



*Letter
to the World*

James D Connolly

Letter to the World

Book Two:
The Storyteller
Trilogy

James D Connolly

Copyright © 2019 James D Connolly.

All rights reserved, Copyright, intellectual property, and other.

This book may be used in part, within Copyright Law.

Any commercial use, or larger part use by individuals or groups, requires the permission of
the author.

jdcdotruth@gmail.com

Re-Edited 2022

CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	5
THE OUTER REALITIES.....	6
The Fallen.....	9
Places.....	23
Odours.....	38
INVESTIGATIONS.....	54
Connections.....	56
Confines.....	78
Hidden Things.....	95
INTERTWINED.....	120
Fire.....	123
Monsters.....	143
Gathering.....	158
HEROES.....	168
Conflict.....	171
Pride.....	190
People.....	210
CONFRONTATION.....	230
Letters.....	232
Reunions.....	242
AUTHOR’S OTHER BOOKS.....	254
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	259
QUOTES.....	260
REFERENCES and RECOMMENDED LINKS.....	262

PREFACE

Welcome to my new trilogy. *The Storyteller Trilogy* has been created as my gift to youth; though these stories would no doubt be enjoyed by readers of all ages, and I hope they will be. These three books gather many of the themes of life, the current world's struggles and realities, deeper forces at play, and some of its history. They lend themselves to the theme of the development of the human race, and the true nature of civilisation. They seek to put civilisation and its ferment squarely in our hands, as we have more ability to understand the ferment, and to wield the power of civilisation, than we imagine.

This second book, *Letter to the World*, is an adventurous story; an exploration of the current reality of human society. It seeks to look at past and present; at the contrasts of life, and puts humanity to an acid test through the eyes of an angel, come to judge us. It also looks at humanity through the lenses of a young street girl and other visitors to our world, and various people they come across as they roam the Earth. Hopefully, through the characters and their interactions you can clarify your own ideas. Though I must say the book was written to share ideas and concepts useful to increasing our vision.

To write a book is a magical experience. It unfolds in front of you, if you let it go. You create it, but the nature of the process brings its own magic too. To write about what you love is also powerful; and very meaningful when you have something to say. It is you who writes a book, but it is also the tide of life, the exigencies of the age, and what you see, that brings out your gifts and its gifts. I am a natural writer, who only found it late in life. I would hope that if you are natural with words that you will explore this gift. It is a gift, and therefore something to be given to others. Too much artistic ability is sacrificed to ego, and so it becomes ash. Art created as a gift, given to beauty, and imbued with meaning, only grows.

So, once more, this is my dance with you; my own perceptions, inspired by life and The Baha'i Faith. This book, just as the others I write, cannot seek, and do not seek, to represent my Faith. The depth and breadth of it is far beyond my words; and my symbolism and adventurousness, well, just wander as they do. I suppose what it seeks to be mostly, is something to enjoy, and something to mull over, or to reflect on. It is something to *begin* conversations and explorations, and I would hope it will be used by youth mentors and animators in their work.

I hope you enjoy *Letter to the World*. I hope you enjoy the ride with the angel of destruction...and I hope you enjoy the other two books, *The Storyteller*, and *The Traveller*.

May you battle in the fields of humility.

The Outer Realities

He came to the ground with great force. Sand flew outwards from his impact. He landed on one knee, with the opposite foot planted forward, and both hands to his sides on the ground for balance. His eyes were intent to strike or defend, and his body also seemed ready, as he slowly raised his head. It was in the deep night, but the moonlight allowed some vision about him. His eyes were purple and piercing. They were sure of themselves, but they also had questions in them and were wary of what lay beyond their reach. He was sure he could sense something, so he lowered his head to listen, and again poise himself for battle.

“It is best that you show yourself,” he then almost commanded whoever lay hid from his view among the huts that circled the spot where he had landed.

A young man in a black suit and tie, and a white shirt, came out of hiding and said, “We believe that you should not be here, Sir. I must ask you to move on.”

“What is this place?” asked the being.

“It is planet Earth,” answered Agent Jeremy Jones.

“Mmm, well my young friend. I have been cast here by the Will of All Things, and you say that I am not to be here. Do you think a young creature like you has the wisdom to even contemplate His designs?”

“Well, no, but I have a job to do,” answered the Agent, as he produced a light staff.

The being almost laughed at such a puny effort to take from him his will. Then his eyes changed, suddenly jumping high, and to the side, just as a light net shot towards him. His wings unfolded, and he instantly shot away, as Jeremy and other agents fired pulses into the nothingness that he had left behind.

Jeremy looked down from the night sky and instinctively went over to the place where the creature had crouched. Deveroux, an older agent, walked over to join the young man, while the others started packing up gear. The older man was still looking up, and still wary, when he said, “Looks like we have a fallen angel. This ain’t gonna’ be easy.”

“There’s a word in the sand,” said Jeremy, bringing Deveroux’s attention away from the firmament.

They both looked down and saw the word ‘*courage*’. It was sketched like calligraphy in the sand. It was in itself a work of art; a work of art which somehow carried a spirit that both men could feel.

“Well, my goodness me, boy. Looks like our friend appreciated your courage. They have a *lot* to give these ones, it’s just a shame he’s *fallen*.”

“*Really!* He had time to *compliment me?* Why is this creature such a problem?”

“Because he can look like a local wherever he goes, and blend in; but mostly, if he deems that this place is lost, and he decides to, he can lay waste to it.”

“The village?”

“This *whole* damned world, boy.”

The Fallen

The angel had shot upwards hard, one light pulse just missing him. He had gone so fast and so hard away from the attempted capture that he did not look up, and just a few seconds into his flight he felt a strange energy pass through him. He had smashed through what seemed to be a ribbon of light, and someone had fallen out of it. The person was unconscious and heading for the ground. The way the body fell made the angel realise their state, so he darted after it.

He was still far from the falling creature when he gathered it up with a light that now radiated out of his chest. The light drew the body gently closer to him as he descended, and he slowed *its* descent by slowing his own. He drew the young lady into his arms, just as he gently landed on the ground.

The angel's eyes were still wary, but he had travelled a good distance in those few seconds. He was now well out in the desert and was able to see enough with the moonlight. This creature could see into the deeper nature of things, but now being hunted here, his outer sight needed to take precedence.

He laid the young lady down and shot away again into the night sky. But in almost an instant he was back again. He had gathered some water, and he crouched over her, now

wiping her brow with the wet tip of one his wings. To him, it was almost like another arm and hand. The woman began to stir, and he drew his wings back as if they had not been there.

“Hello,” said the young lady, looking up, seeing the Angel as a normal man. All except for the purple eyes, which she just thought was natural for this planet. She was new to this world, and the creature was able to project what seemed normal to those around it, but its true form was hidden.

“Hello,” said the angel.

“I should be dead.”

“I would say not,” said the angel, very plainly.

“Who are you?” asked the lady, now a little wary.

“Dispel your fear. I am fallen, and so are you. We are on this rock in the outer realities. I have not known this place, yet we have been cast here.”

“I haven’t been *cast* anywhere,” stated the young lady, while checking an amulet that hung around her neck. She was relieved that it was still there, and intact. “Who *are* you?” she asked again.

“I am Judgement, and I have been judged.”

“*Boy*, you’re a bit cryptic; aren’t you?”

“I have fallen because I failed to reach the heights set for me. I have been cast to this...place.”

“So you have been exiled?”

“I have been cast down. I *need* to find the meaning of my being issued here.”

“I’m Suwna. I’m not fallen. I’m just searching for someone, and I can return home or travel where I decide to, mostly.”

“Our place is here. Our paths are perfect. His Will is Wisdom itself. Your place is with me; for a time at least.”

“Hang on a minute. I don’t know *who* you are, or *where* you came from, but my place is where I choose.”

“*Really*, do you have *that* little meaning in you?”

“*Meaning?*”

“Our paths have crossed. I will help you on your quest, and you may help me on mine.”

“I don’t *need* help,” said the young woman, with a little attitude.

“*I do*,” said the angel, with an almost broken look. “I am cast here because my spirit was weak. It needs to find meaning, and you are the first, or maybe the *second* meaning I have found here.”

“I’m not from here. I’m from a deeper world, and I am just hoping to find someone,” said Suwna, trying to explain in a way this man would understand.

“I am not from here, and I am tired. I battled hard but failed to turn back the Darkness. I was less than what was required of me. I am here to grow, and somehow, I feel that I am to battle.”

“*Boy*, you are just *a little ray of sunshine*. What’s your name?”

“I am, *Judgment*,” answered the angel, wondering why he had needed to repeat himself.

Suwna Smith just exhaled strongly and sat up, wondering what the hell she had fallen into.

THE BATTLE HAD ENDED. Twelve agents lay on the red desert sand among the huts. *Others* had come for the angel too. They brought down the Agents easily, and had now gone on their way. This was Earth prime. The place called ‘Reality’, and the creatures who came for the angel were of this place. They were hunters with special weapons, and they were filled with all the vile loss of man. There was nothing in their eyes, except for maybe a *dim light* in the one who led them. They had left with no concern about who the Agents were or where they came from; such was their ignorance. Yet fortunately for the fallen agents, whoever had sent these dogs after the angel seemed to have some sense of political etiquette, as the Agents had been brought down with stun weapons.

Deveroux and his crew were far out in the ‘realities’, and more used to working on deeper worlds. Such thoroughly oppressed souls as those who attacked them, souls so totally unaware of their true reality, were different animals to what they were used to fighting. Well, except for Agent Deveroux, and as he woke, he realised that this fight had just got a whole lot bigger. He knew that his people would wake soon, so through the painful ringing in his head he gathered all his experience and reflected quickly on what had played out here. He had to *focus*, to prepare his fallen comrades for the other battles that must come; with the fallen angel, and with the five buried souls that had taken down twelve of his best.

“*That hurts,*” called Jeremy, out loud, at the same time wishing that he had not shouted. His brain was throbbing, and his own shout made it worse for a short, but very intense, while. It seemed that the stun weapons shut down brain function with a real bang and reawakened them with a bigger one.

“*Get up, boy,*” ordered Deveroux.

“What!” called Jeremy, as if shouting over the noise in his head, and still a little dazed.

“Yep, I’m good,” called Agent Wat, in reply.

“Wat!” yelled Deveroux.

“What!?” repeated Jeremy.

“*Oh for God’s sake, Jones, get up. You have a job to do for me.*”

Jeremy had a lot of respect for Agent Deveroux, and despite his pain and disorientation he got up, stood up straight, and said, “Yes, Agent.”

“*Good lad. Follow that Angel. Track him down. He seems to have some respect for you, so you’re our best shot. The rest of us are going after those humans.*” He then looked around at the rest of his Agents flat on their backs, or just now sitting up, and added, “*That is when I get all our sorry butts up off the ground.*”

“Yes, sir,” said Jeremy, as he turned to go.

“And watch your back. That angel is no angel, and those animals that brought us down’ll be tracking him too. Keep in touch, and get in plain clothes as soon as you can.”

“I will find him, sir. *To Protect.*”

“*To Protect*. Now go!” ordered Deveroux, knowing that he was quite possibly sending the young man to his death. The more they got in the way of any of these all creatures the more likely they were to lose their life. But that’s what The Protectors did. They got in the way. The service of these men and women was not of self-interest. It was one of sacrifice.

As Deveroux waited for his cohorts to come around, he wondered at the design that had brought all these players together here tonight, and what might be the final result. The only thing that he knew for sure was that it may cost all these players, including them, and this world, *very* dearly. He then put it all aside and got on with what was in front of him. He yelled at another Agent who was now on her feet, “Get back through the portal. I want all the intel’ you can get me on that angel, and I want a full report on all travel to this planet from any place deeper over the last twenty years, with regular updates. I don’t want any more surprises. You *got* that?”

“Yes, Agent. *To Protect*.”

“To Protect,” replied Deveroux plainly, dismissing the lady.

He stretched his torso for a few seconds, looking up into the sky, deep in thought. Then he sighed strongly through his nose, and started moving about, yelling at the Agents still dazed on the ground and helping a few to their feet.

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THERE WAS SOMEONE ELSE THERE?”

“Agents of some kind,” said the man, standing in front of the desk.

The man sitting behind the great rectangular oak desk had asked the question, and he most certainly did *not* like the answer.

“Were they government? How the *hell* could anyone else know about him?”

“Maybe they had the same source as us,” offered the man standing.

“My source is long gone. He was on the run from someone he called The Omnipotent when I found him. I tortured that fat pig for weeks before he gave in, and he died soon after that. He didn’t hang around Government Agents, or Agencies; in fact he made it very clear early on that he was hiding from them too. He eventually told me things that would *curl your toes*. We’re *small fry*; but with that angel, I can rise to a whole new kind of power.”

The man standing in front of the desk man knew The Fat Man, and this story, and his boss knew that. It was said for the other men there to hear. It was to keep them scared of him, and for his pride; to show how powerful he was, that he knew things, and mostly to reinforce his top dog status in the pack. This man was a lost soul like those he commanded. His past was horrific; in things both done to him and in his own violent actions. He had become stone and ash, and was in no way redeemable. Some reach such a place; this lowest state for a human soul.

This man thought otherwise though. He saw himself as stronger and smarter than everybody else. He only craved power, and loved to exercise it over others. He sat there looking at the man in front of him, and then cast a glance over the men who leant up against the wall behind him. They were his dogs, and soon they would net him a bigger dog; one he intended to use to its full potential.

A shadow now moved down the hall outside the office. It left the large house and stole away into the night. A deep stench filled the air in a trail behind it as it went.

THE DARKNESS SAT IN ITS DEEP DARK HOLE. It waited there. It had been there many years now, knowing its powers were not yet strong enough, but they were growing. This world had been a good choice. It had travelled to the *outer worlds* seeking the energy it craved and the soil in which it needed to grow. It knew it could not yet be detected by The Omnipotent due to the darkness that still persisted on this rock; but it would watch the angel in any case, and it would continue to watch these *others* who sought the winged creature. It would bide its time, and maybe *it* could even use the angel for its own designs. The Imaginer only knew that it must survive, that it would finally be free, and it would do so by any means.

JEREMY WANDERED DOWN THE ALLEY. He was in an industrial area and now in plain clothes. He had found good energy readings when he had checked the portal to this area. He knew that the angel was near, and he knew it would be watching. His only hope was to engage it again and hope it loved mercy just as much as it appreciated courage.

He could definitely feel something; something which eventually drew him along past some warehouses. As he came to the corner of one of the buildings, he looked down the wide alley between it and the next one. There was a young girl there. She stood right there in front of Jeremy as if she was waiting for him. She was about fourteen; her clothes soiled and her hair slept in. There was something unsure in her stance, but her words were strong and confident.

“Are you looking for the angel?”

“Angel?” feigned Jeremy.

“Yes, the angel,” she said confidently, yet not as confidently as the first time.

Jeremy noticed the small change in her demeanour, and then she just fell to the ground. He rushed over to her, and as he checked her pulse, he now noticed how emaciated she was and how dark the shadows underneath her eyes were. She started to come around, and Jeremy asked, “Where is your home? I have to get you help.”

“I have no home,” she answered.

“But, your parents?”

“They’re gone. The drugs got my Dad, and the booze and a violent man took my Mum. *I look after myself.*”

“You need a physician, and some sustenance,” said Jeremy, in concern, and using what he believed to be the local lingo.

“I *knew* you weren’t from here,” she said, jumping up.

“Well, not from *right* here,” feigned Jeremy, doing his best to be a *secret* agent.

“You’re not very good at lying. I know when someone’s lying. That’s good though. It means I can trust you,” she said, now showing that her weakness was a ruse, as she stood there strong.

Jeremy looked her in the eye, thinking over this small, but rather large, predicament. So much was at stake for this young soul in many ways, as he saw it, and any secrecy was now slowly flying out of his grip.

“Are your parents *really* gone?”

“Yes. Just the fainting was a lie. Just to check, you know.”

The Agent shook his head and smiled just a little, then asked, “Do you live in this place?”

“Yep. I get by. The workers here help me when I’m really desperate. They see me as something like a stray dog, and I don’t tell them my parents are gone. They are more generous when they believe they have more mouths to feed...” The girl stopped as she realised that she was giving out a good deal of information. She looked at Jeremy and asked, “Are *you* an angel? I don’t usually open up like that.”

“No.”

“Then what are you, and *where* are you from?”

Again, Jeremy paused. Again, this young one had his measure, and he was ‘*trained*’. Saying more, or saying nothing, might not protect this young lady; and she *was indeed* a young lady. Aware, intelligent, well-mannered and well assured.

“I can *take it*. I’ve been out here for more than four years now; all on my own. I’ve seen *so* many things; things that others could live a lifetime and not come across.”

“I am sure you have, and I don’t know if that’s *a recommendation*, but it shows you have courage.”

“*Yes. Courage,*” came a deep voice from behind him.

Jeremy ran forward and gathered the girl up quickly. He reached the end of the warehouse and turned the corner, hoping to deposit her safely before he could turn to face the angel. He knew the angel’s voice, as it had a special quality that made it unmistakeable, and Jeremy knew he wanted this girl out of harm’s way. As he turned the corner though, he was confronted by a landing angel. It folded its wings and stood there at ease. The angel now

wore blue jeans, a white shirt, and a leather jacket. He stood in brown elastic sided leather boots, and with these clothes and his unkempt short black hair he looked very normal. At least that was the image he now projected of himself to those about him.

“I told you I could find out his intentions. He’s good, this one,” said the young lady, to the angel.

“Yes, Lilly. It would seem we that have another to add to our company. I saw courage in you in the village, and now caring and self-sacrifice. We will find *much* as we accompany one another. *Meaning* is building.”

Jeremy just stood there gathering what was presenting to him, as Suwna Smith came running around the corner behind him, saying immediately, “It’s you!”

Jeremy swung around. He remembered her too, from some years before; the girl who travelled in the vortex.

“Where did you take my great grandfather?”

Jeremy just looked at her, and around to the angel. It was getting confusing and more complex very quickly, so he then let go, just feeling and allowing the situation. He felt the eddies of fate tossing all around him and followed the knowing that came to him as he opened his mouth. “You are not supposed to be here,” he said to the angel; “You are travelling without a permit,” to Suwna; “And you should not be in such company, young lady,” to Lilly.

The angel’s head then turned, as if to be sure that Jeremy was not here with backup, while Suwna and Lilly just stood there with a *‘How the hell is it any of your business?’* look on their faces; and by their stance.

Then Jeremy smiled at the reactions, and they all relaxed. It seemed the natural thing to do, despite the fact he had a young girl in harm's way, a very dangerous angel, and a non-permitted Traveller from a deeper world. As well as that, the hunters would be after them too, but *worst of all*, Agent Deveroux would *definitely* not be happy with him not checking in. But a deep knowing rising inside him told him that he had to tag along with this small band and see what would come. How *to protect* was not yet clear to him in this situation, and his training was also telling him that to go by the book in this situation wasn't immediately the best path. Only time would give him enough clarity.

"We are all joined in meaning. *What shall we find?*" asked the angel, with real passion. "*Come my good friend. Come with us. Let us sit and converse.*"

These eddies of fate were now turning into a single current in Jeremy's inner senses, as he listened to the angel's words and looked over to Suwna.

"We are the fallen," announced Suwna, with a big smile.

"We are indeed!" agreed the angel, with great gusto.

"We are indeed!" added Lilly, with a small giggle.

"I still have a job to do, you know," said Jeremy, plainly.

"Duty is well understood. I thought no less. You are wise to *await* meaning, young man," replied the angel.

"There are others hunting you. These two are in harm's way."

"Your cohorts will not harm them," answered the angel, very assuredly.

“Not them. We were taken down by some locals, and they played nice with us because their head man has some smarts, but they were merciless. There’s no humanity in them, so if they’re let off the leash fully, we may not be able to protect these two.”

“I’ve been many places, Agent. I’ve not needed your, or *anyone else’s*, protection. I can see to my own safety,” stated Suwna, confidently.

Jeremy did not share her confidence in herself. He was concerned, as the outer realities provided far greater threat of harm than people of worlds deeper could know. She was a Traveller, and had probably seen much, and maybe she was equipped, but he had to assume that Suwna and Lilly needed protection. He was trained to protect, and until he had evidence to the contrary, he would look out for them. He would protect them even if they didn’t need protection.

“You under-estimate me too, young man,” said Judgement. “You see me as a simple creature who knows so little of the nature of life, and the creatures that exist.”

Jeremy thought about how old this angel could be. He could imagine it knew plenty, and that whoever came up against it was not going to have it easy, and even though the situation was not *at all* satisfactory, he could still feel the strong flow of fate. There was something huge here, and he knew that there was to be a great deal of learning and meaning in this particular design. He surrendered himself more to it, but he would always be a Protector.

“*And*,” charged Lilly, “you *haven’t* been here with me on the street for the last four years, or for the struggle before that. I am *still* here, and I choose to find *meaning*.”

“*To meaning*,” said Judgement.

“*To meaning*,” called out Lilly, emulating the angel’s passion.

“To meaning,” said Jeremy, surely and gently, with a smile that was instantly multiplied by this small band.

“To meaning,” said Suwna, thoughtfully, and seemingly proud of Jeremy somehow.

In a window overlooking the wide alley where they all stood, a dark figure had watched. It now slunk away, being very careful to stay downwind as it went.

Places

Syria was indeed a horrifyingly lost place in the days that the small band of friends travelled there. The people who had stayed in the cities, somehow lived amongst all the broken cement and in some places the shells and rockets still came. So *many* had fled these places and this country, as such was the chaos. The destruction and loss were heart-breaking to all these visitors, except for Judgement. He lived in a whole different reality and had reacted very differently.

Lilly was especially affected. She *had* known loss, but *not* like *this*. She felt the depth of it by what she saw in the people's eyes and in how they now had to live. The group had talked with many people here and there, trying to be of aid where they could. Judgement could understand any language, and the other two, because they were from the *deeper reality*, naturally understood any language of the outer worlds and were also understood by those they conversed with.

This small band had since left those places and were now over the border in Jordan, walking around the massive encampment of refugees. Judgement sat and talked with many of the souls in this great tent city. As far as anyone was concerned, he was just a man; a bit *strange*, but just a man. Lilly and he were inseparable, and he had been translating for her so

far. As well as deeper sight, an angel also has deeper hearing, and can hear even what a person does not put words to, so Lilly received more than the words of these souls as they recounted the horrors they had witnessed and had undergone themselves, even here in relative safety. Needless to say, there were many tears; tears of those who recounted, as well Lilly's. So many had died, had their bodies smashed, or had beloved children and family torn away from them; and for what; greed, pride, fear, ideology, and fundamentalism. It was not a new story.

Suwna had brought Jeremy *with her*, as Lilly was not willing to jump from high places to catch the vortex; at least not yet. Jeremy had volunteered to take the jumps, as the Agency's portals were not his to share with these people; also aces up his sleeve should he need them. Apparently, taking a leap off high places allowed for enough momentum and a constant speed, on most planets, for the amulet to work. They had not been tested in vehicles, as they were reasonably new, and she and her father had not been sure of the effect of being encapsulated in anything. The angel and young Lilly had flown together. Judgement flew where his heart took him, and, like just a grandfather and grandchild getting up to mischievous adventures together, he and Lilly wandered.

