUUM

I wanted to write a book to explore some of the implications of our burgeoning AI and robotic future. What I found as I wrote though was *how amazing* it is to be human. I *was* able find *some* clear implications in the rise of AI, but indeed, it turned out to be more a look at the seemingly small, yet powerfully amazing, aspects of our human creature.

The story is about Crash; an AI crash-test dummy that wanders out into the world by chance. He is a lovely fellow, experiencing a good deal of struggle as he explores further safety solutions for humans. Strangely the damage enhances him, allowing him access to deeper fields of the human continuum. Mmm, *maybe*.

See what *you* think of Crash and his journey in the human continuum.

UNITY

"I don't know what turn of fate brought these two together. A woman of beauty and dreams, and a killer born in the belly of hatred itself. I don't even know where they were headin'. But the day I saw their path's cross was somthin' I wouldn't soon forget.

I've prospected all over this planet in my one hundred and twenty years, and life was hard out here back then. Much harder than it is now, and most folks were just lost in the grip of desperation. Well...it was that way beyond all the walled cities, and away from the high planets.

Those places weren't caught in the grip of desperation and loss, or bein' chewed up in the violent chaos on some other rocks, but they were livin' in their own kind'a hell, and growing a chaos of their own makin'."

CLOWN TOWN

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Duncan Connolly is an Australian writer and artist/ painter of Irish descent. He grew up in a Christian family, but as a young man his quest for knowledge and understanding of the meaning of life and the spirit led him towards the Bahá'í Faith and has been a member of the Bahá'í community since then. His driving interest has been the nature of the human creature, and this life.

It has led him to many sources from psychology to history to religious texts. He also believes in the wisdom of nature and in human inner vision as great sources of joy and understanding. But believes that only by living life can anyone really hold knowledge. His writing and art are greatly influenced by his Faith and life experiences, and those of humanity.

The books of The Department of Truth Trilogy are his first published works; where he uses storytelling, in the form of novels, to inspire others. He has also been writing philosophical realisations and poetry, under the acronym JDC for a number of years.

SOME BAHÁ'Í QUOTES

“The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the impetuosity of youth and its vehemence reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood. Then will the human race reach that stature of ripeness which will enable it to acquire all the powers and capacities upon which its ultimate development must depend.” p.201

Shoghi Effendi. “World Order of Baha’u’llah.”

“Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this fetish, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.” p.202

Shoghi Effendi. “World Order of Baha’u’llah.”

“O SON OF SPIRIT!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.”¹

“O SON OF SPIRIT!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbour. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.”²

“O SON OF MAN!

Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.”³

“O CHILDREN OF MEN!

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.”⁶⁸

Baha’u’ llah. “The Hidden Words of Baha’u’ llah: Arabic”

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RECOMMENDED LINKS

For further information on the Baha’i Faith the following links are recommended

www.bahai.org

www.bahai.org.au

www.bahaiebooks.com