Suwna had simply followed the flight path of the angel; she and Jeremy beginning to think they were just tagging along. She was very adept at guiding the vortex, but it was not something she actually drove. It was done by the switching of dials to a destination initially, but then by intention, thought, and feeling. She simply conversed with it in a way. She had mostly just set it to go to a place in her travels, but within a planet's atmosphere she had to guide it. There had been many times though, over the years of her travels, when it had taken her somewhere she had not intended to go. These '*detours*' had strangely, in the end, turned out to be providential. She trusted the vortex and sometimes wondered if she really guided it

at all. She hadn't been sure about holding hands with Jeremy when they jumped, but she became more comfortable as she came to know him.

The company of four had visited a good few places before coming here. Great natural places, big cities, and tiny villages; and in each they found more understanding of this place and these human creatures. All, ably guided by Lilly, as she was the only one from this Earth of outer the realities. This girl had learned much about geography as a child when she was still going to school, and had thankfully been a reader; now a regular at the local library. She had taken on the responsibility to educate herself, as while she wanted to keep what she saw as her freedom, she was deeply curious about things and the world. She was glad that her reading was now paying off. *Especially* now that she could visit so many of the places and meet the people she had read about.

THE FOUR NOW SAT AMONG THE TENTS TOGETHER, as they rested themselves in the shade for a short while.

“So many wars, on so many worlds; at least, it will soon be in the past for most here. The Unifier has come here, and now others go about His work, but freewill slows the process in this *outer reality*. Many may still have to suffer here before they learn, if they learn *at all*,” explained Judgement, as he had found out much more about this planet and the nature of the outer reality in his wanderings than the others were aware of. They simply did not have the deeper sight and hearing of an angel. But Judgement too was only still learning and quite blind in his *own* way to this place.

“There were *wars in Deeper?*” asked Jeremy, a little surprised, as he knew that Judgement had not been to this level of reality before, so must have been referring to wars in Deeper places. “It’s more police work these days.”

“There was a kind of war, and much more, in my world’s recent history. It is an inner reality of this one, I believe,” offered Suwna. “But the mindset here is so much like it was at the times of our Groundfall. Our history and stories tell of it clearly. Our world has thankfully passed beyond that stage.”

“I am finding it hard to gather the scent of purity here. It does not bode well for the worlds within, or those about it. It may need to be cut out of existence,” commented Judgment, as if it were quite normal to say so.

“*What!*” said Lilly.

“I may have to destroy this place. And I may not. We will see.”

“That’s not *meaning!*” protested Lilly

Judgement looked at her and the others, and he said, “Maybe you are the reason this world will be saved, young Lilly. It does not seek to save itself. It races headlong into the self, war and pain. Only chaos, seemingly awaits it.”

“But, their lives,” said Lilly sadly.

“You are not *only* a physical creature, as are all here. You are spirit, you are meaning. Your true reality lies in another realm, and it is that I may need to simply replant your souls in better soil. The soil here has been fouled and is growing more toxic. It is becoming more destructive to souls, rather than healthy and challenging. It may survive past this time, or I may not let it.”

“But I’m just young yet, and there is so much potential here. We *will* learn.”

“But at what cost to the other realms, and at what cost to souls befouled for eternity, because of the chaos and animalism now existent here?”

“Look at the tents, Judgement,” offered Jeremy. “Good people have built a city of tents and provided food and water for these souls.”

“Mmm, yes, but many of even those good souls, far away from all this pain, fall more to self every day to the whims of the animal ego. It will be mercy I give.”

Lilly was not happy with Judgement, and she walked stoutly out from amongst the tents and into the desert around them. The *ancient darkness* watched her walk away. It had been watching the angel, and it could feel there was power for the picking in this girl. She was more vulnerable off by herself, so it began its work.

The youth walked a while, looking down at the sand in thought and kicking at it occasionally as she walked. Some flew up into her face and mouth with the wind, so she spat it out, and she kept spitting as she tried to remove it. The poor child then spat and spat, but more and more sand came out. She didn’t understand and it frightened her terribly. Then she could not feel her lips, so she felt for them, but *they were gone*. Her fingers *were sand too* and began to *fall away* in front of her eyes. She then realised that she *was* sand, and *grain by grain* she began to fall away into the sandy floor of the desert at her feet. Soon she would be *part of it*, just grains of sand, *unseen and unknown*.

She was in shock, and she *cried out* with all *the terror* that rose in her, just as her legs *wore away* and her torso *fell and shattered* into a large pile of sand on the ground. As her scream raced across the barren land to the tents, even the pile of sand she had become gave away its form to the flat desert ground in the growing wind.

“Lilly, are you okay,” asked Jeremy.

“I’m still here?” cried Lilly, hopefully.

“We heard you scream,” said Suwna, now holding her tight as the young girl trembled; both of them on their knees in the sand.

She looked up at Judgement, and standing up for the displaced people in the camp, she cried, *“You cannot leave them to the desert. They will not be known, and they will blow away.”* And then Lilly sobbed deeply.

Suwna and Jeremy looked puzzled, and the angel furrowed its brow.

“WHERE THE HELL IS HE?” asked Deveroux, very concerned, and now sitting in his office.

“We tracked him to the Sydney docks, but there’s no portal activity after that.”

“None?”

“None, Sir. Either he is still there, or nearby, or he has disappeared,” explained the lady Agent.

“Damn!” cursed Deveroux, still not giving up on Jeremy, but wondering what fate had done with him.

He knew he was a smart kid and had plenty of the stuff it took to do this job. The young man could often see a little deeper than him, and Deveroux had trusted that sense more than once while they had been working together. To him Jeremy was a new breed that did not seem to have to go through the hard slog to learn. It was like they just came in and became a

part of what was already built. It was normal to them, and all that had gone on before was simply in them; well, beyond the benefit and power of longer life experience.

“What about travel activity?”

“There has been quite a lot of activity. We got hits the further back we went. A good deal of traffic and mostly no registration scanned. It seems to be all dark traffic, but for two. One was almost undetectable. It seems that the Fat Man made it here too, but there was no return.”

“That *sad* case, is *here*?”

“He was tagged in area 16. He is no longer with us. We found some recordings in the ether there, Sir. Apparently, it’s not pretty.”

“Show them to me, Agent.”

“Bring them in, Agent,” she then said to a young man who had been standing waiting just outside the office door.

The recording they watched was horrifying. It took all Deveroux’s detachment to make it possible to do it. He even felt sorry for the old villain as he watched him scream. The part of the recording they watched was only several minutes long, thankfully, and he only kept watching because he needed to know more about The Fat Man’s torturer. Deveroux knew by the way this creature went about his business that there wouldn’t be any mercy. The end game in these recordings was always going to be one poor dead tortured sod. The only variables would be the amount time he survived and the amount of information he gave up.

The cold precision of the torturer, and his ways, told Deveroux that this was not a contractor. *This* was the man he was hunting, especially from his expressions as he worked. This man followed *no one*, and it was *all* about him.

The young Agent then informed Deveroux that The Fat Man had eventually given away a good few secrets of the deeper places and realities. The only thing he thankfully did not give up, were the portals and how to access the deeper places; at least in the recordings that were clear. What *was* very clear to him though, from watching all the recordings, was that this torturer's knowledge *was* a threat to the order of things. If they *did* eventually take him alive, he would have to be quarantined away from this outer world.

"That old fool thought he could escape the justice of The Omnipotent and landed in the hands of a fate that was a hell of a lot worse," commented Deveroux.

"Well, Sir, maybe because of that suffering he'll be given rest," offered the lady Agent.

"*Maybe*. That's up to The Man. So...what about all that other traffic?"

"There were some very weird readings. One clear reading recently, then some more clear readings back some years, and some very odd and unclear readings in between."

"That's a lot of traffic to an outer world. What's the latest clear one?"

"A vortex, Sir. But it's enclosed, so we don't know who it is."

"The others will have at least been scanned as they came and went, *hopefully*. Check for that *psycho* on the scans, just in case," ordered Deveroux, indicating the torturer, "and I want to view *all* of those ether recordings, *personally*. I hope to God this *freakshow* hasn't found his way deeper."

He then stood up, began walking out of his office, and yelled, “*Wat*. We have somewhere else to be.”

“*With you, Agent.*”

“I’ll go over them all when I get back. Review the recordings of that poor sod a few times, and if you find *anything*, be in touch,” he finished, as he and *Wat* rolled out the main door.

THE FOUR FRIENDS SAT DOWN TO EAT. It had been a day now since they were at the camps, and they were sitting in a cafe in Alice Springs; a town in the centre of Australia. It was another desert; a red desert. The Alice was a big but small town, in amongst large ramps of rock that were tilted up many thousands of years ago. Some were parallel to each other and others at direct right angles to them. It was a magical place, and right now, a dry riverbed flowed through it.

“You can end that war. I *know* you can, Judgement,” expressed Lilly, very passionately about the war in Syria.

“It is not my place to do so. I understand your passion and your compassion; these hold *great* meaning, but I cannot interfere in a free will world. I am merely *one Letter.*”

“What does *that* mean?” asked Suwna and Lilly, in unison.

“It is not your place to know,” answered Judgement, plainly.

Suwna turned to Lilly to help her, by explaining what she did know, hoping it might help the teen. “This is a free will world. The opportunities to grow, learn, and succeed

spiritually here, are great. It has to stay within the boundaries that exist here, though. That's the only way free will is possible."

"People suffer and die, and that's supposed to be okay!" protested Lilly.

"No, it's *not* okay," said Suwna. "People perpetrate great harm on each other, and this world eventually needs to find its way to unity; to a civilisation built on love, and on spiritual foundations."

"They are now learning individually and collectively that over-intellectualism, fundamentalism, racism, materialism, consumerism, individualism, political activism, aggression, fear and oppression are not the foundations on which a world can stand; let alone prosper, grow, and evolve. If they are in fact learning *anything*," offered Judgement.

Suwna just gave Judgement the look, and continued explaining, "In this world, the human creature, as a whole kind, is coming to understand these things. It is maturing. We have seen these times in my planet's history; you, are in a time of great change. Lend your weight to what your heart tells you and play your part in that awakening," offered Suwna.

"It won't matter what I do if he destroys it all," complained Lilly.

"You are *all human*," said Judgement, as if it would somehow make something clear to Lilly.

The looks of dismay and confusion made the angel explain what he had meant, "This is *one place*, one Earth. You are *all human*. You are not a gender, not an age, not a race, not a culture, not a religion...You are *human*. It is *you* who separate yourselves. It is *you* who defy and destroy your own evolution. I heard these words by my inner hearing from the heart of one of your kind this very day..."

When '*us and them*' are gone, we can get on with solving our real difficulties.

It is not only *them*, it is *us too*. If we do not believe *we* have to change a little, understand a little, and give a little, then *we* cannot be one, and *we* shall war some more until *us and them* are gone.

Maybe in the ashes of *our* folly, when *we* are humbled enough to just get on as humans, *we* may journey onwards in *our* human family. *We*...is the future. *Our*...is the solution."

"That might be true, but what can I do now? There seems so little time," protested Lilly.

"I think you are doing more than you realise right now, Lilly. Just be true to your heart and speak your mind. Lean into the pain, and show this angel the depth of good here," shared Suwna, with genuine pride in this young soul.

A fire came to Lilly's eyes, one even greater than flying with an angel. It was connection to a purpose. A fire that was not missed by Judgement, and a fire that helped Jeremy remember his own purpose as he had watched the discussion with real interest.

Jeremy had just been along for the ride, more so than the others, it seemed. He had sat through many such meals and discussions with these three. He would sit and listen mostly; as he got to know them, and as he sought out the meaning of his place in this situation. This, and what path he should take in duty to his work. He was still questioning his choice to join in and could find no clear place to stand inside. He was still unsure in his mind whether he was allowing this angel and his two new friends to take him for a ride, or whether he was doing his duty by being a part of this small company. What he *did* know, was that he was that he

with the angel and had its confidence, and that in itself was worth a great deal. He again decided that until his place in all this was clearer, he would let life play out, as sometimes, it is best to leave life to do the work; find the answers and solve problems.

He came out of his thoughts and found himself looking at Suwna, now in hot debate with Judgement. He liked her. He liked her strength and calm, and her honesty. Just then Suwna looked across to him, and she gave him a '*what are you up to*' look. Jeremy just shot her his secret agent '*secret agent*' look, and they both started chuckling.

“HE’S JUMPING ALL OVER THE PLACE. We just get a bead on it, and it’s gone,” explained his number one man, “let alone, us getting there quickly enough to prepare to bring it down. Our best shot was when he came in. We knew his trajectory then. This locator is not so useful when he’s here.”

The man speaking was outwardly strong and seemed not to be a slave to fear, but down deep he was never at ease, as he never knew when his boss would snap; when the boss snapped, people died, and died quickly.

“Then we will have to bring him *to us*,” said the boss, sitting back and contemplating what it would take to do that.

“THAT WOULD JUST...NOT BE OUR PLACE,” explained the man behind the desk, in an English accent.

“He’s one of your *special* people, *isn’t* he?” stated Deveroux, in a question.

“We can’t confirm that.”

“Let me tell you sumthin’, *little man*, this freak you’re protecting is gonn’a bring down fire on this place like you’ve *never* seen. We need to get to him and *shut* him down.”

“You mean bring down fire on our organisation, or England?”

“He’s playin’ with something *way* out of his league, and it’ll affect the whole planet. You just tell him, that I *will* find him, and that he just *better* hope that I *do*. Because the fate that’s comin’ for him otherwise, will be beyond his reckoning.”

“You sound like someone out of an old American Western movie, old chap.”

“You sound like the Captain of the Titanic,” retorted Deveroux.

“*What Icebergs*,” added Wat, very seriously, as both men kept their gaze steady; showing clearly that it was not a joke.

Protectors always did their homework on the worlds they entered. The Titanic was a natural choice to communicate the point to this man, and Wat had followed Deveroux’s lead nicely.

Just then a phone rang on the desk, and the man answered it.

“Yes, sir. Ahha, yes. Yes. *Of course*, sir.”

The man put down the phone, and said, “Seems like someone believes you chaps.” Referring to higher ups who were no doubt listening, and probably watching. The two Agents did not look around as they knew that this ‘*deep contact*’ was never going to be attended to by just one man. “Seems like, there’s been some previous contact with *your lot*. *Strange* things afoot, eh.”

The man then stood up, walked around the desk, and put out his hand to shake Deveroux’s. “The name’s Geoffrey; John Geoffrey.”

After he shook hands with Deveroux and Agent Wat he sat on the front of the desk. “Not one of *ours*. Not on our list. Not an informant, or on our ‘protecting the important people’ list. We don’t know him. But we would *definitely* like to *get* to know him; especially as *you* chaps are *so* interested. We have a few friends; we will see what we can do. Got to say I’ve not seen a photo quite as amazing as this, and yet still blurry,” said the British agent, as he watched the loop of the few second long 3D recording of the man’s face, all playing in a cube shaped cloud on his desk.

“It’s an *old* recording,” explained Deveroux.

“Won’t blow up in 60 seconds, or anything?” asked Geoffrey, with his right eyebrow raised, and a typical wry English smile on his face.

“The matrix *will* degrade. It’s beyond even atoms. You lot aren’t even close to that yet,” said Deveroux, with no humour at all.

“I suppose we’re like savages to you. *The uneducated*, as it were.”

“That is not how we see you, Geoffrey. Your potential, because of your outer reality existence, is *far* greater,” offered Wat.

The British Intelligence officer went to ask another question, but Deveroux held up his hand, and gave him the face that told Geoffrey that there was not going to be any more questions; *or* answers.

“Quite right,” responded Geoffrey, in very British tones. “The *order of things*, *what*. A man needs to know *his place*, and have a little humility.”

But his outward facial expression, and his words, were not true of his inward state. Geoffrey was no fool, and he was going to make *very* sure that these ‘*chaps*’ knew that, and,

by the end of all this, exactly who was running the show *here*. He didn't care what the higher ups thought; he knew the game, and he didn't like these '*bloody foreigners*', or whatever they were, having any control over 'his lot'. It wasn't so much that they were foreign, as much as it was, that they were just '*not British*'.

Odours

When Jeremy landed, Suwna was *not* here. He felt a shiver up his spine as he looked along the row of lights on the beach front. There was a *smell too*, so overpowering that he snorted it out strongly. *Behind him a shadow seemed to drift back into the darkness.* Jeremy kept snorting out the foul odour, as he looked around to make sure he was where his cohorts agreed that they were going to meet up. He was sure that this was the beachfront of Rio de Janeiro, where they had intended to land. He had never lost Suwna before; they had always landed together.

Something *had happened*; something different. He knew it, but there was nothing he could do, even though his mind was busy trying to work out what he should do now. He thought about all kinds of possibilities, and projections, but got lost in them. He could feel his mind racing, yet he could not stop it. This train of thought now dragged him from thought to thought; faster and faster, until he found himself *on* a speeding train that was reaching dangerous speeds. Jeremy ran as fast as he could through the cars, trying to get to the engine to slow the train down. But the faster he tried to get to the engine the faster the train went. He ran and he ran, and even though the train threatened to come off the tracks if it went any faster, he could not stop trying to get there faster. He could feel it was now hurtling out of

control, when suddenly, a man stood up from a seat in front of him and stopped him. He held Jeremy's shoulders, and also held his gaze intently on his own. The train then seemed to move through them and race off into the night sky.

Jeremy took in some deep breaths, as he relaxed. He was now in an alleyway in the favelas; the slums of Rio de Janeiro. He had run a very long way and was quite exhausted. He couldn't even be sure how long he had been running. The man who had stopped him was in his late fifties and still kept Jeremy's gaze until he came all the way into the *here and now*. Somehow the man could sense that this was not drugs, and that this young man he was now steadying was a good man.

The Imaginer was furious, but a little more satiated. It could have gained even more energy from this attack, but it sat back in its dark nest knowing that there would always be more time to gather energy and bring these minds to its own.

"Are you with me, amigo?" asked the man.

"I am," said Jeremy. "Thanks. Don't know what just happened."

"Caught in the gaol of thoughts, I would say," offered the man. "They can take you away from yourself, and life, and make you loco, eh."

Jeremy laughed.

"That's good; you are with me, and now with yourself again," said the man, with a gentle smile.

"This *is* Rio de Janeiro?"

"Si, it is, *mi amigo*."

“Have you seen others who aren’t from here tonight? I travel with a lady my age, another man, and a youth.”

“No, I have not. But it is late. If we do not find them tonight, we will find them tomorrow.”

“You sound so sure.”

“All who travel here visit The Redeemer,” said the man, as he pointed up to the mountain beyond the city to the lit statue of Jesus. “Come, you can stay with me tonight.”

Jeremy thanked him and took him up on his kind offer. They then walked through the favelas, talking, and dodging trouble here and there. After some time, Jeremy asked the man why he was out walking in the streets at night.

“I walk the streets, to *maybe* help where I can.”

“Who?”

“Families, the young...maybe I save one youth from a bad future.”

“Dangerous work.”

“God walks the earth for me, and I walk with the Persian, I Am. There is *no* danger for me.”

The words struck Jeremy deep. He had never encountered this much faith and detachment. Agents were always apprised of the worlds they entered, and Jeremy knew of Whom the man spoke, but it was more the spirit of the man’s words that hit him. This man was a selfless spiritual creature living in a very dangerous material reality. Jeremy was now beginning to understand how the ‘*outer realities*’ could bring a soul to greatness, just as it

could render a soul to ash. He began to understand the nature, and opportunity, of a life in the outer realities.

“Ah, you do not ask me questions. Do you *know* of the, I Am?”

“We are given to some knowledge of the worlds we enter,” said Jeremy, only just realising his mistake after the words had escaped his mouth.

“So, you are *an angel*, perhaps?” questioned the man, realising there was even more to this young soul he had encountered; yet not turning in curiosity, but simply walking on.

Jeremy went silent, wondering how he could have said that out loud. He had always been highly disciplined, yet all he seemed to be doing lately was break cover. The man continued to lead him upwards through the alleyways, not pressing Jeremy for any more information. It seemed of no consequence to him, so left the Agent to himself as they walked. It was very clear that this man *definitely* did not walk the earth, even though he did most surely.

SUWNA FOUND HERSELF IN AFRICA; in the deep desert, near to where the angel had broken through the vortex and sent her hurtling towards the ground. She was wary of where she had now landed as she realised a deep stench that was coming from behind her. It was night in the desert, with no moon. The darkness here seemed to envelop her senses, and her being. Jeremy was not holding her hand, and she felt very alone; which was strange, because she had travelled without anyone else for some years.

She gathered her courage, turning slowly toward the stench as her sight adjusted from the coloured lights inside the vortex. There on the ground were three cattle carcasses; two

large, one small. The stench then made her wretch a few times, but fortunately, she didn't bring up the contents of her stomach.

In the dark, a figure stood up, and said, "It is that good you have something in your belly to hold down. I have no such struggle."

As the man smiled, his teeth were added to the whites of his eyes.

"Much is relative, in our existence," offered Suwna, a little afraid that this man had been right there waiting for her, yet now also, suddenly, *very* aware of the safety and comfort that her life had afforded her in comparison to this soul. A full stomach had never been an issue, even though she had travelled in very dangerous places.

"Yes. Much," agreed the emaciated old man. "Come to my village. It is not safe at night, especially near rotting flesh. It is a wonder that I was here, and it would be an honour to have the lady of the ribbon light among us."

"I am no one special," said Suwna.

"Maybe; maybe not. But you *have* come *here*."

"By mistake," explained Suwna, trying to make the man understand that her coming here should not be a source of hope or meaning.

"Ahh, even better. *His* designs are more perfect."

Suwna thought he sounded *just like* Judgement. She looked down at her amulet and realised from the readings that this was quite near to where she had fallen from the sky. The old man looked at her as if trying to see something, and then commented, as he turned to lead her to the village, "It is a great grace to be caught by an angel. We have prayed to be a part of your journey."

It then dawned on her that this was where Judgement had entered this world; that due to her travelling through here that night, as well as all those who hunted the angel, that the people of this place had missed out on conversing with the angel. Jeremy had confided in her about his experience with the winged creature and she now thought that maybe these people had something important to share with Judgement. Maybe she had to take a message, or maybe these people held some *meaning*. She then smiled to herself as she followed the old man, realising that that *'stupid angel'* was rubbing off on her.

IN THE DARKNESS A PORTAL OPENED. It opened and closed quickly, so was not noticed by the Agents as they ran a search of the warehouse. They had night vision glasses on and were working their way through the large space. Geoffrey had given them this address as a possible connection to the man they were hunting.

Deveroux suddenly stopped. The other Agents immediately followed suit.

“What is that stench?” whispered Wat.

Deveroux stood up tall as the others began to choke on the fumes that reached their noses. There were now all coughing, holding their breath, and bringing their coats up to cover their faces; some were gagging. Such was the confusion in this thick rising cloud of odour that they seemed to lose all sense of their mission.

“*Odiferous D,*” stated Deveroux.

“Hey, *Big D.* Your men might want to be outside, I reckon,” suggested Odiferous, in an Australian accent.

Some of the Agents were beginning to bring up their lunch when Deveroux gave them the hand signal to leave; all while he held his own nose tight in the crook of his arm.

“There’s a breeze on the roof. It *might* help,” suggested the stench ridden man.

“*Hell yeah, Odi’*. Let’s go. *Boy*, you are *particularly* rank today,” said Deveroux, as he led the way.

“*Always* the charmer, eh Big D,” responded Odiferous, as he followed Deveroux to the roof.

The way up was an open steel staircase to the roof, and it did not take them long to reach the fresh air. Fortunately for Deveroux there *was* a good breeze.

“So, this is where you got to, Odi’,” commented Deveroux.

“Yep; couldn’t work with anyone anymore. Not with this little problem.”

“It *ain’t little*, Odi,” commented Deveroux, breaking into laughter. “*Hell, boy*, that could kill a man.”

Odiferous D had a good laugh too, and said, “Toughen up, Big D,” and laughed some more, as he feigned to move closer to Deveroux.

Both men had a good laugh at each other’s expense, enjoying it very much. Odiferous D was a nickname this man got after he had a bad experience with a stench wraith. He and Deveroux had worked together as trusted partners for a long time before that, but not for very long after the incident. The stench could not be removed, or masked, and became too much of a handicap for their work, so he had to leave The Agency. But he had left on his *own* terms. He *was* to hand in his Protector’s badge, which meant no more travel. But it had been too

much for him to give up, so he bolted through a portal and was not heard from again. Well, until now.

“So, what you got for me, *Odi*.”

“A deal, is what I’ve got for you, *big man*.”

“You know me better than that, *partner*.”

“Don’t *partner* me, *old dog*.”

“Okay, Odi,” said Deveroux, breaking out of the competition. In the old days they had always challenged each other and played the ‘*who’s toughest*’ game. “Let’s get this done...*talk* to me.”

“I got what you need. I got tabs on all the players, except *one*, and that’s more of a *feeling* that there’s someone else, or somethin’ else, but it’s *not small*. Anyway, I want to keep my badge; keep doin’ my old work, and I’ll give aid whenever The Agency crosses my path...or even volunteer if it wants to send me somewhere where it needs someone covert.”

“*Covert!* Are you *kidding* me!”

“I got real good at it from havin’ this disability, and from dodgin’ The Agency all these years. I’m better than *anyone*, that’s why I got tabs on all the players, including you. I’ll even pass intel’ along about the continuing situation, and other stuff; *that’s if*, I know the Agency isn’t coming after me.”

“No one’s comin’ after you with that *stench*,” said Deveroux, with a smile.

“Like I said, Deveroux, *don’t* play me. I’ve gotten good at what I do, and I’m not a new kid on the block. I *know* you, and I got what you need, but the deal is that I keep portal access and work for The Agency again. I need some purpose, some *meaning*.”

“Meaning, purpose...Yeah, I get that. So, what have you got for me, Odi?”

“*It all*, Big D,” said Odiferous D, as he walked over to the rail and leaped off the building.

Deveroux raced to the edge and saw Odiferous making his way across the wide alleyway between the warehouses. There were many cardboard boxes, now crushed, where he had landed, so Deveroux could not follow. As Odiferous put his hand on the handle of a small door of the next building, he turned to Big D, and shouted, “When you got the deal, come back here, *alone*.”

“People, and this world, may suffer *needlessly* by then, Odi. *For God’s sake!*”

“This world *suffers anyway*, Big D,” retorted the stench ridden man, as he opened the door and disappeared.

SUWNA SAT WITH THE OLD WOMEN AS THEY WORKED SOME MEAL. It was the next morning, and the young women had gone gathering. The men, young and old, had gone out seeking food and digging for water. Only the very old and the very young stayed behind otherwise; but all had work to do. A few of the young adults had left the small tribe recently, to go into the towns and look for work, and buy food to bring back to the village. The odd one would never return. But most would, as the community was strong here.

Not all Africa was like this. There were modern cities, places of great greenery and people far better off, but in this place, there was now drought, and these people lived a subsistence life. Such a life was tenuous at times, but this tribe had seen many times of great need and times of extremely little over its long life and deep past. They had known death and

suffering, but it was a part of life to them. Much had been passed on over the generations; the greatest of which was acceptance and resilience.

Suwna was a guest, so was not allowed to work at all. She had wished to go gathering with the young women, or digging for water with the old men, but the culture would not allow it. Courtesy, out here, was courtesy, and a guest was a guest.

“This is life for us. It is hard for us. We wish it was better, but we accept our sorrow, take joy in small things, and we live on.”

Suwna nodded and looked down respectfully as the old woman went on to share stories of their young ones dying; and the cattle. The story of malnutrition was not new to Africa.

“The water, the land, and the food, come first. Without these, there can be no life. One day, even those who hide in the great cities will realise this. They pillage the Earth and play with nature. They poison her, playing with creation like a spoilt child with a toy. They forget the earth, the plants, and the animals. They forget the water, and one day they will cry long and deep with regret when the farmers are gone, and the earth lies sick. If they continue, it will be unable to yield up enough to eat for *these great swathes* of souls; one’s whose feet have *never* touched the ground.”

“Yes, people can forget these things.”

“They forget *themselves*. They are taken, *from* themselves. They are taken from the land. We may struggle and die, but we do not lose *ourselves*, and we *do not* lose connection to all things. They forget they are connected. They forget Who feeds them.”

Suwna smiled at the old lady’s words and nodded her head in respect.

“Where I come from,” shared Suwna, “we have not lost this awareness; well, we did for a short while, but we turned in the era of great hardship. The trees saved us, and the land was healed, and we were healed. We don’t forget the water, or the farmers, and we look after both.”

It was the old lady’s turn to smile. She knew that her visitor’s story was not one of *this* world, as the story of the lady of the ribbon light, once known to one in this tribe, became known to all. The word was probably spreading outside it too. There would be a gathering tonight.

“It is good you have come. Tell me more of your land and your farmers?” asked the old woman.

“We live in cities and towns, and communities of all sizes. We have learnt to care about each other’s struggles over the whole of *our* Earth. If a community finds itself in need, then the rest of the country will aid it. If a whole country is affected the rest of the world helps out. There are many development projects in our poorer nations, but we only empower people to take charge of their *own* future. All of us work, no one is idle, and all of us are responsible for our own communities. We are one, and act as one, supporting all and each on our shared life journey.”

“But the farmers?”

“Yes, of course, the farmers. They are given support and some precedence with societal funds, due to our time of great struggle. A community puts its taxes into a central pool, and the farmers have first call on it if the crop fails. The farmer is given reasonable income to continue for the next year, so the basics are produced. This way too, we see that

the land is nurtured, not degraded due to financial pressure. Much of our science is about renewal of soils and a return to a natural balance.”

“Are there poor there?”

“No. A higher sense of justice reigns in people’s hearts, and they share more. Even tax is paid on an increasing rate as a person’s income becomes greater, but *all* must work and be of service, just as it is for you here. Work and purpose are good for the soul.”

“But there are always those who take more?”

“We don’t hold anyone one back who wishes to build great things, or endeavour, but extreme wealth and poverty has been wiped from our culture. You see, those who do well, share voluntarily. Enforcement is not useful, and not needed, when love and justice rule people’s hearts.”

“One world, with *one* culture?”

“Yes and no. We *are* one culture; a *new* culture. But we are individual souls, and there are many flower beds of cultural diversity. We are now *firstly* one people, one race, and all continues to evolve around *that* core understanding. We are one people in the new culture; one culture of unity, in diversity.”

“I like the sound of your world. This one will not see such change easily and may yet fall back forever into darkness. Many will have to come back to the earth, and many will die, if they do not kill our Mother everywhere first. In most of this world people are lost in a dream and they have great weapons too. There are fools here who still wish to wield them; and may yet destroy us,” explained the old woman.

“We’ve come to know that *unity* is the answer to *all* woes and struggles. Anything can be built, remedied, created, or nurtured, where there is genuine love and unity. We thought that if we remedied the *many things* we needed to, then unity would surely come, but we found that *unity needed to be first*, so we could easily *remedy the many things*.”

“There is meaning there,” said the old woman, as she fell into silence while continuing her work.

High in the sky high above, it watched. Unseen, it hoped that this detour would provide what it had sought. It then looked to the old woman, and it seized her being.

SUWNA HUGGED THE OLD WOMAN. It was time to leave, but she had been so happy to have joined in the celebrations. It was a little difficult for her to be the guest of honour, but she accepted these people’s ways as a humble guest. She was quite taken by the people here, as even in the depths of drought and with life at the lowest of ebb, they still gave out. They still lived. All had shared, and all had received.

The old woman’s scent was now sweet; such a beautiful scent, that Suwna was taken away, and just as she began to drift unconsciously within it, the rain started coming down. It was light at first and got a little heavier. It woke her from the allure of the scent and freed her from its strange spell. Not that she seemed to want to.

“I have to join my friends now.”

“Yes,” said the old woman.

Suwna watched the villagers as they now danced in the rain, but the old soul was only intent *on her*. She thought that was a little strange, as surely the rain was *life* to her; and even

stranger, as Suwna now felt a deep strong feeling of love in her heart. It was the kind of love that a man and a woman share, and she felt deeply for Jeremy. But before she drifted off again into the scent which still caressed her nostrils, she said goodbye, and followed the old man through the rain to nearby cliffs.

The old woman waved her goodbye, and when Suwna was gone, she went into the hut and wept as if a great loss haunted her; that was, before she was released again, *and the creature disappeared into the night.*

Suwna talked with the old man as they walked to the cliffs, and in time asked about the scent and the feelings she had gathered from the old woman.

He turned, as if alarmed, and said, "Leave such things; things as this, *here*. Take with you, what you have seen, but *not* these things. Do you understand?"

"Why?"

"Trust an old man, *please*."

Suwna had agreed, and they soon found the cliffs. She looked down and decided there was enough depth with this planet's gravitational pull for a jump.

"Travel well," said the old man, simply.

Suwna made the jump immediately. There was something not quite normal in this place, and even though it was special, she was glad to be going now. As the ribbons of colour wrapped around her, she wondered what force had taken her there. There was always a cause to any effect. All existence had laws, and there had to be a requisite force. She shivered a little. She did not like thinking that someone, or *something*, had power over her; especially as she now recalled Lilly's experience in the desert in Jordan. She knew for sure that something

was not right. There were hidden forces at play. But she would bide her time, and watch. She had learned over some time travelling, and even tracking on some worlds, that one is far better to be silent and circumspect when hunting something.

This young lady had courage and application to burn. She had built the amulet that now bore her away in the white ribbon vortex. Her father was the scientist who had discovered the vortex on her world. She, though, had developed the technology to travel in it. It had taken only a few short years, as she was intent on chasing Grandpa Jack to *wherever* he was. Curiosity and love had driven her and kept her to purpose. These wonderful forces still drove her.

She had found her great grandfather once; on a strange bridge that was crumbling; its steel bending, twisting, and bits of it breaking away, upwards. They had had so little time to talk then, and that was where she had first run into Jeremy. He had provided Jack's escape from that strange place, *Grandpa Jack* to her, as Protectors were want to do. She had asked Jeremy about that place and its nature on their recent travels here together, but he had disappointed her when he explained that he was bound by certain laws, so could not share that with her. Fortunately for him, she had seen the compassion in his eyes for her as he had told her that he couldn't.

That time on the bridge was the first, and only other, time that she had come across an Agent in her travels. She could certainly have used one a couple of times. She had gotten into her share of crazy jams. She knew that Jeremy was a Lawman of some kind who had a wide jurisdiction in the deeper and outer realities, but he was different to what she would have expected a Lawman to be. He was considered, compassionate, and flexible. She liked that and felt a little affection for him as she thought of it.

She then recalled the strong love she felt when she was saying goodbye to the old woman, and now, as she thought about it, she realised that it had to be someone else's feelings. She *knew* herself, and while she had felt affection here and there for this Agent, she knew her feelings were not that strong. Suwna then wondered at her strange experience as the vortex bore her on to her original destination.

Investigations

Jeremy had stayed with Ramos for two days now, and they had visited the beach and The Redeemer each day. They had set off again this morning to seek out his friends. He could not get over the poverty right beside such wealth but knew that the outer realities were far behind the deeper worlds. Some things that he and Ramos saw in the night had turned his stomach, while others greatly pained his heart. He realised that he now saw these and other things with the angel's eyes, as well as his own, as they had wandered all about this great city. He saw great loss here; souls self-destructing, rich and poor.

He knew of the deeper self, and saw how these people were blinded to theirs by their focus on the material, to the point that there was a great void; a great meaninglessness in their lives. There was family and community *too* though, and there were plenty of free-hearted smiles as they wandered here. Many in the favelas got lost in drugs, or got mean and violent,

yet Ramos told him that most married, brought up their children well, and lived good lives here. He explained that it was not *just* about poverty, but more about meaning, as youth suicides haunted the rich as well as the poor. He believed that suffering and breakdown were not about wealth or poverty; as where there was no meaning, there was breakdown, and sometimes even death preferred.

Jeremy had certainly received an education that he had not sought as they had tried find his travelling companions. He was very concerned for Suwna, especially after they had been separated, and his torturous experience on arriving. He was worried about where she was, or what *she* may have fallen into. There was *something* here. A malevolent force of some kind. It was not Judgement...or was it? He had not been around an angel before and was not aware of the forces at play around them. But even though he was not totally sure, he thought that it had to be something else.

The young Agent was glad that he had joined this small crew of souls, as he could hopefully find out more about angels and the nature of things around them; to help the Agency to eject him from this world, or maybe even cajole him to leave. Right now, Jeremy was deep in thought about the actions that his Agency would now be taking, wondering what more they had found out about angels like this, as he and Ramos came around a corner in the path they were walking up. There was Suwna under the statue of The Redeemer, and the other reason that he was glad to be part of this crew became abundantly clear.

Judgement and Lilly were there too, and as Suwna saw him, she smiled. She was relieved, and there were other feelings too, just now a little deeper for the young Agent. But she held them away, as she needed to be circumspect and keep her focus. She needed to watch for, and feel out, *the presence* that had taken her to the village.

Connections

Jeremy was surprised at the gentleness of Suwna's response to their reunion. He was a little saddened at the lack of reaction, but still could not help smiling wide; making it very clear to her that he was happy that she was okay, as well as a small sign of other feelings. She had nodded quickly, on the outside, looking almost immediately to Ramos, who was walking beside him.

“Ahhh!” said the angel loudly, as he saw Ramos; not even acknowledging Jeremy. “*I search for meaning.*”

“As *do I*, mi amigo.”

The two then went over to the stone balustrades around below the great statue that looked over Rio and out to the sea beyond. They sat on the stone rail overlooking the great contrasts set out below them. Lilly had raced after them, and Jeremy walked up to Suwna, as she said, “Well they're off again.”

She had wanted to go after them. To watch around the angel and see if she could gather any sign of what she had experienced in the village; and in the desert beyond it. But somehow, she did not go; *her being* did not seem to want to move.

“I couldn’t find you all, until today,” said Jeremy, also wanting to follow the angel, yet finding himself more drawn to this young lady. “How did we get separated?”

“I don’t know. I ended up in the desert. In a village. In *the* village, I think.”

“*The* village?”

“Yep, the village where Judgement came to earth, and I really believe I have to share the meaning I found there with him.”

“*God*, we’re *all* beginning to think, and sound, like him.”

They both laughed a little as they agreed, and with this, another deeper feeling passed through both of them. Then Suwna just went with the flow of the connection she felt, opening up to Jeremy about her full experience there. The door of trust had opened inside her, and she walked through. After she shared her experience, Jeremy shared the story of the train; how his mind had run away from him. They naturally now found themselves cohorts in the same effort to seek the truth of what was happening around the angel; not just Judgement himself.

They smiled as they felt the union within this shared work, both happy to be connected in a more meaningful way. It was not all just about this investigation though, as by working more closely there was a greater chance for exploration of each other’s nature, and feelings unspoken; the tender herbs, which were as yet, just a promise of what tree may grow and fruit.

“WE HAVE BEEN HERE THREE DAYS. You are the *first* meaning,” stated Judgement.

“Who *are* you?” asked the man, seeing the strangeness and feeling the rarefied air around the man in front of him.

“I am Judgement. I am fallen. I seek meaning, so to fulfil what The Great Mystery has planned for me here.”

“Well, that’s better than, *I am here to destroy the Earth*,” said Lilly, with her hands on her hips.

She was happy that the angel seemed to be asking more questions about the nature of its falling here. She was also quite surprised at his candour with this man, as Judgement had not revealed himself this openly to any other person that they had met on their wanderings around the planet; well, other than his travel companions.

“*Destruction* is most likely *still* to come, young friend.”

“Are you well, my friend?” asked Ramos, of Judgement, now thinking that maybe the child should not be around this strange, even though charismatic, man.

The angel then climbed down from the stone balustrade and stepped off the rocky edge. Ramos was shocked, but as the angel fell below the lip, beyond the sight of others who milled around the great statue, it presented its wings. It then floated there, looking up to Ramos and Lilly, as its wings gently beat the air. They kept him as still as a bird of prey hovering, but without all the effort. After a short while, he grabbed the rocky wall, drew in his wings, and climbed up again to Ramos’s dumfounded, or more so, silent, joy.

“He’s an angel,” explained Lilly, as if Ramos needed to be told.

“What meaning do you seek, *mi amigo*?” asked Ramos, wondering what a creature such as this could *not* see from the great heights he may fly to.

“*You* walk your own way; *not* those of others around you?”

“We all walk through the same life.”

“No. You walk here, *yet* are on a different path? This is a place of extreme loss, and a place of hedonistic reliance. There *is* great hope here, but you walk *even* beyond *that*.”

“I do walk the path of hope, as we all must.”

“I see more faith and detachment, than hope. I see certitude. I see a sure soul, reliant in the arms of The Great Mystery.”

“I am a child,” said Ramos, wondering what he could give this amazing creature.

“Share *meaning* with me,” requested the angel, far more lovingly; or was it, that it had just not seemed to talk lovingly before.

Ramos shook his head, then imagined The Servant in front of him, the Exemplar of his Faith, and he opened his mouth. “From your interaction with this young one, and hearing your words, I can share some particular meaning with you that may be of service. It would seem to me that the nature of *investigation* would be beneficial to your work here, and maybe one other perspective of things as they are here, for you to consider. You are *far* beyond me, so please excuse any seeming arrogance as I share with you. I do this to be of service only.”

The angel’s eyes glowed a brighter purple as he heard this humble man’s words. There was already great meaning here, even though the man had not yet shared anything.

“The principle that I may share with you is that of investigation,” offered Ramos. “It needs to be an independent *investigation of truth*; for the blind eyes of what you have previously known, and of what others believe they know, will stunt the vigour of your search here.

You and your companions may all seek answers *together* too, but you must *seek the truth, firstly*, and see through your *own* eyes. You need open your eyes wide, *even though* they are as special as they are. The Servant once said...

“...once every soul inquireth into truth, society will be freed from the darkness of continually repeating the past.”¹

“Yes, there is meaning there.”

“*Yes, there is!*” said Lilly, emphasising Judgement’s need to investigate properly.

“The other thing, a useful perspective for you, is the nature of *this time*; in *this place*. You need to know the frame in which you now stand; the weather that exists around you, and from where these winds blow,” offered Ramos.

“I can see the winds, and I see the dark clouds all about me too. Your kind has not learned what you have heretofore spoken of. How can the blind investigate, especially when they are unknowing that they even need to?” charged Judgement.

“It is early yet in the process of our awakening, winged one.”

“The darkness is *deep*. I would *have* to disagree.”

“But the darkness always increases through the night; before the morning comes. It is the early morning here now. The glow of the Sun, the promise of the new Day is only intimated generally, at this time. Some have not woken yet, but *no doubt* only those *truly sick* will not eventually wake in this new Day.”

Lilly was very taken by Ramos, and the way that he spoke of things. It made things so clear.

“You follow The Unifier?”

“You know of Him?”

“I have heard the prayers of His followers. Your spirit carries the same life.”

“Then you know the will of The All-Merciful is already at play here.”

“I do my work. I have my place in the nature of things. The Great Mystery has sent me here. I am Judgement,” thinking he was explaining himself clearly, but falling very short.

“God is Judge, and the coming of His Messengers naturally creates the time of judgement in every era. This is simply as it has always been,” explained Ramos.

“But you still *need respond* as a people. So few have responded, and so many have only chosen themselves when the Gift was offered. The Great one sends the Messenger, but you must *act* as a people. It is up to *you* to gather Their Meaning and *live* to it. I do *not* see it here. I see self, I see ignorance, I see coping, and mere adaptation. I see imitation, I see talk, but I *do not* see change. I do not see the first rays of light in souls, just the *deepening* of night.”

“This is the time of the storm, of the chaos and experimentation of youth. We will break through into adulthood. Our Guardian has said that this time of titanic upheaval is bringing on the birth of a new humanity. He says about *the storm*, that *they*, meaning the followers of The Persian I am...

“...know full well whence it comes, and what it will ultimately lead to. Though ignorant of how far it will reach, they clearly recognize its genesis, are aware of its direction, acknowledge its necessity, observe confidently its mysterious processes, ardently pray for the mitigation of its severity, intelligently labour to assuage its fury, and anticipate, with undimmed vision, the consummation of the fears and the hopes it must necessarily engender.”²

Even many, not of my faith, see the nature of this time, and work with us to reenergise the spirit on this planet; *just as much is growing*, as is dying. This is the balance; the disintegration of what must pass, and the integration of what is daily being born. We *will* come to a new place, but we require *time*.”

“Yes,” said Lilly, “we need *time*,” wondering to herself about this man’s beliefs.

The angel turned to Lilly as Ramos wondered about the nature of the angel’s place in humanity’s journey. Judgement then sought to make his reality clear to the young one, and to answer the questions he heard in Ramos’s thoughts.

“I am given to my work. If the response is too slow, I will bring the shaking of this planet. The Great Mystery has sent me here, and *His* designs are perfect. It is *His* mercy you need seek. I will do as I see needs be done. I am only *one letter*. Mercy is *not* of me. I am Judgement.”

ODI HAD KEPT HIMSELF BUSY. He had been stalking all the players while being very careful about what doorways he used, and always keeping *downwind*. Now that The Agency knew he was here he had to take even more care.

Geoffrey had become the focus of his investigation. Odi had followed him on and off for a while now, as the man was looking deeper into things that should not concern an agent of his world. Odiferous D knew well his own stench, but *this guy* was rotten; he knew it in his gut. There was an air of superiority that followed Geoffrey wherever he went.

Almost a week ago now, Geoffrey had followed Deveroux and his men from the warehouse, and that's where he got Odi's more focused attention. Geoffrey had tried to enter the portal that the Agents left through; through the same physical door they had closed behind them, but he only found himself in a small storeroom. He had done the usual knocking on all the walls, and the standard tapping on the floor to see if there was a secret door. He even thought he was being very clever when he checked the room's ceiling and scanned around for any seams or cracks that would tell him how they got out. To Odi this was just another fool, full of his own lack of knowledge and flawed designs, though thought him more than worth following for a while; at least until Deveroux got back to him with the bad news.

This foul-smelling ex-Agent from deeper knew that the rules were the rules, and he was now almost sure that they would stay that way in his case. Hope had been strong in him, but his conversation with Deveroux in the warehouse had made the reality of his relationship to The Agency clearer to him. He sighed a little, as he now closed his long dark coat a little to keep out the night chill. He almost hid in his turned-up collar and dark hat as he watched Geoffrey's house from the shadows. The hopes for a deal with The Agency had all just been in his head, he now thought. We only find out the reality of some things by taking a step, or by doing something. Just thinking does not quite cut it sometimes; or is that, mostly?

The Agency would not break foundational rules, especially for some unknown planet in the outer realities. He didn't even know if he should even meet with Deveroux a second time. Odi had got the wood on his old partner because he wasn't expecting him, but

Deveroux would be prepared next time. It was then that he decided that a second meeting would *definitely* not happen. He would just do his job out here, without sanction. He would work by himself, and trust the Big Man, that *not* being Agent Deveroux, just as he always had. He would stay on the case, as it was giving him a bit of the purpose that he had lost all those years ago, and he also wanted to help out these humans. He felt an affinity with the people of this planet, as they were a little flawed like him.

Geoffrey had his own investigation underway. He had no regard for these black suited idiots from "*Deeper*". He guffawed a little too himself as he thought of them, and that word. He was *on the job*, and he would do his work no matter the call from the higher ups. They were all *morons* as far as he was concerned. He saw himself as a guardian of his people, but he was just a little deluded, as all the glory boys are. They see themselves as heroes, falling to their own imagined importance in the end.

Odi now saw Geoffrey going to his car and heading out of his driveway, so he pulled out a zoom handle; well, that's what he had dubbed it. It was a transport device from another planet that he had once visited in this galaxy. He had been to other galaxies, and to places deeper when he could cover his movement between the realities well enough; but mostly, he had wandered the local galaxy, the Milky Way as they called it. Earth was his home base though, and Australia his main stomping ground. Just travelling in this one outer galaxy kept down the chance of him being noticed by the authorities, and there was plenty to keep him occupied in this small backyard.

Anyway, the zoom handle was a silver, burnished steel ball, which had a handle hanging from it. He grabbed hold of the handle with one hand and tossed the ball steel upwards in the direction Geoffrey was heading. The ball fired off in the required direction, taking Odi, hanging from the handle, with it. It let out the slack on the wire that connected

them as he tossed it, and then gently reeled him in as it went. The night sky hid his movement; well, until he passed by some noses that was; his stench violently battering the nostrils of a few people who were out *enjoying* the night air.

DEVEROUX AND HIS AGENTS COULD NOT GET A BEAD ON ANYTHING. They were more than a bit lost on this investigation. The warehouse lead, which he was assured was the *only* lead, ended in a dead end. The angel too was hard to track. They knew where the creature had been, but they too, had not been able to track him in real time. The Agents were checking all leads in a few teams now; chasing the angel and the torturer. For Deveroux, one saving grace was that one of his Agents was riding along with the creature.

The few sightings around the planet, and one description given by a man who worked at the Sydney docks, had fit Agent Jones. The story that man told made this older Agent think that maybe the angel had some power over Jeremy. From the reports of witnesses, Agent Jones had been very relaxed, and apparently there were two young ladies with them. The questions now running through Deveroux's mind were kept steady by his faith in Jeremy though, as well as in the lad's abilities. Jeremy had come from a very normal and happy upbringing on a world deeper and had felt driven to be part of the work of The Agency. Deveroux liked him, because even though he was not the best at things, and often had setbacks as he trained and as he worked the job, the lad would always get up and get going again. The lad was *ever sure* he was learning, and so he *kept* learning. He hadn't been the best agent, but because of his humility and courage, he had become the best; as far as Deveroux saw it anyway.

The two had worked many cases together, and Jeremy had grown quite assured under Deveroux and Wat's tutelage. The boy held Deveroux's favour, and they had a good working

relationship. They had gotten to know each other's moves, and how to support the other in the field. The older Agent was very good in mentoring the younger crew and Jeremy was hungry to transform. There were even times when Deveroux and the Judge would invite the lad over for meals. The Judge *also* had a lot of time for this young man, which was *really* saying something. Mrs Deveroux was definitely hard to slide by if you weren't up to scratch.

As Deveroux now sat at his desk deeper and hoped like hell, not just that his Agent would succeed and come back unharmed, but more so that his wife would not find out what danger he had sent the boy into. Part of him didn't like it that his boy was *seemingly relaxed* from the witness reports, as even if the angel was on side, there was still that freak out there and his pack of dogs hunting them.

It was then that something occurred to Deveroux. He had just realised a quite shocking connection, and he raced out of his office and through another door. It was something on the tape of The Fat Man's torture; something that he had only now gathered in reflection on those dark souls. *Something* in that recording that he had *known* before, and he shuddered as he thought about it. If he was right, his young cohort was in deeper darker water than anyone had yet realised.

He watched the recording three times just to be sure, before finally looking up from the misty cube and taking a deep breath of resignation. He stood up, put his badge in his pocket, a light staff into the back his belt, and a flat pulse grenade in his other side coat pocket. He then shook his head at the futility of these devices, ones that he had always considered very dependable weapons, as he walked out into the buzzing situation-room.

He then walked past the desks, and many agents there, with no emotion. When he came to the main investigation board at the front of the room, he took the room's attention, and said, "Earth of the outer realities is now to be officially on *total lockdown*. It is to be cut

off to *all* traffic. All agents are to be recalled from that planet *immediately*, and after nineteen today, *anything* crossing the border of the realities from that planet, or leaving that planet in its physical universe, is to be destroyed *with full prejudice*. *No one* and *nothing* leave for *anywhere*; not even one of ours if they don't get out before the deadline. *Have I made myself clear?*”

The room gave a slightly stunned, “To Protect,” in a not so enthusiastic, and quite jumbled, unison.

Agent Wat stood up, and said, “*Now Agents!*”

Wat then looked to Deveroux, and Deveroux looked at him with a face that clearly said, ‘*We have lost the boy*’. The older Agent then nodded toward his office, indicating that Wat would find the answer to his unasked questions, as he turned away and headed out the door. Wat knew that this was *no* small order that had been given, only guessing at what such an extreme measure would be aimed at. He went into Deveroux’s office and saw that a part of the cloudy old recording of The Fat Man’s torture was playing repeatedly through a small loop. After a few viewings he finally recognised the threat within it, now seeing that this recording was not just about the torture of one old crim’ from deeper. It could mean the torture of a *whole world* of souls, and maybe *many more*, over an eternity.

THE FRIENDS WERE NOW SITTING AROUND RAMOS’S TABLE. The discussion was lively, as it always was over any table they sat at. Lilly was nipping like a small dog at Judgement’s ankles and barking at him about the seemingly endless possibilities of a human future, while Judgement, a little harried, held his ground. Jeremy and Ramos sat back mostly, enjoying the interplay and the particular connection these two had. Also, the beauty of the

fire in the heart, and nimbleness of mind, this young lady showed up against her very powerful adversary. Suwna on the other hand was right in the fight with Lilly, encouraging her, and helping her past things. She helped her keep trained on Judgement, and supported the young girl's arguments for allowing the natural evolution of the peoples of this planet to take its course.

“It is *enough*. Your *words* must end,” said Judgement, now hoping to command Lilly's obedience, and quiet her.

“My words will never end on this subject, or only when you have opened your eyes,” charged Lilly.

“Then let me open yours a little,” offered Judgement. “Words are only of use if backed by actions; actions that prove them; and prove you. There are many good words and sayings in this place, even though totally outweighed by the words of gossip, selfishness, and fear, but even these *good* words are mostly *not* given to *deeds*.”

The lower passions of your kind, bar these words from coming to life in your world. So many seek out only what will benefit them materially, even if it is to the detriment of their own. The I Am, has said...

“The need is very great, everywhere in the world.... for a true spiritual awareness to pervade and motivate people's lives. No amount of administrative procedure or adherence to rules can take the place of this soul characteristic, this spirituality which is the essence of man.”³

“Well, there’s been so *many* people who’ve helped me when I had no one to depend on. They showed me their hearts by what they did. They gave me food, talked to me, and encouraged me to read. I think there are a lot more good actions in the world than *you* can see. Maybe your eyes are closed to the endless small acts of people in daily life,” argued Lilly.

Judgement smiled, which was no small feat in its achievement.

“Maybe, young soul. Maybe. I will seek out what you speak of as we continue to travel. But when the time is called for, I will sit deep in the midmost heart of this place, where I may be aware of all. The Judgement will be cast by this resonance alone. Not by your words or mine.”

“We will surprise you then. If not *then*, then before that time *even comes*,” stated Lilly, in a surer and more adult demeanour; a demeanour which none there missed, and Suwna celebrated with a nod of her head.

The angel was especially taken by it, and miracle of miracles, he smiled again.

Ramos then gently entered the conversation, “The people of my Faith believe very much in the soul’s powers, and we are very optimistic of a future civilisation built on the nobility inherent in people. We believe *it can be* achieved by these powers within humankind, *even though* many today struggle to see their inner being *at all* right now. *We too*, young Lilly, believe in mankind, and in small acts. The I Am, has also said...

“Thou art even as finely tempered sword concealed in the darkness of its sheath and its value hidden from the artificers knowledge. Wherefore come forth from the sheath of self and desire that thy worth may be made resplendent and manifest unto all the world.”⁴

...The purpose of the *other* words, quoted by our winged friend before, *mi hija*, were to help call us to our higher nature, and certainly *not* to denigrate or judge; to help us heal, by making it clear to us the nature of our illness. *All His Words are The Remedy,*” finished Ramos, looking at Lilly, and smiling. Unlike the angel he seemed to have a smile, or the promise of one, always on his face.

Lilly just jumped up from her seat and went around the table to hug the man. Ramos was a little surprised, but had known the appreciation of many children here like Lilly; many children and youth lost in the streets.

ODI HUNG THERE IN THE DARK NIGHT ABOVE THE BUILDING. The winds were strong enough to take his stench away, yet not too strong as to test his grip on the zoom handle. He could not *believe* where this idiot had gone. The British Intelligence agent was now parking his car in Max Nadzor’s driveway. Max was the torturer in the recording and the owner of the pack of human dogs who sought the Angel.

Odi knew about the angel; he knew about all of it. The only omission was The Imaginer, still lying deep and somewhat dormant deep in the Earth. He had a hunch there was another player, but no idea that this vile darkness existed. The ancient darkness was more than a player. It was powerful beyond imagination and unstoppable in the outer realities once its energies were restored. Deveroux and his men had fought this creature before, in deeper places, and *it* was what he had seen on the recording.

Odiferous D watched the fool now knock at the door and go in. He hung there a while, deciding not to go in, as Max’s dogs would be more alert with an outsider on the

premises. He almost felt sorry for Geoffrey, as no matter how smart he thought he was, he did not understand what lay just below the surface of Max Nadzor. The word nadzor meant control in Slovenian, and Max had chosen it for himself. He strangely believed that he could control his life, his future, and his rise to power; but mostly, control others. Control is a good thing to have within one's being, but beyond the soul, out in the world, it was usually a tool of selfishness and a weapon, or more truly, and in essence, a balm for fear. Fear and control always seemed to be natural bedfellows.

“Basically, old boy, we need to have control of our *own* country, *and* our *own* world,” finished Geoffrey, after he had shared just an inkling of the existence and interest of the Agents from deeper; not knowing that they were now almost all gone, and that they would not be back.

“I could not agree more,” said a delighted Max, liking the fact he now had a seemingly willing accomplice with information on this Agency.

Geoffrey had shared that they were from deeper, and had capabilities beyond the usual, so Max now knew that he would have to be more cautious in how he went about things, and certainly keep his dogs more alert. He was now angry that they had not brought one of these Agents back with them for him to interrogate, when they took them down in the village. He was now furious at his number one's caution in missing such an opportunity, as Nadzor really did not want to have to work with this spineless fop that he was in conversation with. He blamed *their* lack of vision, of course, but then settled his anger with the *obvious* fact that they could not be expected to be *as smart as him*.

“So, down to business,” said the agent easily, as he sat relaxed in a very comfortable lounge chair across from Max.

“Certainly,” agreed Max, with the same body language.

“You have certain methods that we don’t like, as well as particular ‘business’ interests that are not in the least satisfactory, but we will look the other way for some support of our interests.”

“Support?”

“We hear that you have technology, or at least some knowledge from deeper, so what we are considering is information sharing, *old bean*. Like *all* good friends. You share the tech’, we share the information on these chaps from deeper, etcetera,” explained Geoffrey, with full confidence in his control of this whole situation.

“Sounds very much in order to me,” agreed Max, but knowing that any arrangement would *only* be advantageous to him, not this fool and his friends. Max would throw them a few crumbs from what he had gathered from The Fat Man, but certainly not the bulk, or anything crucial.

“I think this can be quite advantageous for us all, well into the future; don’t you think,” added Geoffrey, thinking he was giving Max more long-term assurances of some leeway to carry on his ‘business’, as well as intimating an ongoing alliance. There was also a small threat implicated by his tone.

Max was after the greatest known power in the universe; an angel. He almost laughed at the arrogance of the glory boy in front of him. Max never *needed* anyone, and would *never* be partners or reliant on anyone, especially for as long as ‘*into the future*’. He never let anyone who had the *least* control over him live any longer than was productive; *not one*. He would end this pathetic piece of roadkill when he had the angel. “*When the world cowers at my feet,*” he now thought.

JUDGEMENT DID NOT SHARE THE JOYFUL FEELINGS IN THE ROOM. While the others had appreciated the exchange, he did not, completely. They were so happy for Lilly finding a true comrade in arms in this humble local man, but the angel was still concerned. He saw this world and its peoples dispassionately and was concerned that this young soul did not have clear sight. He decided that it was time to show her some of her planet's history.

While the creature did see what she and Ramos were saying, he believed that this youth still needed more vision to understand the forces at play in today's world better. He knew history was like a person's memory; that it was required for a normal life, let alone for learning, growing, and evolving. The dangers of not seeing past experience and remembering it, meant that there can be no adulthood, as adulthood comes from long experience and the wisdom it provides. The history of this planet and the development of *these* people were no different to any other world. While all plants grow to be different, the process is the same.

The angel had ceased his words, letting the child feel good about her effort. He was not blind to the fact that she and Ramos had brought out great meaning in this conversation, and that Lilly needed to be encouraged to fight on. It was '*her fight*' that this old angel liked, if indeed this kind of angel liked anything. He was proud of her passion, her determination, and her unwillingness to admit defeat on something so important. She fought for the lives of others and for the potential of her kind. But the angel knew he was fighting for them too, in a way this child could not yet see.

The next morning, he explained to Lilly, Suwna, and Jeremy, that he was taking Lilly back to see the century before this one and then into the recent history of the current one.

"Really!" exclaimed Lilly, quite wide eyed. "Can you do that?!"

“Yes. There is much there, and it would seem, as I look about me, that many of the lessons there, or the wisdom they afforded, seem not to have reached your generation.”

“I have read some history, and others my age have probably learned much more.”

“They have learned *little*, or push its power childishly aside,” stated Judgement, very plainly, and after a pause to show the value of this truth to him, he continued on. “It was somewhat biased when written; in every culture, as it was slanted to suit particular peoples. In your current times too, it is coming under the influence of so many other words; words of the various ideologies that seek to rewrite it for their purposes. These things change the nature of the lessons learned and subvert reality at times, even the mindless storytelling of current fiction and some *professional* comment destroys the truth of times past for a lazy world to ingest.”

“Well, I think that history is being opened up a lot more, too. A lot more is being uncovered and is far less biased than in the past.”

“In a way it is being questioned and wider and diverse sources are now more sought, but because of the influences I have mentioned, because of so little respect for the past and a lack of humility in your generation, you are being very easily led. Like a fool with no memory, or a partial or misshapen one, the human race will circle aimlessly again and again, renewing the countless mistakes of the past and going nowhere.”

“We can access *more* knowledge than *ever* before. I’ve learnt *so* much at the library. Form books, and from the internet. There has *never* been more information available,” argued Lilly.

“The opportunity to access knowledge is no doubt far greater than it has been before here. But, as an individual, one needs to hold a wide and deep historic memory within

oneself. The power of history, and the holding of it *in one's being*, is most assuredly not *only* about the past. Education *too* is not *just* information gathering, it is also in a *held* knowledge of life.”

“How do you know how things were here in the past? You’re new here. You’re just searching with us.”

“I do not sleep, young one. I have deeper sight and hearing. I access the spiritual reality which provides a far more essential view, and I have gathered much of this planet’s history. I have also found a lack of will in most I have talked with here to search deeply for the full truth of any matter. Their racial memory, or their ideology, seems to make them less willing to open their minds and search out more generally, or to delve deep enough into the lessons of history.”

“Most people are more aware of things than they say in a conversation.”

“That may be so, but you need to draw from the human experience of your present day, and of the past, to be able to think for yourself. You need to *carry* these memories, not just access them. You need to *learn* from them; *consider* them, *reflect* on them, make them yours and *act* on them, not just know *of* them. You need to carry a good education in many things *within you*, so that you will not be so easily made in *another image and likeness* by those who seek to make you so. *All* were youth once, just like you, in every generation. To evolve as a kind, then and now, *all* have needed to know the lessons of the past. So as not to cycle aimlessly in error, or dally where there is great danger again, and again.”

“The new generation’s moving on with technology and creating great things. We *do* know enough about the past. We are super-keen about making a better world because people in the past generations *did not* do their job. They have not been adults really. Things like

allowing plastic to choke the planet, and more money being spent on war than on feeding our fellow man,” offered Lilly. “*I know enough, to see.*”

“We can always learn more, even if these things are indeed true. But yes, this world, if I allow its future existence *will* need to address these two failures you speak of *most assuredly*,” agreed Judgement. He then stopped and looked deeply into her eyes again, saying slowly, “Understand that *you* stand in *your* time. But see *its* problems; do not blame; simply *do* what *you* must do. To protest and talk is not enough. You need to bring the change by action, and such change means *sacrifice*. It is *never* about someone else, or those before you, being wrong, it is about your will to *sacrifice* for the change that needs come in the age in which you live. But you need to *carry* knowledge, *deep* knowledge, so that your volition, your intent, can bring out of you, *valuable* action toward higher change. A good part of that knowledge is a *thorough* knowledge of what came before, from the experience of all the lives you now stand upon. Go forward, *indeed*, but ignore the past at your peril.”

Ramos had come into the house with some fresh bread while all this was going on. He had been preparing some breakfast while he listened, and he now nodded to Lilly to show his agreement with Judgement’s argument.

“Then show me,” said Lilly, plainly, and relaxing a little.

“*Good*. You will hopefully see that to live without a memory makes a grown adult into a helpless child, and *so it is* with humanity. Human memory is required, and its *integrity* a *deep* responsibility of *every* individual,” finished the angel, and with that, it put one arm around her midriff and up under her ribs, holding her to his side. His wings unfolded, and in a flash and with a gust of wind, they were gone.

Ramos smiled with wide open eyes, and said to Jeremy and Suwna, “That was *really something*, eh”.

Confines

On their way to the past, Judgement and Lilly conversed. The angel was explaining the nature of history as well as the power of humility in the process of learning. He explained that a person could not be too much *the knower*, or nothing would be learned. He said that he appreciated Lilly's fire and even encouraged it, but also that there is a time for fire, and a time for humility and learning.

Lilly had been brought up among fighting and had fought for her very existence a number of times early in her life. She had also grown up in a culture that valued debate over discussion. People did not seem aware of open discussion or had a lack of will to use the power of a *shared exploration* of differing ideas. The heat of debate and anger were growing to the point lately that many greater fires would not be far away, especially if the language of difference and hate was not soon stilled.

Most saw debate and the fires around these as about finding the truth; or more so them championing it. But Judgement had explained, quite to the contrary, that unity was righter than being right, and that only in humility could people *truly* seek the truth together. He wanted the youth ready to learn from what she would see, and again quoted a Writing on humility from Ramos's, I Am.

“They should conduct themselves in such manner that the earth upon which they tread may never be allowed to address to them such words as these: “I am to be preferred above you. For witness, how patient I am in bearing the burden which the husbandman layeth upon me. I am the instrument that continually imparteth unto all beings the blessings with which He Who is the Source of all grace hath entrusted me. Notwithstanding the honour conferred upon me, and the unnumbered evidences of my wealth—a wealth that supplieth the needs of all creation—behold the measure of my humility, witness with what absolute submissiveness I allow myself to be trodden beneath the feet of men”⁵

“Within the confines of humility, comes the greatest vision. Here there is greater access to knowledge, and the ability to see that *all is relative and a process*. There is far more space and possibility within its confines, than there is in the so-called freedom of opinion, and the lesser field of combative debate,” explained Judgement.

THE BEAST LOOKED ASIDE FROM RAMOS. This one was strong in spirit and its effort would have to be too great to gather a profit of energy; if indeed it could gather *at all* from such a soul. This one lived *in* his soul, and only one Essence lived in his heart, so in these two places the beast could not gain purchase. In these *places* a person is free and able to sacrifice ease and comfort; in surrender, we become powerful and free.

The darkness had, all its ancient life, been envious of free will creatures; these creatures with souls. They seemed to be able to quell the pain of emotion and the excesses of

thought; a luxury it could not afford, and a remedy it could not use to bring an end to its pain. Truth be known though; the creature would not give up the power of its ego to see and gather its own deeper powers. It screamed and cursed The Creator, refusing to be humble before Him, and barring itself from the balm of spirit. This creature had never known of its full true self because it would not look, so it had been confined for eons within the self-torture that had brought it to its, now, most darkened state.

It looked to Jeremy, then to Suwna, now following the train of her thoughts. It is in the endless chattering of the mind that The Imaginer takes hold; as we wander off into our thoughts, not even aware that we are wandering. There he strikes, and there he plays with us and feeds on our emotions. No doubt he has had you at some time, and you have woken wandering what brought you to your latest thought or why you were so emotionally charged.

In any case, the ancient darkness kept following Suwna's thoughts as she mused about how she had never had time to grow a relationship. Her enjoyment of this time travelling with the young Agent had thrown up this question to her mind. She had been so driven and purposed until now. Her thoughts then wandered to her Grandpa Jack, as the science of travel, and finding him, had been her purpose for a long time. She had no idea where on this world to find him. She had narrowed the search to this planet, but it was still so big, and even though the angel had promised to help, it had so far denied her goal. It seemed, for now, that she was destined to be with *these* souls, and on *this* purpose.

She now wondered what Grandpa Jack did for a living...*Was he a fisherman? Then, seeing waves and sand, and him walking along a beach...then smelling mudflats...*and as she wandered in her thoughts, she came to a world that she had Travelled to some time ago; a planet of great seas and endless tidal mud flats, where mud skippers and water trees abounded. She found herself among the green verdure of the water trees there when

everything went cold and dark. The night came in suddenly, and she looked up above her. A wide elliptical cloud began to swirl with great circular force in the sky. It was horizon to horizon and surrounded a clear view, a framed circle of the stars in its midst.

She was buoyed a little by a blue-white light that she now found in her hand, but as she looked around, she could now see only mud. The water trees had vanished, and an almost endless vista of mud had replaced it. The mud stretched all the way to some far off, black treed horizon; all except for two white dead tree trunks with no branches, one on either side of her. A dark foreboding then began to fill her; a growing fear. She tried to release her mind from this dark train of thought, but she could not. The feeling of impending danger grew to terror, as she realised that she was confined here; the two trees somehow holding her firmly in place, and she screamed.

Jeremy and Ramos then became aware of her predicament, because until a moment before she had just seemed to be gently staring off into space, and they had left her to her thoughts. Ramos reached across the table and grabbed her by the shoulders. He then sought her attention, just as he had done with Jeremy on his arrival in Rio. But the mud now started bubbling under Suwna's feet and she started to slowly sink in the wet sand. She went to lift her feet, but they were held in the suction of the mud. She reached for the closest dead tree, but while able to touch it, she could not get a grip on it. It was just a trunk; thick and dry. The swirling sky had darkened more and more and was now swallowing the stars in the night sky as well. All, as she was slowly, but inexorably, taken down into the mud.

She could not release herself and each centimetre she sank was a torture in itself. The Imaginer fed well as she slowly but eventually found herself up to her chest in the mud, and she was still sinking. Ramos had not been able to gather her attention and release her, and she slowly continued to sink to her chin. She held her chin up and screamed again as

hopelessness poured into her. Ramos carefully watched her actions, trying to find a way to release her from whatever nightmare she was trapped in. The mud though, now came up over her closed mouth, slowly and excruciatingly, then to her nose. She blew the mud out, trying to hold it out and keep breathing. She cried now as she tilted her head up for some respite above the mud, but she inevitably fell below it. A greater terror then gripped her as total darkness came.

She screamed inside, and just as she was about to give up the fight *hope* thrust her arm up through the mud. It was instinctive and took The Imaginer by surprise, making it recoil. She then felt some arms around her as Ramos realised, from her movements, the sinking nature of her nightmare. He took hold of her bodily and pulled her up out of the chair.

She woke as Ramos set her down on the floor, and she went down on all fours acting as if she was expelling mud and coughing up muddy water from her lungs. Jeremy knelt down beside her and put one arm across the front of her shoulders for support, rubbing her upper back with the other hand. He thought it would help calm her and massage some of the shock away. He had instinctively done this and began even patting her back strongly to help her remove the muddy water that was not there. Jeremy called her name a few times and she eventually came fully out of that place. She then sat back on the floor and let her head fall to the side to rest it up against his upper arm, and she wept a little.

LILLY AND JUDGEMENT HAD VISITED MANY CONFLICTS NOW. The twentieth century had far more than its fair share. The young lady was beginning to get a feel for the forces that were at play below, and within, these epic upheavals of the nineteen hundreds. She saw national interests and ideologies at war throughout the whole of this century. These took

various forms, from war to influence, but the basis of many of them were the same, and the pain brought on people was also the same. Nationalism, communism, religious fundamentalism, capitalism, trade wars, the falling of colonialism, all brought their outcomes, but under each conflict, and in the pathway of humanity, were two forces.

There was, strangely, a cohesive force that seemed to be aiding a new way of seeing and doing things underneath it all, and she could see how the world had also finally settled into its national boundaries by the end of the century, at least physically. There *were*, over this time too, countries playing with other countries for oil, for strategic dominance, or trade supremacy, all while the battle for ideological supremacy still played its games also. But while many still played in the affairs of their own country, and in other countries, the boundaries of countries had settled.

The other force was a release from external control of countries, as people sought their power back, and refused overlords. Colonialism was being tapered back as people of various countries sought freedom by the use of any opposing force they could bring to bear. Some took on fascist socialism to gain back their strength, while many embraced Communism to regain their power over their own future. Others allowed religious fundamentalism to rise up, while others sought democracy, and some, capitalism. It seemed that any opposing force was better than colonial power. Some, though, as in India and South Africa rallied behind good men, those being Gandhi and Mandela; two truly good men. The sad thing was that even what came after these good men was not always good, and in all of these changes some gained their freedom, while others just came to know a new gaoler, but the process was ongoing.

The nonviolent resistance in India was hard for her to watch, but a complete triumph of the human spirit. The Truth and Forgiveness hearings of the South African solution was

indeed, also, a high-spirited human way out of the darkness. When she saw the tanks falling to the roses of the people in Russia, she wept, and punched the angel on the arm, and said, “See. We are capable of good change, and there’s order growing in this century.”

What took her the most though, was the huge change in the level of communication between countries in the latter part of this century; even while some were still very much at odds, they talked with each other far more by the century’s end. The nations had even succeeded in forming the United Nations, and while she had been allowed to see this institution’s flaws, and too much of its power in the hands of a small number of countries, she knew it was a step in the right direction. The United Nations had truly been a *momentous* step in the evolution of the human family; totally unprecedented, and a marvel that it even existed. It had its critics, and those who saw it as dangerous because they feared more control from it, yet it had still continued on. She could see that it needed to evolve, or something more substantial needed to replace it, as Judgement made it clear to her that nationalism was still strong, and a representative world federation of countries was yet a good while away.

There was a groundswell of change over these hundred years in the attitudes of people through that cohesive and positive force that she had noticed. People learned more of other cultures as time wound on, and more of them visited other countries more often. The mixing of cultures in various countries began too, and the first signs of *unity in diversity*, or cultures adding to other cultures, started to grow in places where only one culture had once been practised before. It seemed that racism, while still strong in various places and needing much work to overcome, had been seen clearly for what it was and had been cast aside by the majority of souls on the planet. Laws were even brought in for cultural and religious freedom in some countries. Things were changing.

The empowerment of women was also an outcome of this underlying positive force of change. Although some countries did not evolve in this, many did, and over the century it evolved from gaoled suffragettes in England, to more equal and empowered women given the same opportunities as men. As all things are a process, there was still resistance to movement towards a greater evolution of this equality, but the gates had been opened in this century. Due to its widespread scale, its unprecedented nature in human history, those particular gates could never to be closed again.

The rise in awareness of humanity's responsibility in the stewardship of the natural world, and in kindness towards animals too, had come a very long way, and these were still growing in the current century. All these great movements forward were somewhat a surprise for Lilly, as the angel had also shown her endless war and unimaginable personal pain and suffering in the great storms of this century. He had shown her death, genocides, and destruction on a massive scale, but this period of history had also indeed shown her clearly its *great light*. There was light growing within the darkness of that century.

When she had commented on this growing light of awareness, the angel had informed her that the Nineteenth Century had been dubbed *The Century of Light* by the son of the Persian I Am.

He then shared part of a speech by this Servant on the nature of light itself, when he spoke in Paris in late 1911, after being freed from forty years of arrest, banishment, and imprisonment...

"There are two kinds of light. There is the visible light of the sun, by whose aid we can discern the beauties of the world around us—without this we could see nothing.

Nevertheless, though it is the function of this light to make things visible to us, it cannot give us the power to see them or to understand what their various charms may be, for this light has no intelligence, no consciousness. It is the light of the intellect which gives us knowledge and understanding, and without this light the physical eyes would be useless.

This light of the intellect is the highest light that exists, for it is born of the Light Divine.

The light of the intellect enables us to understand and realize all that exists, but it is only the Divine Light that can give us sight for the invisible things, and which enables us to see truths that will only be visible to the world thousands of years hence.

It was the Divine Light which enabled the prophets to see two thousand years in advance what was going to take place and today we see the realization of their vision. Thus it is this Light which we must strive to seek, for it is greater than any other...Seek with all your hearts this Heavenly Light, so that you may be enabled to understand the realities, that you may know the secret things of God, that the hidden ways may be made plain before your eyes."⁶

Judgement then went on to share how all the remedies of the intellect, and even the many great people who stood up to change the world for the better, had failed the people, because they could not hear the Voice of God; they missed the dawning of the greater Light of Revelation. The Physician had been sent to tend to the illness of humanity, and while progress had been made, people still closed their ears to His words and barred themselves from a deeper and more encompassing remedy.

But the world *was* changed to Lilly now, as she saw that prejudices *were* challenged and education spread, as technology and human learning exploded, and she made that clear to the angel.

Judgement then explained that *all* these things were a product of the Spirit of The Age. That knowledge was released with each Manifestation of the Ancient of Days. Also, that even though mankind had chosen a lesser and harder pathway, that a new deeper structure had been infused into the very nature of things. Change was brought on in the bubbling of life from an active renewal in the innermost reality, and that the ideas of the Messenger had been made slowly more apparent within the ferment of this century. But all while the world, still deaf to the Wisdom of The Remedy, also fell still deeper into the mires of materialism and ideological warfare, as it seemed that only in the deep dark would the human creature finally see wisdom and seek the light. It had learned much, and it had learned so little, over those hundred years; but the light was rising in the darkness.

“Most seem to be ignoring the lessons of that fertile century,” he explained, “as the voices that now shout out loud in your world are becoming even more intolerant. Many *have* learned by the movement of the past, yet still see themselves as the physicians and only wheel out new variations of old ideologies, or piecemeal ideas that are confused and cannot see to the human future. They will only distract and confuse, aiding the darkness of chaos to grow. The *darkness of self* too, is only rotting the foundations of what must needs pass away, even while much good has grown. All hope is in The Light. It will be more easily seen as humanity continues to go deeper into the darkness; after it hits wall after wall of ignorance. They need to yield to The Physician, for their own sakes, but pride will blind their eyes and most probably lead to chaos. So, I must bring down the requisite force to change, or destroy, your world.”

“But all the success and learning we’ve achieved; all the death, destruction, and lives lost, will have been for nothing,” argued Lilly.

“It seems that the pain now shaking your planet is *not* enough. All the death and destruction seem, so far, not enough. Two wars have encompassed this globe and many other great conflagrations, as well as ideas that played to people’s fears; *even these* have still not united you, not *humbled* you. Great waves of mental illness and poverty also continue to torture the body of mankind. What do you think it will take for people to be humble, and seek the heart again?”

“There must be another way. We can learn.”

“Contemplate this new understanding and act in accordance with *wisdom*; not simply more accessed information. The intellect is powerful, but the soul is where things need be measured. It is where nobility and a final peace will be found. *Contemplate* knowledge, do not just grab it and shout it at others; seek out if it is valuable, and if so, act on it to unite souls. Even though you are limited, you can do this.”

“Limited?”

“Confined. The eyes of men can only see so far due to the confines of their nature, as you are *learning* creatures. These confines of knowledge disallow you the vision required to move you forward. Children need guidance from adults, and so it is the same for humanity. You need to understand that. First is Knowledge from the I Am, the Physician, if you could only see.”

THE CREATURE NEEDED MORE. It *always* needed more, as it could *never* be satiated. It now reached out again from its confines in a space between the rocks, seeking out the

tortured mind of Max Nadzor. It had often received great slaking of its endless thirst from this man's dreams. The Imaginer then saw Geoffrey, and easily distracted like a child, it turned its attention to him. Like a new delight, the darkness enjoyed deeply this man's negative and arrogant thoughts. This one was very cool in outer manner, but yet very ego driven. He would be easy pickings.

It was then that a stench reached its senses and it immediately recoiled. The stench seemed to be coming from someone nearby, but each time the beast tried to see through the cloud of stench the smell would attack it, and it would recoil. A very *animal* creature, it could not handle such a smell. It seemed for now at least that Odiferous D was immune to the darkness, and Geoffrey had also fortunately been spared the terror of being taken away in his thoughts to some torturous place because of his proximity to Odi.

Something now moved in the sky above Odi while he went on with the business of his investigation of Geoffrey.

He did not sense the presence at all. He just followed the agent as he now left Nadzor's premises again. Geoffrey had visited a few times now and moved easily and confidently as he walked to his car, which was a bad sign as far as Odi was concerned. Being so relaxed, he was either oblivious to the danger, or he and Nadzor were in cahoots. He had to know which, and so immediately hatched a plan to find out. Being so odorous, it was hard for him to gather information *up close and personal*. But maybe he could use Geoffrey's lack of knowledge about the protocols of The Agency to get a clear bead on his intentions.

He followed the agent home and waited for him to settle in for the night. Odi was still elevated on the travelling device, and now looked into the house from the darkness, just far enough away from a streetlight so as to be part of the darkness. There was no way the English agent could see him in the dark.

After a bath and a meal, the man sat down with a small drink. He smiled as if very pleased with his day and went over his latest conversation with Nadzor a few times. He was very taken by his part in the conversation; very taken with his clever use of language and the clearer expression of Nadzor's place in *the scheme of things*. He smiled again, as he saw how the conversation had put this *lowlife* more in his place, and opened this channel of information wider, with *no lack of flair* on his part. Again, he smiled.

There was then a knock at the door. The agent was suddenly wary. "*Have I pushed Nadzor too hard this time?*" he thought. Doubts were now arising where his confidence once happily sat. He grabbed a pistol out of his shoulder holster, which was hanging on a hook in the hall, as he went to the door. He then called out, "Who's there?" Making sure his silhouette could not be seen through the small glass panels of his door, while taking a bead on the dark figure now in the sensor light outside the door.

"Don't open the door. I'm from The Agency, deeper. We have had you under surveillance and have ways of hearing your conversations. My advice to you is to curtail any partnership with Nadzor. It seems that he is only a small player in what we are after, and believe me, he knows a lot about the *main* threat to your world," said Odi, with a smile, but hoping like hell Geoffrey would lead him the rest of the way.

"Don't know what you mean old chap. Just been sussing out Nadzor. You know; show him a little interest and hopefully slowing him down if he's up to something big."

"Agent Geoffrey, let me be clear," said Odi, trying to keep up the bluff, and with everything crossed, he continued. "We know the nature of your conversations, and you are safe from arrest only because of the treaty situation we have with your planet. We will inform your higher ups, so you will most likely be looking for new employment soon, and if we see you near Nadzor again we will then have no choice but to take you out of the equation."

Geoffrey was not happy as he knew he was out of bounds with his own organisation. Odi's bluff was also going to work because this man had *no* info' on The Agency. He now even felt a little foolish, as he still didn't know *anything* about the *main threat* that the Agents had talked about in their initial meeting, and it now clear that Nadzor had been playing him. He had failed to protect his lot, now seeing the fruitlessness of the narrow confines of his arrogance.

"*Alright, old man*, I can see you *have* me; *only* protecting my lot. My apologies for any nasty language about you gents in my conversations with Max; had to *seem* that way to be credible, as it were. I'm coming out."

"My advice would be to stay right where you are, and considering that we are now clear, and you seem more on board, maybe you *could* stay in your relationship with Nadzor," suggested Odi, but immediately chided himself, as it may not seem believable that they would warn him off Nadzor, then allow him to keep up contact.

"*Very good*. That would *have* to be helpful."

"He won't share anything of real importance with you, as he has plans bigger than just *your lot*, but maybe you can be of help with his movements. Just keep up the pretence and we will be in touch for updates. Watch him carefully. He is no fool."

Geoffrey stood beyond the doorway realising that he *had* to be a player in this, and he now even wanted to work with this crew from deeper; *his* aims finally untied with theirs and he would do his part. A warm feeling of being came over him as he aligned with them. It was *very strange* for him, as such feelings were very unusual in his line of work.

"So, the higher ups will know?"

“They have to know, agent. As you would well know. Maybe it’s time to do some soul searching, and if you do a good job, we will definitely make clear the importance of your part in this investigation.”

“Only did it for my own lot, *you know*,” knowing that he could maybe still swing all this with his higher ups.

“Nadzor is *way* ahead of you, and the possible results of his activities much worse than you can imagine. He is the enemy, and *we* are your friends. You will be in grave danger at every meeting, for your lot, and for *all* others, Geoffrey.”

With that the agent felt another warm feeling come over him. Geoffrey was feeling an alignment to right spirit, a connection with wider humanity, and the sheer beauty and deep power of self-sacrifice. He was quite taken, and wondering why he had not felt this way before, no matter all the work he had done to look after his people. He then remembered his youthful self and the reasons for entering this work in the beginning. It *was* to protect his people, and even though he always knew his work was for them, he now saw clearly that he had only been feeding his own ego for a very long time. “*Just plumping my own pillow, as it were*,” he thought. He then relaxed as he felt the *strain of self* leave his heart.

“*All good*, old chap. Seems that there is a change in the air,” answered a humbler Geoffrey, as he breathed in and caught, thankfully, just a tiny nasal glimpse of something particularly foul.

“*Very good*. We’ll be in touch,” stated Odi, as he threw the steel ball of the zoom handle straight up, with him following quickly behind it.

Odi knew his ruse would be discovered when The Agency got in touch with Geoffrey’s mob, or the other way around. He would still send an email explaining the

situation to the English higher ups, and they would liaise with The Agency. All the right people would know, and Geoffery would keep tabs on Nadzor for them. He was stoked at what he had achieved, and now even allowed himself a little hope of becoming *official* again. As much as he liked the freedom that his individual initiative afforded him, he wanted to be a part of the main game, and in with the others. It *was* great to be a free agent, but a lot harder work, alone.

He smiled as he zoomed off into the night, now high above the dank clouds of England. The moon was bright tonight, and his flight path was like a wonderland. He smiled, now knowing they had someone almost on the inside, and that The Agency would soon know all about him and Nadzor. The stench didn't seem so bad right now for Odi. He felt good about his place in the world, but unfortunately, he wouldn't be getting any backup beyond those now on the planet. The Agency would know nothing of all this, as they had locked down the Earth quickly. *More* unfortunately, he had no intention of being in any more contact with Geoffrey, as he thought The Agency would be on the job there.

The presence in the night had watched Odi at his work but did not follow him. It had been drawn to Geoffrey.

LILLY AND JUDGEMENT WERE NOW ONLY A YEAR FROM THE PRESENT. She had seen and gathered so much that she was bursting. She knew that she would need some time to reflect over all she had now come to see. The young girl felt a little older and more responsible for the fortunes of her kind. Not even to do with Judgement and his purpose, but simply within itself. She felt her responsibility deeply now and knew that it needed to be beyond the narrow confines of words alone.

The angel now shared a quote about the nature of the current times, as they flew into their present. He said it was from an Institution called the Universal House of Justice. One that was created by the I Am...

*"Over the last year, it has become clearer still that, in different nations in different ways, the social consensus around ideals that have traditionally united and bound together a people is increasingly worn and spent. It can no longer offer a reliable defence against a variety of self-serving, intolerant, and toxic ideologies that feed upon discontent and resentment. With a conflicted world appearing every day less sure of itself, the proponents of these destructive doctrines grow bold and brazen. We recall the unequivocal verdict from the Supreme Pen: "They hasten forward to Hell Fire, and mistake it for light." Well-meaning leaders of nations and people of goodwill are left struggling to repair the fractures evident in society and powerless to prevent their spread. The effects of all this are not only to be seen in outright conflict or a collapse in order. In the distrust that pits neighbour against neighbour and severs family ties, in the antagonism of so much of what passes for social discourse, in the casualness with which appeals to ignoble human motivations are used to win power and pile up riches—in all these lie unmistakable signs that the moral force which sustains society has become gravely depleted."*⁷

Hidden Things

The man ran into the lounge room where Nadzor had nodded off. He woke suddenly with the footsteps, then shot a look of pure hatred at his man. He had reacted like an angry bear woken from hibernation; yet one with a conscious mind, which magnified this innocent angry reactive response to one of evil.

“This *better* be good,” Max said quietly, but threateningly.

“We think we have shot at the angel.”

“The angel!”

“Yes, boss. It’s in Rio.”

“Rio, eh. He’s still there?”

“Yes; stationary for quite some time, then gone, then back again. But it’s the longest he’s been anywhere. I think we have a shot.”

“Use the travel device. Get there and track him down. Maybe we won’t need my plan to bring him to me after all.”

“For sure, boss,” said the younger man, as he turned and rushed out of the room.

“You had *better* find me that angel this time, or become as mobile, *and as invisible*, as him,” called Max, after his man, who was now running down the corridor beyond his office doorway.

“Yes, boss,” called the man back to him, now with an angry look on *his* face.

Yuri was Russian and had come from hard stock. His family had run a black-market business under the Communists and now under the newer democratic government. They were a tight family, yet he had been sold by them, to Max. Nadzor had needed a dog that was loyal, and one used to being in a hidden life. He had recruited the boy, or really, had paid Yuri’s family for his indenture. The young man had done the honourable thing and fulfilled his part in the bargain for his family. He had not seen any of his family since then; in the almost ten years that he had now worked for Max.

Max was an extremely private man and required this cutting of even family ties as part of the deal. The full ten-year indenture was close to ending, and Max had become more and more threatening toward him as it began to count down. Yuri knew that this psychopath would probably not let him go or let him live. He knew too much about Max’s business and he would probably kill him; making out to Yuri’s family that it just happened on the job, or some other useful excuse. Yuri’s father had given his son up for dead on the day he made the deal though. He had plenty of other sons, and this one was only the runt after all. The boy had not known this, but over the years, as he grew older and saw the nature of these types of men, had realised that he was just a commodity.

In the last four years he had constantly worked on a plan; a *get out* plan. He would not be going home, and in this moment, he knew that he would not be coming back; he realised that *right now* was the time to implement his escape. He felt a great measure of freedom in that decision, as he felt the joy of the opportunity to choose his life’s path enter his being. He

had never known it, as he had always been held to the will of men who controlled their world with an iron fist, and who cared for no one. Their own power was all they cared about, and they guarded it fiercely.

As Yuri got the boys set up with their devices, he went over his plan. He would finish this job and then he would be gone. This effort to capture the angel had to be successful, as Max would definitely leave no stone unturned hunting him down if it wasn't. A completed mission just might give Max a reason to let him be, or definitely keep him too busy with his new trophy, and his plans. The last dog was now all rigged up and weaponised. He nodded to Yuri, who then hit the button on a flat box strapped to his hip. They were gone in a flash of light.

“RELIGION FELL AWAY BECAUSE IT DID NOT HOLD PEOPLE,” offered Ramos.

“It fell away because nobody saw it as useful, or providing answers anymore,” put in Lilly, now aware of the many underlying movements in humankind's pathway through history.

“It fell away because it was misused. Also, because people with new science considered themselves knowledgeable, so thought they had no need of it or became sceptical of the existence of God. But they also wanted the freedom they thought they would get by leaving their particular belief. Most though thought that these beliefs could no longer answer the questions of more educated people, or have real relevance of the new era,” said Judgement, plainly.

“I suppose there are many reasons for these things,” added Suwna.

“Generally, this planet *has* advanced in foundational changes, such as science and equality,” went on Judgement. “Although equality seems to be somewhat selective as yet. But various minds here are trying to fill the void of meaning and religion with ideologies, or endless small things that make people feel good for fleeting moments. People are forgetting sacrifice, generosity, compassion, and loving kindness. Many even seem to use kindness toward only particular groups, or as a battering ram to bash down the gates of opposing ideologies. Knowledge is lost in this mire of self, things, and in the ideas of children. As it has been said...”

"In truth, the main reason for the unbridled evil in society now is the lack of spirituality.

The materialistic civilization of our age has so absorbed the energy and interest of mankind that people in general no longer feel the need to rise above the forces and conditions of this existence.'⁸

“Where there’s a vacuum of moral leadership, or no shared order of meaning, self aware creatures naturally seek to fill such voids with their own ideas,” shared Jeremy. “It seems to me that there is a war going on for moral leadership here, since the religions lost the generality of people. This planet seems now in an evolutionary spurt, a paradigm shift, so as the old falls away, and the new structure still forming, all kinds of ideas rise; people search for meaning, and deal with the loss of societal boundaries by trying to build their own or hark back to old outworn ones. It’s all part of these great shifts.”

Suwna, just sat back, and said, “Where have you been in all our discussions, Jeremy?”

“Trying to mind my own business, and do my job,” he answered in his defence, then adding, “Talking about that, maybe we need to be moving on.”

“I think we need to talk about the strange things that have happened to us all. Well, except you, Judgement. There have been some very strange things; something hidden is affecting us,” said Suwna.

“*Something hidden?* There is *nothing* hidden from my eyes,” stated Judgement plainly, just as there was a knock at the door.

Jeremy would have been amused, but a strong intuition of imminent danger pushed it aside. He gently pushed Ramos away from the door, and as he went to answer it, he looked at Judgement, something silently passing between them.

He now slowly opened the door.

It was Yuri.

“Hola, mi amigo,” he said, looking into the house as he did.

Jeremy jabbed him in the gut with a light stick, and pushed him out into the street, then quickly fired a pulse into him, knocking him down. The angel burst out through the roof as Jeremy had acted, and was immediately fired on by the five other men. Yuri had rolled over backwards a number of times, even though dazed, going with the force of the pulse to gather his feet again and stand with his men; all while charging up another device in the front of his vest.

He looked up and saw the angel for the first time, and he strangely froze there in that place. He had the angel cold, but he could not bring himself to flick the switch on his weapon. The angel had been bunched up in a protective ball from the bullets fired at him, but

now straightened, as a powerful energy release came out from its heart. It was like a thump of wind had burst out, knocking Yuri and Max's other dogs to the ground.

Jeremy stood guarding the doorway in protection of those inside, while the angel flew down and walked in a small circle around the fallen Yuri. He then turned his eyes to the waking dogs. He waved his arm and they simply dissipated into nothingness. The Agent was stunned, just as Judgement said, "They never truly existed."

He then continued circling around Max's fallen lieutenant, as Yuri rose to his feet. Judgement came around the front of him, and having him eye to eye, he said, "There is *meaning* here." He then tilted his head from side to side, as if seeking it in this man's eyes somehow.

Just then Jeremy caught the smell of something so sweet. *A figure moved back into an alleyway, and although it remained there for a part of what would play out in this small street, it had found a place where it was not noticed.* The smell was like nothing in all his experience, but the angel's interest in Yuri had Jeremy's attention right now; that, and the shock of the angel's total disregard for the sanctity of life. The winged creature could have disabled those lost souls, but he ended them like it was of no consequence at all.

Yuri was not able to look the angel in the eye. He gulped, and his eyes became moist, but stood there tall, to take his medicine.

"Your weapon; *engage it*. Fire on me," challenged the angel, as it took three steps back and waved Jeremy out of the firing zone.

Jeremy did not move, so the angel waved again, and he found himself cast back inside with the others, now on his back. He got up on his feet again, with Ramos and Suwna helping him, and they all watched what would happen next from the window.

Lilly had seen the men dissipate and remembered falling into nothingness in the desert. But instead of this unhinging her, it showed her most clearly what she was up against. Strangely, yet maybe naturally, a certain strength then rose within her; she was not afraid of anything now, and in that one moment she had again grown a little older. This was *no longer* some silly game with an angel. Not that it *had been* for her, but now she felt the *full* seriousness of it. From now on she would treat this situation with all the seriousness it deserved. This new aspect of maturity had always been in potential inside her; just hidden until now.

Jeremy had come up against Yuri before. He was a formidable opponent. He had taken down Agent Deveroux, as well as three other Agents, all by himself, in that African village; all while he guided his dogs to take out the remaining Agents. Anyone, or *anything*, bringing someone like Deveroux down, was not even imagined in Agency circles.

“Engage the weapon,” ordered the angel.

“I cannot.”

“Engage the weapon. *Fight!*”

“I cannot.”

“You *fight* for a foul creature, but *not* for yourself?”

“I do not wish to fight anymore. *End me* or let me go.”

The angel then turned on the switch on the man’s vest by a wave of his hand, and nothing happened.

Yuri looked at him with a question, and the angel answered. “It creates a great force, *does it not?* But not in the presence of an angel.”

“The boss told us it would bring you down,” said Yuri, never believing that it wouldn’t work. They had even tested it. It *was* a very powerful weapon.

The Fat Man had had a good chuckle about that one, when Max had thought him broken; when he had given up the specifications of the weapon, telling him how it could even bring down angels. The Fat Man had known much about the order of things and knew a good deal about the workings of the universe. He knew it would not be long before this planet, in its current state, got a visit from one of these winged warriors. The Fat Man was reaching back from the grave, but it had not netted the life of Max Nadzor as he had wished. The Fat Man would dearly have loved that outcome for all the pain Max had visited on him, and he would most surely have loved the last laugh.

“Enough, about the weapon. Why did you *not* fire on me?”

“I couldn’t do it. I saw you would be like me, held in the servitude of that lowlife; that, and the power that he would have over countless others if he controlled you. I decided to die rather than let that happen to anyone else,” answered Yuri.

“You are...*changed.*”

“I am lost.”

The angel smiled, and breathed deeply what grace was flowing here, then cried out loud, “*There is meaning here!*” And as he did, the wind gusted in a powerful spiral around him and upwards into the sky, as if it was picking up his words and issuing them up in praise, and somehow, for them to rain down upon all the earth.

YURI HAD ONLY STAYED FOR THE NIGHT and was leaving this morning. He did not dare stay any longer. The angel had been very intent on him, and the meaning within him; *as intent* as Lilly was on them both. She had stayed up with them until just after midnight, when Yuri had said that he must sleep, as he had to travel a long way the next day. The girl had not wanted to miss anything, as her responsibility, on behalf of the people of Earth, was now even clearer to her. She had been very changed from seeing the deadly power of the angel, and more so, the fact that it seemed to have no conscience.

It was strange for Lilly to see *an angel* as conceited and soulless, and *killers* as victims. She saw that there was so much more to life, and that the nature of each situation seemed to make things different, and yet strangely also *most definitely* not. The vision of a situation, and actions on it, were dependent on the nature of that situation, almost as much as what was considered best. This was a revelation to her. They were all killers to her; that would not change, but Yuri and the angel's intent and actions were also part of this whole impossible situation. It would take a lot of listening and reflection for Lilly to gather the full truth of this violent meeting. Maybe she would never see it truly, but it was not only as it seemed on face value.

Ramos had watched them all talking yesterday evening after the goings on and had fed them as they talked. He had noticed that the young lady had changed, and he was saddened seeing that some of her innocence had been lost. Even so, a woman was being born, so there was as much to celebrate also. The young lady was turning fifteen soon, and her experiences here and now would very much shape her life into the future; especially such momentous experiences.

Today he had seen the girl wake up early, and she still had a very furrowed brow as she tried to come to grips with all that had landed in her lap. He then decided to get her

outside, in the sunshine and fresh air of the morning, so he asked Lilly to go for a walk with him to get more food.

“How is your heart, young one?” he asked, after a little time.

Lilly looked at Ramos, quite glad that someone had seen her pain.

“It is a little *heavy*, Ramos. But I can carry it.”

“Ahh, little one,” sighed the man of the favellas, “we must all grow older, eh.”

“I feel stronger because of all this. I always got stronger when my life got harder.”

“Yes,” agreed Ramos, recalling his own pathway to maturity.

“Why do men like Yuri kill? He seems like just a boy; an innocent child in a way.”

“Mmm, well, *mi nina*, our nature is *dual*. There is the lower animal, the survivor, the eater, the one who seeks material comfort. There is also the higher spiritual creature, the creature of love, of thought, of freedom, sacrifice and kindness. That young man has not known his deeper self and has only just now realised it exists.”

“I can’t see that; I mean the part where you said he did not know his higher self before. I can see he wants to make up for the pain he has brought on others, but he knows what’s right and wrong, and he has done some very terrible things.”

“He is an extreme case, and yes, somehow, he did know his higher self, but chose to ignore it maybe. At least, until he could no longer allow himself to protect his *own* life *over* the lives of *others*. Such is the mystery of men; the mystery of our hearts.”

“His animal kept him alive; *I suppose*. Not an excuse, but I don’t know how I would have been in his shoes. I haven’t lived his life. I thought *mine* was hard, but when he talked about his to Judgement...well...”

“Es bueno you can see that, and we *are* not to judge. The basic needs of our physical self should be cared for, but this lower nature is most truly the great challenge of this life. Its resistance to what is spiritually good over what is materially advantageous is what tests our souls and allows us the opportunity to grow spiritually strong. Its nature is perfect, as is all in creation. It is in reaching the understanding of our true nature, *our spiritual being*, which sets us free from it; well, begins to set us free; just like Yuri found when he chose the lives of others over his own. His soul lay hidden, and then suddenly it revealed itself, in the *highest* order.”

“But he will have to pay for his crimes.”

“That is not mine to say. He will be leaving us today, and God will decide the rest. We do not know the burdens God has placed on him and how well he has, or may yet, succeed. No one can know another in this way. It is how we invest the measures that have been placed in *us*, within the various realities and circumstances of our lives.”

“So, you can be a killer, and it may be okay?” asked Lilly, not happy at all with what Ramos seemed to be saying.

“No, no. There will be darkness, and a debt on his soul, no doubt. Murder is a serious crime, and I would say people need to be punished for such things, as to take the potential of someone’s whole future life here is a great debt and must be paid. The point I was making, is that it is not mine or yours to judge what we cannot see. That is, the state of his soul, and the struggles his life. Only The Merciful can truly see the reality and circumstances, the intent

and effort, of any soul. It is best, and more spiritually advantageous, to leave such things to Him.”

“But he killed, so there should be justice *here*, not just later.”

“I just know that I will do nothing in this matter. It is yours to decide if you believe you must; and yes, justice, reward and punishment are the pillars of societal order. We must uphold them for the protection and nurture of all.”

“But you’re not going to get the police?”

“I find I cannot in this case, Lilly. As for you and the others, and especially that amazing, winged creature, that thankfully fixed my ceiling and repaired my roof, you must all make *your own* choice.”

“It is not a light decision.”

“No, and reward and punishment are not only pillars that hold up justice and order, they are also part of the foundation that provides the peace and nurture of the children of humanity. The boy was abused in a deep way and kept ignorant of his higher self; these are greater crimes to me. God will judge, or Yuri will pay his debt here for his crimes here if one of you decides his fate. I feel for the young ones who have been treated this way. I know of some, and there have even been many children in this ‘modern’ world who have been left in the arms of abuse because it was too hard politically, or financially, to move them. Care for the safety of children should *never* be political or financial. It should *never* be forgiven or ignored by any soul in any race or culture, or due to someone’s social status; it is only ever, *wrong*. To me, leaving children in such circumstances is even the *same crime* as the *act of abuse itself*,” finished Ramos, with some real fire.

Though he was not going to report Yuri to the authorities, he *was* saddened by the endless excuses of violent and selfish souls who attacked women, sold drugs, enslaved young souls, and hurt others to get what they wanted. It seemed to him that the law was becoming more and more concerned about the rights of the criminal rather than the safety or suffering of the victim. Excuses of mental struggle, being drunk, or on drugs at the time of the act, were some of the defence lawyer's greatest weapons. Excuses filled the world it seemed to him, for every kind of bad behaviour, and even *compassion* misused. There was far less shame in people, and the rock of basic honesty and courtesy was day by day more shunned. The foundations of life now crumbled to serve weak souls on every level, from homes, to schools, to courtrooms, as more and more of the world drifted into the confused mire.

"It is strange, isn't it; how some things are definitely true, and yet may be relative; yet definitely true and very much not relative at all," said Lilly, even confusing herself. "Judgement killed too, and might kill countless more, and *I* fly with him. Life was simpler when I was a child. Hard, but simpler," she mused.

Ramos smiled, and said, "Seek the spirit, Lilly. *Live* in it. See things clearly and be at ease. *It* informs our actions; what *truly* makes us, shows us, and teaches us. As the Great Messenger has said, place justice before your eyes, so you can see through your own eyes and know of things through your own knowledge."

"I would like it if I could read about your Faith. You seem to be a very good man, and I like how you see things. Actually, Ramos, it's more *how you are*."

"Ahh, I strive, and like all, I have flaws, but I would love to share my Faith with you. I have many books. You can choose from them, and I can help a little, eh."

"Yes, thanks," said Lilly, and the two walked on in the gentle early morning air.

MAX EXPLODED. It was two days later, and he had now sent others after the men. No one had seen them, though one local man had said that there was talk of a tussle of some kind two days ago. It was Ramos. He had thankfully gathered their intent and played along. He told them, with the glaring eyes of a simpleton, that in this neighbourhood violence was sadly part of things, and people here usually kept out of any trouble, especially near their homes.

“But the angel *had* been there?” now asked Max.

“Yes, sir. There were strong readings, but residual.”

“The men?”

“No sign of any of them,” answered the man, gulping in fear of Max’s probable response, even though he loved it that he had become the new Lieutenant of Max’s pack.

Max didn’t know what had happened. He was not at all happy. He thought for a moment of a double-cross, but discounted it, as he knew that he had all those men too scared to cross him. It was most likely that they still hunted the angel and could not keep in touch, or even more likely, that the angel had prevailed somehow and killed them all.

He was angry, but not defeated. He would have to set up again. He would have to use his previous plan to draw the angel to him. He would use a new weapon. The men who had disappeared were very well trained, so he knew that it was most likely *the weapon* that didn’t work. “*That fat pig must have played me for sure,*” he then thought, while smiling a little at The Fat Man’s guile. “*In the middle of all that pain,*” he thought, with some respect growing for the old criminal from deeper, well...in Max’s own sad way.

Max had also been in touch with a very pale man from deeper. He believed he was a kind of junior associate of The Fat Man. When the old crim had finally died, Max had got in touch with this *supplier of things*. Fortunately, this pale man was never happy to be out in the light, or allow anyone any direct access deeper, or to his warehouses. Staying hidden and working from dark places were the tools of his trade. He did not lend them out, or open these doors, but he had supplied Nadzor with a couple of high-end weapons before he finally realised that The Fat Man had nothing to do with it.

He was the only one who knew where the old rogue had disappeared to, except for one other soul, and was to be an emergency link only. So, when it seemed that The Fat Man was back in business, the pale man was a *little* wary. But of course, greed had in the end ruled his decision to trade with Max. Eventually though, he *had* decided to make sure this guy from the Outer Realities was legit. He tricked Nadzor in a conversation, and Max gave himself up by being too confident that he was smarter than the fool he was dealing with. The pale man then closed off his back pathway for goods and communication to pass to Earth.

Nadzor knew that he had the goods to bring down the angel, as although the pale man had eventually cottoned onto him, he had already provided Max the right gear. The pale man had no real reason not to believe that it was not The Fat Man communicating with him, and had just decided to do some discrete business from hiding, so he had provided a creature and tech that *would* bind an angel. Max was confident of this creature and the weapon he had purchased from the pale man, but now wondered if any of the information he got out of the fat wily old fox he had tortured was any good. He smiled again, appreciating '*the game*' in that rogue from deeper.

It was then that Max felt a twinge of concern. He always listened to his dog sense, as he called it. It had got him out of many jams as he rose to power in the dark world that he

frequented. *“What about Geoffrey, maybe he was playing his own game too,”* he thought. The agent was *no* new chum to his work, and Max now saw that it would not be unreasonable to believe that the intelligence officer was *also* working *him*. He then knew that if he was to succeed, he had to disappear. He had to get his men, and the gear, and stay hidden until it was time to take the angel down. The angel was his *big play*, and he *had* to keep things tight until he had it under his control. Then he could do *whatever* he wanted. Geoffrey or no Geoffrey, any damned Agency, or any army on the planet for that matter.

Max sat back and laughed out loud at his own brilliance, then took a sip of his drink. He never ran, he would finish his drink, and then get underway. He knew he was ahead of the game still. *“Max Nadzor never runs,”* he thought to himself.

Deep in the dark, The Imaginer salivated at the thought of the angel in a weakened state. This ancient darkness would be powerful enough in this reality without the angel, especially given some time on this planet, but, just like Max, it was never enough, and never soon enough. Nothing was ever enough.

JUDGEMENT, LILLY, SUWNA, AND JEREMY wandered around the Library of Congress. They had needed cards, and Lilly was under sixteen so would not be allowed, but Judgment had just waved his hand and they had all been allowed in. The architecture was exquisite, and Lilly was very taken. She had never seen anything that old and ornate. They had visited the Louvre, but the art, books, and exhibits had more taken her attention there. She knew that she was indeed fortunate to have found the angel among the warehouses, even though he threatened her world and questions of his nature still disturbed her a bit.

She had learnt so much in so short a time and was very glad for all the reading she had done over the years. She loved libraries, and this one was amazing. So, she was here and there, and sitting reading, and standing reading bits of books in the isles. She even spent time just caressing the spines of old books and wondering about their titles; even pulling one old book out and hugging it tightly. They stayed there the whole day, and she had found some of the works of philosophers the most interesting. She hoped they might shine some light on what she was dealing with. But as such searching plays out in such a place, one thing leading to another, she now found that she had come to reading about the use of language and the nature of free speech. She read a quote in one book that quoted a 19th century British politician and philosopher, John Stuart Mill:

“First, individuals are more likely to abandon erroneous beliefs if they are engaged in an open exchange of ideas. Second, by forcing other individuals to re-examine and re-affirm their beliefs in the process of debate, these beliefs are kept from declining into mere dogma. It is not enough that one simply has an unexamined belief that happens to be true; one must understand why the belief in question is the true one.”⁹

She sat and contemplated that. The discussions she had had over these weeks had definitely challenged her beliefs, some definitely falling in the process, but she *was* far clearer on why she believed what she did. The passionate discussion with the angel had brought to light hidden things, *more* true things. As Mill had said, open discussion brought more truth to her door and more clarity on why she believed the truths she already held.

Judgement heard her thoughts, and added a small quote from George Orwell, an English novelist.

“If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought...”¹⁰

Lilly thought about that for a while but did not really get it. She could see it was linked to the quote she had just read but did not know what it really meant. She would need to spend some time reflecting on it. She could tell it was a powerful understanding, but its applications and implications were something that needed to be explored. She thought she would engage Judgement on this subject tonight, with the others also, and search *their* life experiences too. It was great to have other minds, and different ones, of different ages, from different places, and with different experiences. It was almost like a library itself.

The young lady then put the book back on the shelf and picked another. She simply could not get enough.

Suwna was in the science section, seeing where this planet was up to in its understanding of the physical universe, and what she could learn from any scientific pathways that her world may not have wandered down. She wandered from book to book, glancing through and moving on. She came to a book on the physics of the universe. She saw the model, and as she was very au fait with even deeper physics, she was surprised with what she found. She had stumbled on a book that tried to posit that the world was ten to twelve thousand years old, thinking that surely this planet people were beyond such a theory, at least in relation to the other scientific literature she had read here. She then found another book which talked about a big bang, and how gravity and five or six amazing perfect outcomes in

the process as it unfolded had created the universe; all its stars, planets, and sundry, which had allowed for life to grow on Earth.

She saw this as far better than the more close-minded theory she had read, and one very much more appreciative of the magic of existence. But it was also a little less than they could have come to at this level of technological advancement. They had definitely taken off, as the angel had also explained at one stage that a great surge of AI and robotics were beginning to gain hold here. It was exciting times, and she would suppose, scary times for people in this world right now, as they were almost sling-shotting into the future. Such was the pace of such a time in *her own* planet's evolution. Not that all worlds followed exactly the same path, but there were definite similarities, and certain stages seemed to be required.

She remembered a quote from the latest Innate who had graced her planet. This was one of the mysteries in His Writings that had helped inspire her to pursue science, use her inventiveness, and seek to delve more deeply into the Knowledge within this quote and in His other Writings.

"A drop of the billowing ocean of His endless mercy hath adorned all creation with the ornament of existence, and a breath wafted from His peerless Paradise hath invested all beings with the robe of His sanctity and glory. A sprinkling from the unfathomed deep of His sovereign and all-pervasive Will hath, out of utter nothingness, called into being a creation which is infinite in its range and deathless in its duration. The wonders of His bounty can never cease, and the stream of His merciful grace can never be arrested. The process of His creation hath had no beginning, and can have no end."¹¹

This mystery had continued to inspire and inform her, as she built the amulet and travelled the endless byways of reality. So too, two other quotes about reality...

“Verily I say, the human soul is exalted above all egress and regress. It is still, and yet it soareth; it moveth, and yet it is still. It is, in itself, a testimony that beareth witness to the existence of a world that is contingent, as well as to the reality of a world that hath neither beginning nor end.”¹²

and...

“As to thy question whether the physical world is subject to any limitations, know thou that the comprehension of this matter dependeth upon the observer himself. In one sense, it is limited; in another, it is exalted beyond all limitations. The one true God hath everlastingly existed, and will everlastingly continue to exist. His creation, likewise, hath had no beginning, and will have no end. All that is created, however, is preceded by a cause.”¹³

YURI HAD MADE IT TO SWITZERLAND. He still had the teleport technology, even though Jeremy had confiscated and destroyed the weapon he had refused to use, as well as some other tech’ that Yuri could not hide. He had assumed that this device would definitely keep him ahead of Max, if in fact his old boss was even chasing him. Nadzor was so intent on the angel, and power, that Yuri thought that he just may slide by.

But, as he came around the corner of an old stone building, he was suddenly knocked unconscious.

“Did you think you could *hide* from me, boy?” said the man, standing over him. He then looked around to make sure no one had seen the act and dragged Yuri’s unconscious body down the alleyway.

LILLY WAS GETTING TIRED, but still wanted to read more, and would definitely request to stay another day here. She was sitting at a table, and now looked up from her book for a moment while she stretched and looked around. There was a man looking straight at her, in a strange garb. He seemed to be wearing Victorian Era clothing, and he was very happy she had looked his way. He seemed a *little* surprised, but then got up and *did a dance* behind a librarian as she walked by.

Lilly laughed out loud and then remembered where she was; also realising that it had been a while since she had laughed, which was a bit sad. She then instinctively felt in her pocket for a little book that she had chosen to take from Ramos’s small library. It made her feel good too. It was a book *full* of beautiful, spiritual, and essential verses from The Writings of Ramos’s Faith. It was called, “The Hidden Words, and Selected Holy Writings.” She had read it each morning and night since leaving Rio, which was only a few days ago now. There was a note in the first few leaves of the small pocket-sized book that said to read these verses morning and night, so she had followed the instruction. It was not hard, as the words filled her up, and although she didn’t know it, these words were keeping her safe from The Imaginer.

The strange man had followed the librarian into a row of shelves, and out of sight, then popped his head back out, making a face. Lilly laughed out loud again, and the man made the side-to-side finger motion that told Lilly there was to be *none of that* here in the

library, all the while smiling. Lilly smiled and laughed silently. It was even funnier because she was not allowed to laugh.

“Are you okay, Lilly?” asked Jeremy.

“Sure. Just that man over there, making faces,” said Lilly, pointing to where he was.

“I don’t see anyone Lilly,” said Jeremy. “Are you with us?” he then asked, concerned that the strange occurrences were happening again.

“He’s there. Strutting around like a peacock and putting on a stupid face...There!” pointed Lilly.

“I don’t see anyone, Lilly.”

Lilly’s face changed. She too was now suddenly scared, but only until a moment later, as Judgment walked up to the man and nodded his head in respect to him. He conversed with him for a while, then nodded in respect again as he moved on to some bookshelves that the man had indicated. Jeremy saw the Angel talking to *no one*. He could *feel* the presence now, but that was all.

The man then pointed his thumb sideways away from himself, and toward the angel as he had moved away. As he did this, he made a face that said, ‘What a kill joy?’ and then another that said, ‘Why are you travelling *with him?*’ Then some movement that said, ‘Not me! That’s *for sure,*’ like the angel was some kind of wet blanket.

Lilly laughed again. She could not help it. A librarian looked up and she quieted immediately, while the man added, with a jaunty walk and another face, ‘Well, doesn’t she think she’s special’.

Lilly smiled as Suwna came over to the two of them. She had heard Lilly from the isle where she was perusing books and decided to come over. She had seen the man that Jeremy could not, and too, had smiled at his antics. She was also glad of this joyous little diversion for their young companion. Jeremy realised that Suwna could see him too, but was not still not at ease, even though Judgement did not seem at all alarmed, even seeming to respect this invisible man. This trip was throwing up some new experiences for him; that's for sure.

“What an odd man,” said Suwna.

“He's funny,” commented Lilly.

“I can't see him,” said Jeremy.

“Oh no!” said Suwna, concerned that she and Lilly were both having another of those bad experiences.

“The angel can see him too. He seems to even respect him. I don't think...well, it's not one of those experiences we've all had,” offered Jeremy, as he then walked over towards where the man was, hoping that going closer would help. The man then played with Jeremy and started mocking him; moving around him like he was *just* dodging him. Then pretending he was blind like Jeremy, bumping into things all the time, with funny faces.

Both young ladies laughed as quietly as they could, but as all the antics continued, they had to leave the building. The librarians were not happy, and as Jeremy followed them out, they burst into loud and continued laughter. As he caught up with them, they laughed again. Jeremy had his hands out low in front of him with his palms tilted up at forty-five degrees, saying ‘What the hell?’, but it had been a lovely diversion for the girls.

Judgement came out some time later; the three of them sitting having coffee nearby, by then. The girls were still talking about the strange man and recalling all the fun. They were trying to work out who he was, and why Jeremy could not see him. They had worked out that the librarians, and others there, *definitely* didn't see him either.

“Who is he?” asked Lilly, not able to wait until Judgement was right with them.

“He is one of the essences of life.”

“What?!” said Jeremy, in wonder, but getting a little over the constant surprises as well.

How could he protect *anyone* the way things were going? He then surrendered as he remembered that he was just one of the crew in this endeavour. He would have to content himself seek to be of use like he had been in the small conflict in Rio; to protect when he could and do his job keeping tabs on the angel. But really, he wasn't sure of what his job was in this investigation anymore, as it had constantly evolved. He was out of his depth and learning to swim in new currents. His *duty* was still the main thing, and somewhat disallowing him to totally just flow along with things. He envied these two ladies a little; these two courageous souls. There was very little fear in them, and they were up for it all, even though they had no training and had now both been through those terrifying experiences.

“That is all I am bidden to tell. If he wished it, he would have talked with you. Most do not even see him,” added the angel.

“He was funny,” commented Lilly.

“I do not think he is,” stated the angel, plainly.

“He was *great*,” said Suwna, nodding at Lilly, and they both laughed a little again, but mostly at Judgement’s comment.

“He is here for a reason. One way or another, this planet will not be the same after his visit here.”

“*Please*. Who *is* he? What essence?” asked Lilly, trying once more to find out.

The angel just gave her a look making it clear that no answer would be forthcoming. That was the end of it for now, but it was not to be the end of it, as Lilly and Suwna would be working on him some more. But, unfortunately, in time, they would have to give up, as the angel was not to be changed. All he *would* add was that the man was a hidden, yet a most obvious, force in existence.

Intertwined

The Imaginer watched Max running. *He* of course, believed that he wasn't, but fear *was* motivating him; the fear of not gaining more power, or getting caught before he could net the angel. The ego is a *very* fearful creature, and truth be known, even just needing to look good, or being something that others seemed to value, may, rise from our fears. Fear in an animal is perfect, as it needs to eat to survive, and to be strong is always advantageous to its group; a perfect force in the animal world. Yet, beyond good reason, it is a quite destructive one in the *human kingdom*. The power of the human mind creates many more monsters to fear than an animal, and when focused down in its fears its creativeness can do far greater harm than the wildest animal. It can become locked in a darkness of its own making, as such is the suggestibility of the mind.

This ancient darkness had always followed Max. He was a constant stream of hatred, greed, ego, and fear, for it to feed on. It did not even have to make any effort to net

sustenance and relief, as Max was constantly in that state; his dreams also quite tortured. The pains of others not only fed its darkness but relieved its attention on itself. So intent on its satiation that it did not even realise that this element of distraction was also driving it. It only knew it felt good when it fed. The creature had not known that relief could be gained by concentrating on the good in others, not their pain and their fears. Even more tragically, that if it had used the evolution of its own special God given powers for positive and creative outcome, it could have known real and endless joy.

Negative fearful thoughts take us to terrors that are often not there. So many more horrors can be thought up by the mind when in the hands of the physical self. The Imaginer had followed its emotions and thoughts into a very negative reality; if indeed it could be called a reality. Its mental construct was one of want, lack, and a need for what could never satiate it. It had not sought higher thought, or deeper meaning, in itself or in existence. It had not sought knowledge of its own self. It had only followed the caprices of its lower being, and the endless thought trains grown in the deathly quiet places of its singleness.

The human creature, though having a soul, falls often to these effects too. The human mind, when run by the animal in us, also leads to it finding so much more to want, as it is focused *only* on the material world. The mind then becomes the enemy of contentment, peace, and happiness. In such a state it threatens any meaningful connections and chases after empty purpose. Only the soul may free our beings from such a condition, by it reorienting the mind; by force of will, by turning its attention upwards. The soul is the master, yet we often fall to the chattering mind and negative emotions. The Imaginer lived in such a reality; if again, you could even call it that.

It was a creature of thought, and it would often get lost in its trains of thought, or even seek relief and shelter there; trains of thought that wander from one thing to another, and

even take *us* off to places unknowingly. While not always unhelpful, they tend to block our soul's eyes and self-awareness, taking us away from the present. These trains may be good, to allow things to find their place in reflection, but often we find ourselves far away from what we sought. The mind is a mighty tool of discovery when used, but when just let loose, or mistaken as our deepest reality, we may suddenly awaken in the pain of something negative. We may also let outer circumstances call us to unhappiness if we are focused outside our spiritual reality.

All things seem to follow from what we tell ourselves; think about ourselves, others, and our reality. Higher thoughts, positive thoughts, kind thoughts, bring happiness. Attention on our thoughts, when needed, also saves us from the imitation of others and the pain of the material world. The thoughts and conversation of people in today's world are highly negative in content and do not lend to contentment. By the powers of our heart and soul we can change our own thoughts, and in conversation and kind actions, change the thoughts of others. Reorientation available in the Creative Word may take us home to our true selves, and to the Presence of God, as does willing attention on the higher self. Sitting within the higher being we can watch our thoughts, feelings, and actions. The Imaginer did not have a soul, but it always had the ability to choose its thoughts, as The Creator was merciful and never so cruel as to leave it without that power.

Max and The Imaginer knew only these lesser places. Like many who sit in the dark sharing their ignorance or their pain, they became intertwined with each other's trains of thought, and within the endless negativity they would enjoy; if indeed, *enjoyment* expressed the true nature of that state. They had become quite a part of each other, though Max was totally unaware of it, and The Imaginer would never admit to allowing another self knowingly into its being.

Fire

They sat there looking over the great falls called Niagara; a mighty torrent, and a spectacular sight. There was so much water here and into the northern Midwest. The Great Lakes, the mighty Mississippi; and so much rich arable land near all this water too. This place was indeed blessed, just as much as it had been stained by blood and greed in bringing it to this day. The agricultural abundance was also born of hard work and great sacrifices made. Not that this story was new in the history of the world, or particularly in the nature of only one people. Enough is to say that it, like all else, had its light and its darkness, and all of it needed to be learned from.

They all sat there watching the great swathes, the huge flow of water, pour forth over the great arc shaped precipice. It was an uplifting sight, but the band of friends seemed tired now. It had been a few weeks since the library, and they had been into the Middle East again, and to India, where they visited the Taj Mahal and the Lotus Temple. They had visited many places in India; the struggle of life was very apparent there, and yet the great power of its teeming life was like no other place. They had visited a few villages too, and one which was very special. It had grown to a greater sense of human unity; a genuine, person to person, heartfelt love. Even to the point that the caste system had fallen away without a whimper; like it had *never* existed there.

The angel was indeed taken by this place, as was Lilly, who saw a more hopeful view of the future of her kind in this microcosm. Not all the same caste, not all the same religion, men and women, youth, and children, all took part in bringing a new spirit and abundance to that village. There was so much for Lilly to be joyful at, and there was a certain perfume in the air that she caught from time to time, making it a *very* special place for her.

They had spent some days there, even though Jeremy was continually putting out warnings that they needed to keep moving, while Suwna had talked mostly with one dear old soul who had lived there her whole life. The old soul had been amazed at the flower that had bloomed here over the last ten years or so. There had been effort over a much longer time, as many did a great deal of work over the years to bring this new culture here and bring it to this level. All these efforts, in the end, had produced more *noticeable* change in the last decade as the flower had budded and bloomed.

Like the lotus it had gathered from its dark muddy hardship and grown quickly. People were praying together here and helping with the education of other people's children. The youth had grown strong, with a noble sense of community and purpose. The old lady even quoted to Lilly a certain saying that the youth there had taken to heart and acted upon. It was from the Force that had generated the fire of change this place.

“This servant appealeth to every diligent and enterprising soul to exert his utmost endeavour and arise to rehabilitate the conditions in all regions and to quicken the dead with the living waters of wisdom and utterance, by virtue of the love he cherisheth for God, the One, the Peerless, the Almighty, the Beneficent.”¹⁴

The power of the younger generation, the energy and enthusiasm, and their still not jaded, positive mindset, had moved the process on. The people here had once thought that they were powerless, as they had little. But each person had something to give, and it had been nurtured in the spiritual empowerment courses for children, youth, and adults. Any group of people holds a far greater measure than the sum of the wonders and potentials within the individuals who participate; any group of people can change their reality with the right spirit.

Lilly had seen clearly that The Impulse of The Word saw people renewing their spirit, self-reflecting, and opening the potentials that were already inside them, bringing harmony and material advances to that village. Their capacity as individuals, and as a group, had been nurtured and grown, but it was mostly that they did it *together* and in being humble enough to *keep learning*. The main mindset Lilly had seen in her life in Sydney seemed only about '*I know*', and how good '*I look*' not how '*I can act*'.

She had talked with Judgement about this; the first time she had spoken to him alone since the trouble in Rio. He had commented that just *some* action was not enough to wake the Western world out of *its* distracted dream.

He had said strongly, "The new generation, in fact all the generations, of East and West, need, not only to do no harm, or grow more kind, they now have *to sacrifice* for their kind and their future. Either they sacrifice now, by making efforts toward unity, or it will be forced on you by the failing order. If indeed I do not circumvent all future here first." Then adding, "This world needs heroes; souls that seek to bring change for the sake of others and future generations; souls driven by love alone."

In any case, the friends now sat and rested their weary bodies and minds as the spray from the roaring water freshened their faces and their spirits. They had travelled far. Their fire was not out, but it was for now, more so embers which some rest would help refuel. Judgement showed no sign of tiring, but he had acquiesced to stay here two days, even though, to him, he could find little meaning here. To him it seemed there was much more meaning in places where life was more tenuous, and people struggled more.

The conversation today was gentle; less energetic, yet still with some depth. Lilly mentioned that she had been surprised to find that people like her, people who struggled, had the greatest chance to find meaning. It seemed that those who were content with life, and had all they needed, often wasted time chasing more of the same and did not see the need to find meaning. Jeremy assured her that in time they would, as no amount of comfort would provide the meaning all people need to be sustained. It left an emptiness, and made life, art, society, and people, dull and lifeless. It left people wondering why all the pain, depression, and anxiety was everywhere. “Emptiness always seeks to be filled,” he finished.

Suwna again wondered why Jeremy put in so little into their debates and conversations. He obviously had so much to share, and when he did, it was usually gold. She had looked at him at the times that he did, and smiled, hoping it would encourage him to share more. Now was one of those moments and the two of them felt very close again as they locked eyes. Lilly saw the looks, becoming awake to their feelings for each other for the first time. She giggled, and Jeremy went red, turning away, as if looking around *at things*. Suwna smiled broadly at Lilly, and Lilly smiled back. It now seemed that Jeremy had nothing much to share again.

Suwna continued the discussion with Lilly, as they chatted about why people struggled to change. Their search wandered here and there, as Jeremy stared a little uncomfortably into the mist of the great falls.

“Our world has to change,” commented Lilly. “But people have to *want* it to change.”

“Yes. People have to change. Individual change and societal change are intertwined; one is an integral part of the other,” shared Suwna. She then shared a quote from her tradition...

*"The more we search for ourselves, the less likely we are to find ourselves; and the more we search for God, and to serve our fellow-men, the more profoundly will we become acquainted with ourselves, and the more inwardly assured. This is one of the great spiritual laws of life."*¹⁵

ODIFEROUS D HAD LOST HIS MAN; or was that, men. Max was definitely gone, as he had checked his home three times now, and so it seemed was Geoffrey. He just hung his head in shame as he now flew away from Max's huge home. Even worse, to him, the Agency would know of his failure.

He was *sure* that he *had* felt a change in Geoffrey when he had talked with him. “*He sure was a good actor,*” he now thought. He had gone to check on Geoffrey when Max disappeared, and he too had not been home for some weeks. Odi had checked and rechecked both their homes, now knowing for sure that they were gone. He assumed that the English agent had gone straight to Max, and they had gone underground. Then another scenario

occurred to him. *“Maybe Geoffrey had not been a good enough actor with Max, and Max had gotten rid of him; and maybe that had sent Max on the run,”* he thought. He could only really guess now as to what had happened, but he knew that Max would still be after the angel.

He had to humble up a bit and find them again, or there was *no way* he was going to get back into The Agency, let alone save this planet from Max Nadzor. “I stink,” he said out loud to himself.

It was then that he smelt the most glorious smell; a smell that even got past his own stench. He cast his eyes downward looking for the source, as he was still in flight, but turned in fright as something touched his shoulder.

JEREMY AND SUWNA HAD GONE FOR A WALK IN THE EVENING. Lilly had nearly tagged along but thought better of it due to what she had seen pass between these two. She was also tired from all the travel and endless thought, so was glad of an early night. The angel had provided them good places to sleep when they had not come across gracious and generous souls like Ramos. Not many people would have invited four strangers in here, even though this was a very generous country and full of many good people.

The angel had checked them in for two rooms here, and the man at the desk simply did it, not asking for a credit card or any payment. The angel never slept, so it was a bit creepy for Jeremy, as whenever he woke the angel would be sitting on his bed with its eyes open; even more creepy when it was sometimes staring directly at him. It did not eat either, as it was a spiritual creature and so gathered all energy in meditation, reflection, and communion with The Omnipotent. He had explained to his new cohorts that *all* sustenance for *all* creatures came from The Sustainer, as *all creation* is sustained by Him, from water to

atoms; beings, food, and environments. “All worlds, and the universe, to trees that fruit,” he had finished. He simply received his sustenance from more directly from this essential well than those of a material existence.

“This trip is really testing me,” confided Jeremy, as they now wandered gently along a well-lit walkway above the roar of the water. The moon was out, and full tonight, and it lit up a sublime view of the falls. “I don’t know where the hell I am, or what I am supposed to do,” he added, as they both took in the scene.

“I think you do, Jeremy. I think you’re *doing* it.”

He looked over to his walking companion, and said, “Thanks Suwna, you’re good for me.” Then a little red, he added, “You know, *good for people.*”

“Yep, *right*, Jeremy,” replied Suwna, and they both laughed.

Jeremy then relaxed a bit. “I’ve been on the job this whole time. I need to relax and stop sweating the small stuff.”

“You *care*, and you see to your duty. *That’s* attractive,” said Suwna, as she began to laugh loudly and easily about her use of words.

“Damn, girl. You are *hurting* me,” responded the Agent, laughing too, yet deeply appreciating what she had said. He knew she meant it. He looked down, and said, “You and Lilly are courageous souls.”

“Thanks Jeremy,” said Suwna, not at all put out that he should include Lilly. It was true. They certainly had things to fear but did not care to focus on them. In Lilly’s case it was

more that she had a purpose that fired her heart, which left little room for thoughts of fear; or more so, that the quest was all-important.

“It’s nice to just go for a walk, eh?” said Jeremy.

“Yes, walkabout, as they say in Australia,” said Suwna, lightly and happily.

“Yep,” was all the young man had to say, because there was so much that he wanted to say, but wisdom told him that it was well before time. He then remembered the angel explaining to Lilly that physical attraction and emotion can block thought, or bogle it, creating bad decisions.

“I like you Jeremy,” said Suwna, plainly.

“I like you too, Suwna.” replied Jeremy, now released from his caution; or was that wisdom.

“We don’t have to name this yet. Let’s just relax and enjoy each other’s company.”

Jeremy had never been good at these things, but this woman seemed to calm his thoughts with what she said and how she said it. He saw that for a woman, and maybe more mature men, degrees of closeness were more easily seen and expressed. But men *did* seem a *little* more, just, *on or off* when it came to such things. He wasn’t totally sure of all that really, but he *was* sure he liked this lady. Her way and her words made him surer, and she had a good heart. He hoped that he could be more someone who *steadied her*.

As far as Suwna was concerned, just him deciding to come along with them was steadying her. She did not need him to be there, but she knew she had a solid friend. A person she could rely on; that was supporting her by just being there. She saw very clearly that he

didn't realise that fully, but he was steady; and all on his own. He was insightful too, and she wanted to discover more of those thoughts. This kind of connection was all quite new to her too.

These two people from deeper walked the streets of this...Earth of the Outer Realities, taking time to learn more about each other. It was on the way home, after some late coffee and cake, that Suwna again asked why he could not help her with finding Grandpa Jack.

“Look. Like I said, I'm bound by the order of things. I want *so much* to help you, but maybe it's something that you need to complete on your own. I've found that sometimes we think people are holding us back, but it can be life saying that it is not time, or that something is just ours to do,” offered Jeremy, with a sure but gentle demeanour.

“Sure. I know you want to help me. I can feel it in what you say. You're an honourable man, held to your duty.”

“Thanks, Suwna. I know how hard that was to say. I know how intent you are to find him.”

“Even though I want this, I kind of know by your refusal that I can count on you; trust your word. Maybe I'm seeking more than Jack Johnston, right now.”

Jeremy smiled, and so did Suwna. A gentle fire had been lit; one that would travel with them, and one these two could always sit at and talk by. They would each add fuel when it was necessary, and as they went through this quest with Judgement it would warm them. In the challenge of the quest, and in conversation by this small fire, they would learn more about each other, and themselves.

LILLY SAT ON HER BED. She was letting the last weeks of effort and discovery wash over her. She realised that she needed to make a little more time each day to just let her thoughts wander, and also let ideas and knowledge intertwine and coalesce inside her. Reflection like this was new to her, as were the words she read each morning and night from the little book Ramos had given her. The words buoyed her, relaxed her, and even fired her to go on with the quest. But by sitting back from things and reflecting too, she had now realised that it was not just the angel's quest, it was hers too. Jeremy and Suwna's as well, in a way.

They were all learning, and there had been *so* much that she should be tired. But while her body was tired, her spirit stayed up to eat and drink from the smorgasbord of her memories of all the recent experiences, places, and people. She allowed it all to flow through her, not trying to make sense of it all, as it was too much. She saw it, as just letting her mind and soul digest things slowly. She would then talk to God, telling Him that it was quite a lot to understand, and asked if He would help her. She often talked to God as a friend in her life, and she had always believed He kept her safe. She talked to Him like one would a relative, a mentor, a father sometimes, or a trusted friend. He was her companion over all her years, and her link with Him was very informal, relaxed, and real.

Now, as her thoughts wandered, she remembered her walk with Ramos. She remembered them talking about his hopes of social and economic development there, when the village in India jumped into her mind. They were starting to do a lot of what Ramos had talked about. He had said that his Faith had now even matured enough to grow an international social and economic development organisation. Individuals and small groups in his Faith had been doing all sorts of things for a long time before it came into being though; from starting schools in the third world, to spiritual empowerment of youth all over the world, to individuals helping refugees, to literacy, and micro loans. But now things could

coalesce and be supported, and the learning shared between such projects all over the world. This new institution was less about the raising of money, as it was about learning; learning more about how any group of people could drive *their own* intellectual, spiritual, and material development.

Ramos had said, the insights gained from the courses of Running Man, as well as the experience that grew out of the process of community building engendered by these study circles, and the experience of many years of people doing social and economic development projects, had created the natural flowering of this new institution. He had said that the energy source was the fire of individuals to act in service to others, and the will of people to take responsibility for their own future. The learning that these had provided, grew, and would continue to grow. This was the knowledge that would underpin this new International Institution. It had grown from the ground up, from individual and small group efforts, and from a sense of the fact that we are *noble spiritual beings* at our very core.

He had added, that, “The Kindling of all these things was the Message of the I Am; the Creative Word. Its deep essence, its calling of us to our spiritual nature, has now begun to spawn greater unity and greater ability for humans to act on their own behalf.”

Ramos then shared some of the inspiration that he drew from to do his work. He was very excited to continue community building work in the favelas, because of the greater possibilities to make life better there. He said that now the spiritual and the physical could intertwine at a *greater* intensity and help grow each other toward a healthier world; in small places all over the world. He then shared his quote from The Servant...

“We should continually be establishing new bases for human happiness and creating and promoting new instrumentalities toward this end.

How excellent, how honourable is man if he arises to fulfil his responsibilities; how wretched and contemptible, if he shuts his eyes to the welfare of society and wastes his precious life in pursuing his own selfish interests and personal advantages. Supreme happiness is man’s, and he beholds the signs of God in the world and in the human soul, if he urges on the steed of high endeavour in the arena of civilization and justice.”¹⁶

In this quote she had found a certain meaning. It was that we had lost our spirit, and somehow considered that looking after ourselves and the status quo, were okay, and that simply not harming others was a high attainment. But she saw clearly that this wasn't enough, and now as she reflected on it and what she had seen around the world, she saw that some sacrifice, as Judgement had made clear, was a *requirement* to turn the tide and to create a more evolved future. The angel had been right, the world was in need of heroes, many heroes; people like her, or anyone. People needed to stand up and care; they needed to *participate*. She now saw how spirit could manifest itself more in basic day to day of life, and that even just some regular kindness, just a little, could light a fire that may burn away the darkness of isolation and bring people together again.

This young soul then hurt so much at the thought of the angel disallowing her any future opportunity to take part in all these things; more so, that humanity would not be given a chance to repair and renew its fortunes. “*It just can’t be this way,*” she thought, as she then asked The Merciful to help her and her human family.

She then saw a vibrant reality, how all humanity was deeply intertwined; that we all counted and could make a difference. The deep truth of human oneness enveloped her being, and she knew. It was then she was shown all manner of wider concerns, such as poverty and the environmental problems, and she wondered why. But as the number of these global problems rose one after the other in her mind, she realised the message. It was that while each person can start the rebuilding of their local community, there were worldwide problems too that required the action of a unified humanity; like plastics in the ocean killing birds and sea life, and now micro plastics even entering the food chain. There were many other problems which only a united worldwide human endeavour could hope to remedy.

As she came out of that gentle place, she wondered how many current struggles would require a worldwide response to mitigate or bring them to a solution. Her mind wandered from war to injustice, biodiversity to deforestation, greed to poverty, and environmental degradation to plastic again. People were dependent on this product and had fallen away from the use of paper packaging and glass containers. The fact that it was mostly not recycled, and more and more of this now clearly dangerous substance was being made, made it a bigger problem. She knew it was useful, as it had been more than helpful to her over the years, but she still knew that it would turn into a destructive beast if not managed. It would take the world to bring it and its negative influence to heel, just as it would take a global resolve to fix many of the other dire problems of our time.

It was strange to her how people only seemed to act when something was an immediate threat to them, generally speaking, and it was then she realised that it was like what Suwna had talked about; about *her* society coming to maturity. She had explained that it took a mature and more selfless nature to have *real* vision. Only a mature united humanity could solve the difficult nature of poverty and plastics, or the save the forests; the lungs of

our world. The list of things that had come to Lilly was endless, and yet she was still hopeful, and now very ready to act. It was then that she realised that fire came from understanding these things, and in seeing one's nobility and responsibility. That the material was indeed intertwined with the spiritual, and that selfishness and individual material gain could never bring an abundance that was so clearly available to humanity.

She knew people had the power now; she knew *she* did. They just had to access the noble spirit within, and act for the spiritual and material future of humankind. They had to grow up and *act* for the future of humanity, for the abundant natural world, and to retain all the nurture inherently provided within these systems. Food production, an end to extremes of wealth and poverty, and continued invention, were *all* possible by doing things the 'good' way, the considered way, rather than the fearful or selfish way.

Lilly did not know it, but it was indeed fortunate that she was in a positive frame of mind, and had that night read about the nobility of the human soul, as The Imaginer was lurking. It had turned its attention to them from its dark hole, seeking a view to any weakness in the angel in the room next door. It had seen the child, hopeful of the easy pickings in one alone and in thought, but it was repulsed by her upwardly focused being.

In any case, Lilly's mind now wandered to robots and AI, and the implications of these for the future of humanity; as well as drones, and how they were just beginning, but becoming a wave that would change the world. She could see these were the next great wave of change in the world, just like the change she had seen in the agricultural revolution, the industrial revolution, and the technological revolution, on her travels into history with Judgement.

She knew that there would always be struggle with change, and she had seen people did suffer from these big waves of change; but change seemed inevitable. There would always be greed and lack of foresight, and maybe some real trouble and pain before the AI process settled, but it would all indeed be quite amazing. She hoped that the hearts of humans did not make this unthinkably complex change, too painful, as she had seen from human history how greed and fear usually had no vision and made even good things bad. Lilly trusted this great change and that it would lead to good outcomes in the end, but she knew there would be lessons that came along with it.

She had never even had a smart phone; or a phone at all. She had wished she did when other street folk had shared theirs with her at times, but she had also seen how lost people had become in those devices. All this technology was historically still new, so people would eventually learn to balance time on these devices with time more outwardly focused on life, nature, service, and the people in their lives; and more time inwardly focused in reflection and meditation. The library had thankfully provided her with technology when she needed it or sought certain information. It was such a great gift to be able to access information easily, and Judgement's lesson on the need to know and understand history, and the power of internally held knowledge, were now also becoming powerful friends.

In balance it was really about not getting too lost in the endless information and having a good base of knowledge to discern the value of information from. The Guidance held in the beautiful words of the small book that Ramos had given her was now definitely something that would guide her thinking too. She hoped one day that they would be part of her, just like the history lesson Judgement had provided. The young lady felt empowered as she saw the relationships of all these things. The fire to be of service to her kind, beyond this quest, was growing even stronger inside her.

It was then that she saw all the great historical waves of change in her mind's eye; each one more powerful than the one before it, all bringing a greater and greater change. Then suddenly, a great wave of Spirit rose close behind the growing technological wave and was almost right upon it. It monstered the artificial intelligence wave and she now felt that all the waves had somehow prepared the way for this one; yet the same Creative Force had initiated all these waves, bringing them on, or sending them forth, in natural sequence. All of these waves were bringing on a completely new humanity; one that required a higher spiritual consciousness to handle the advancement now growing within it. She could not begin to imagine the societal change that would ensue from this monstrous wave; considering what the industrial and technological change had already created and would yet create.

YURI SAT UP. He was tied up on an old mattress and knew it was time to pay the piper. He had not escaped his past so easily, and as the noise of the door being unlocked reached him, he shuddered.

SUWNA SCREAMED HERSELF AWAKE. Lilly went over and held her. I was looking for Grandpa Jack in my dreams, and I got taken again...Her voice trailed off as it was not something she ever wanted to recount, let alone remember.

She had found herself in what seemed like a northern European village. It had a two-storey white building that was really attached houses, each of them having only blue or red, doors, windows, shutters, and railings on those with outer stairs. All the rest was white, and it was quite beautiful, but it started to confuse her mind and unsettle her. Then all she could think of was, *Where is Jack?! Which door is his?* Her anxiety and frustration rose to fever

pitch when she could not open any of the doors. She then found herself trying to scratch them open and saw her nails tearing off. She was in excruciating pain, but could not stop, eventually even wearing down the ends of her fingers; blood trickling through their horrendously pain soaked ends.

Suffice is to say that this recounting is enough, as to share the rest would not be meet or seemly; but all through this terrible ordeal she had seen a bright green door open on the ground floor, and she now saw Grandpa Jack through it. He was gardening, and even though she saw him, she was unable to stop herself working at the other doors to find him. Strange is the dreaming mind, and much more had passed before she had finally screamed out; much more.

The door of her hotel room flew open, and the angel flew in ready for battle. Jeremy waited respectfully outside, but not wanting to. The angel now sensed what had happened, and looked a little surprised, which quickly turned to a look of deep concern. The look on his face represented a memory of something; something that represented deep pain, and danger. It then turned and immediately folded its wings as it left the room.

“She has had a nightmare. One that leaves a strange trace; a trace I have *known* before. *The Darkness* is here,” he said to Jeremy, as he came out the door.

“We’ve *all* had nightmares, but mostly we’ve been awake. We were going to talk with you about it before the sudden battle in Rio.”

“Off in your thoughts?” asked Judgement plainly.

“Yes...*you know what this is?*”

“Yes. I failed to end its existence. It is the reason I am fallen. I failed to defeat it. The others who fought it did not know of its survival, but I did, just as I ceased to be. I had fought alongside a most courageous and selfless man, and I weakened the beast enough for it to be taken to oblivion, but still, we failed. The Holy Light was so intense in the final assault that my essence was dissipated. I thought I was ended, only to find myself re-coalesced as I was cast here.”

“So maybe that is why you’re here; to finish this fight.”

It was the first time that Judgement had not seemed totally sure of himself, as within his heart was the painful memory of his failure to fulfil The Omnipotent’s will. To him, it was more painful than the almost total obliteration of his being that he had suffered in his first fight with this creature. Such was his love for his Lord, and such was the joy within the love of the All Loving, that it was impossible to feel outside of once truly known. The angel then came to clarity; that he may yet please his Lord, as he had mercifully been sent here by Him to battle this creature again. *“Mercy is the greatest attribute of the All Merciful,”* it thought, as it bucked up a little.

Jeremy walked into the room and Suwna put her hand out to him. He took it in his, and stood there, as Lilly, still sitting beside her, kept a good hold of her. They would stay there until this sweet lady had freed herself enough from her ordeal. Jeremy was glad that she had put out her hand to him, knowing he would not let go until she let go of his. He let her be, as his thoughts now went to Judgement. He was a bit concerned about the fact that the angel had fought this creature before, and more *especially* that it had failed. If an angel could not take down this ‘Darkness’, then this world was in for a bigger fight than it could know.

But Jeremy did now feel like an Agent again and had some fire in his belly. He had been so hamstrung by this whole situation. It had been a constant lack of clarity, as he had not been able to *act*. But now he had a clear objective and knew that it was time to be in touch with The Agency. He would take a portal tonight, after he had spent a day with Suwna; he would stay as long as he could here near the great torrent; hoping it would wash away some of this brave Traveller's pain. He should have gone straight away, but he could not leave her in this state. He knew he was not fulfilling his duty particularly well, but life is not that simple sometimes.

JEREMY WANDERED THROUGH THE PORTALS. There were three levels to get to the Agency, but he only got to the secondaries before finding he could go no further. He tried another secondary, and another, and another. All were locked. It was then that Jeremy tweaked to what the Darkness was. Suwna had called it The Imaginer, which was a good name for it, but the name totally failed to fill the hearer with the dread they should feel when its name was mentioned.

He knew that The Agency had locked down this planet, as all secondaries were closed, and he believed he knew why. He had learnt about the creature in the last year of his training modules. Deveroux was a guest instructor at the time and had shared with them an incident with a creature which was ancient, from deeper, and had lived in a woman's dreams. He had said that it was gone; that they had defeated it, or more so, that they had held their ground even at threat to their lives, and the loss of some lives, while *Jack Johnston* did.

"Jack Johnston," he said out loud to himself, with an 'of course' tone. Jeremy had recalled this story of the man who defeated the beast when he had got Jack out of a big jam, as a junior Agent. It was also when he had first met Suwna and her Grandpa Jack. But the

story of this creature had not even created a niggler, or raised a memory in him, while these strange things were happening to him and his new friends. To him, and as far as The Agency was concerned, the beast was thought to be destroyed.

The intricacy of the intertwining cords of the life paths of these creatures and these people seemed to be becoming clearer. He was in awe of the design but didn't hang around there contemplating it. He had to find Jack Johnston. He knew that he had to gather information from this older Traveller, while still keeping his whereabouts from Suwna. It was hard being an Agent sometimes, but his mission was clear, and he had dallied *too* long. Maybe if this thing ever got sorted, just maybe, certain connections *would* be allowed by the higher ups due to the circumstances. This situation was now all very wild and new, but he felt purposed. He now powered up his pulse weapon and went through another portal in search of Grandpa Jack.

Two dark figures ran through the grounds of Max Nadzor's home. They found what they needed in a hidden room in the basement, then disappeared again into the night.

Monsters

The creature belched. It had not done so for a long time now and it thoroughly enjoyed it. It knew it was getting stronger, but it then screamed out, as it needed to be better and powerful *now*. It had *no* patience, and while it planned its future endlessly in its mind and saw the required process it could not stand to wait *at all*. It sat in the realm of its endless mental machinations, and it screamed again, as even hope can be a negative thing in an impatient creature.

Max Nadzor woke suddenly from a violent dream. He despised how the dream made him feel as he tried to shake it off. Something had taken control of him, moving him like a puppet. This was the most terrifying thing he could imagine for himself. It was not just ego; it was of course, fear. This particular monster had grown from the abuse he had suffered as a child and the fight for his life in his teens. He had been starved, kept in small rooms, and locked in cupboards with his sister by a drug addled schizophrenic mother, and when they had escaped, they had been placed with a lady who abused his sister in other ways.

His sister had taken her own life one day, and Max had gone on the run. He had decided that no one was ever going to control him again and reacted violently when others sought to do it. His shame at his *own* violent behaviour did not last long, as it was so volatile

and so often acted out that he had to come to a particular view of the world in himself; one that could accept his violence. Max was protecting Max, *no matter what*, not at all realising at the final turning point around seventeen that he had set his mind, and so his life. Every time he found himself reacting strongly, he would blame others for it, only seeing morons who could not see as he did. He then, over time, came to '*know*' that he was superior in *every* way. It would seem that seeking freedom from control had built as strong a need for control into him, as such can be the nature of disfunction.

It was natural for Max to control his surroundings, and abuse others, just as he had been, because he was vulnerable. This was not to say that he should be found innocent of his very violent and selfish acts. He knew right from wrong like a child of two does, and definitely a child of seven; let alone a man his age. The Author of life would decide Max's fate eventually, but that was no balm for the endless victims of his rage. Some do suffer greatly, but all are still aware of their crimes, and still have the ability to change, no matter their excuses.

The creature even enjoyed Max's fear and anger on waking from his dreams, as this was like a scrumptious dessert for it. Though never satisfied, it did enjoy its food. The creature had found the minds of its victims very easy pickings, as most here did not know their own minds, so it would easily gather from the chaos already there. Reactive and over thinking minds like Max's were deep wells of satiation. The beast could feel the rolling chatter of the minds of men like rain in the distance, but only had the energy to access a small number of them as yet.

The Darkness heard the extreme thoughts, the hatred, the fear, and ego driving the thoughts of many souls. It saw the seemingly endless drama growing in the minds of the peoples of this planet. The focus on the negative aspects of things in people was like music;

the call of the siren drawing him in. The negativity of most thinking here was growing fast. The lack of belief too, now seemingly in the majority of souls who thought that humankind was doomed to constantly circle and never escape from its childish ways. There was a huge lack of belief in human nobility, and a great misunderstanding of the power in their spiritual nature. All these things then, would make it very easy for the beast to trick and manipulate, and he saw a great field that was ready for harvest. One which was fed every day by the great rains of negative thought.

The monster inside great swathes of people needed to be quelled and humanity brought back to remembrance its nobility. But many seemed unaware, or like Max, just explained it away, as there seemed to be less societal consequence to the *lesser ways* in these times. The lack of vision to see our true nature, our higher nature, was drawing greater monsters of dysfunction deeper into people's lives, just as it had drawn The Imaginer to our door.

“WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?” asked Suwna. “Shouldn't we be getting out of here?”

“Yes, Suwna, we definitely should. I had some things that could not wait. Things I had to find out,” explained Jeremy, now seeing the family likeness.

Suwna picked up on the split-second change in his eyes, but she did not voice it. The look was not right given the words he spoke and their current circumstances. He knew something that she didn't, and she *knew it*. But she would let him do his work right now, as she was not at ease and wanted to get moving. She again made that very clear to all of them.

“I do not fear the dark creature,” stated Judgement.

“But the ladies are not safe,” charged Jeremy, thinking how this angel was, more and more, nothing like he thought one would be. “*Maybe there are different kinds of angels,*” he mused.

“Then leave my company, so you *will* be safe. The *meaning* has been found; the purpose *clear*. I now *know* what I seek. I will seek it out quickly, as the creature will be weak and best defeated now. It will be feeding on the endless darkness here and I can’t allow it to get stronger,” explained Judgement, and with that the angel jumped high, took wing, and shot off over the buildings.

Lilly started to cry a little, and Suwna, herself still a little shaken after The Imaginer had gotten to her a second time, tried to ease her. With the angel gone she felt very much more vulnerable, and Lilly was deeply saddened to be left again by someone she cared about. Jeremy felt a little powerless too but did not show it. His mind went back over the story that Deveroux had told and what Jack Johnston and his wife Jennifer had now shared with him about their experience with the beast. She and Jack were not at all happy that it had survived, and Jeremy was still deep in thought as Lilly spoke up.

“We can read these morning and night. Ramos said they would keep me safe from all monsters.”

“How?” asked Suwna, very hopeful.

“They are guidance and take us to the spirit, where love is, and fear can’t reside,” explained Lilly, feeling a deep wisdom rising in surety from inside her.

“*Guidance!*” almost shouted Jeremy, remembering the story of a carpet and the beast that Jack had shared with him. “Yes, we will definitely need to do that.” But he then stopped, stumped again, and a little lost in what he needed to do now.

“Maybe we need to keep travelling; keep *moving*,” offered Suwna, trying to help Jeremy lead a little, and wake a little herself. She was not afraid to lead, it was just that he had the training and she trusted that he had more scope on such things.

“Yes,” said Jeremy, feeling more than a little over done by his mind right then; so much so he that he couldn’t gather even simple things. It was now also that his mind sought answers for this world, *and* how to track and defeat the creature, *as well* as how he could protect these two; all too much, and too fractured right now to think clearly. But the ladies were right. They had to keep moving. He *would* battle this monster, but only when these two souls had been relocated to a safe place.

“I can take you both, but only one at a time,” said Suwna. “I can come back, but we’ll be separated for a short while.”

“I don’t like that idea,” said Lilly, strongly, with a shudder going up her spine.

“I can access portals here, so we can all travel together. We don’t need to jump,” explained Jeremy, beginning to come out of the confusion of his thoughts.

“Thank God for that,” said Lilly, thinking that adding the fear of jumping off something very high in her already vulnerable state would be too much.

“So, you just wanted to *hold my hand* then?” asked Suwna, in accusation, thinking of the many high places they had jumped off together.

Jeremy smiled. “Just protocol, ma’am,” he said, finally releasing himself from his mental load and straightening up. “Follow me.”

They all had smiles of their faces about that handholding though as they headed off. Lilly allowed herself a little giggle.

All intertwined in this situation had scattered to the four winds. The threads were unravelling. Just as they had been connected in this process, they now had been disconnected. Such is the way of things in life sometimes. As to what would come, only the fools among them thought they knew. Such are the designs, and the chances, of life; this pulsing system that is alive with promise.

THE THREE FRIENDS ENTERED ANOTHER DOORWAY. It was to be the last of five primary doorways that they had passed through, as Jeremy wanted to hopefully confuse the beast that had attacked them. He was not sure how it went about its machinations or exactly what all its powers were, but he knew the portals existed within a far deeper reality than this vile creature could exist in, let alone have sight of, or any influence in.

Jeremy had explained all this, as this smaller band had walked between the first and second of these doorways. The portals behind the various physical doorways were light. They entered light, and almost immediately came out of light, as they passed through. All this brought to Lilly's mind part of a discussion she had had with Judgement on the nature of light and monsters.

“There are many monsters on this Earth, and there have been many others over its history. They grow in darkness, but the truth of their existence is that they do and did not exist. Only virtue exists, only light,” he had said.

The teen then remembered the men; Max's dogs. The angel had taken their lives saying that they had never existed, and it was now clear on reflection why he had said that.

He did not mean them; he meant that there was no light in them. There were more questions there, but she continued on with her reflection of their conversation.

The angel had gone on to talk of darkness and light on her world. Judgement shared his knowledge copiously if allowed, and this subject had been no exception. “Darkness and monsters,” he had continued, “do not have existence. They are just a lack of light; a lack of spirit. Darkness itself does not exist; only light, and therefore darkness, and monsters of the dark, do not. Shine a light on them and they will scurry, or more truly, that which is dark will be dissipated by the light. They *will* run, use more words to confuse, or if pushed to the brink use threats, anger, or even violence. But when the light truly dawns within us, they become very quickly, or very obviously, *the nothing* they always were. Darkness can only exist in enclosed places.”

The winged creature had then gone on to say that people do not become dark; they choose to turn off the lights within them. He had said that there were endless sad reasons why people would not turn on the Light or would continue to live in dark places.

“If you find yourself enclosed within a dark place,” the angel had gone on to say, “or if you walk in the physical reality with dark creatures, then you need to cast out the darkness inside *you* that holds you there, and to them. Darkness seeks darkness, weakness seeks weakness. Strive, and be swift; sacrifice your darkness by turning on the higher powers within you and live them in the world. Seek the monsters within you and take back your power; grow your light, as these attachments and fears are just prisons of the soul and places where nothing can grow.”

No force is greater than light. The light of truth and honesty opens up all that needs be seen. The *light of unity*, an even greater force, allows all to flourish. In bowing to the power of unity and love all darkness can be seen and purged, as they cannot exist together. It may be

hard, but the goal of unity, of loving kindness, if striven for, will cleanse us. We may *even* feign this high power and talk of it constantly for the sake of ego and fear, but if there is drama, control, and pointless hurt, if there is not an easy flow of love and kindness, then the light of unity is not truly there. No matter the words of any individual, or any group.

Monsters exist in the darkness on the periphery, and in all that lies beyond the beams of the light of unity; even in places that expound virtue. Unity is of the heart, as family is of the heart, so it is powered by an even deeper force; that of love. Where there is no love, there is no life. The cohesive force of love, the gravity of the heart, only mends and cares, and if pure, seeks only the truth. Family, community, and kind are kept alive and nurtured by love's power, not by traditions, economic laws, or institutions. Ideas, traditions, and institutions, if void of these essential spiritual forces will drift into darkness and only bring more chaos as they do.

The angel had gone on to explain, "The light of unity shines only around the truth, as truth is the other requisite force that may bring true unity to a particular place. Knowledge of what is *indeed* true, and *the will to seek it*, is humble and beautiful, and is as required as love is. There can be endless love between family members or in a whole culture, there can be a palpable unity in groups, but if these are ignorant of truth, or do not seek it, then *no* loving act is of worth. *True love* and *true knowledge* bring life, and these two bring the light of unity. Love of one's group is not enough, and the agreed truths of small groups do not necessarily bring light.

True love and true understanding, therefore true unity, exist together. If there is drama or separation, if there is ignorance, if there is antagonism, then there is darkness. It simply can be no other way. The laboured realities humans choose, and have chosen, to live by in the half light, are endless. The ideologies that grow in darkness last but a time historically, as

they could never be sustained. There have been many monsters in your history that were of these things and the embodiments of them; some individuals who espoused them even considered heroes. There are ideologies that *seem* to pour forth light and tolerance yet only attack that which is not of them. There have been many ideologies that grew and fell in the Century of Light, and the *children* of these ideologies still abound in the minds of people in the current century, as people seek meaning in a world that grows more meaningless every day.”

“But how do we see what is true and light in all the ideas out there?” asked Lilly at the time.

“I thought that would be clear,” the angel had responded, putting his head to side wondering how the child could have missed it. “What have I shared with you? What basic forces have been at play; the positive ones?”

“Unity, light, love, truth, knowledge, sacrifice, courage, effort, caring...honesty.”

“What negative ones?”

“Hate, fundamentalism, war mongering, greed, disagreement, drama, closed ideologies, control, darkness, ego, fear.”

“Then, is not the answer then *clear*?”

“So, people, groups, places and ways of being which create light, engender love, and actively seek the truth of things.”

“And show less the things of darkness,” added the winged creature.

“So, it’s simple.”

“In a way, yes. But while you do need to make the effort to look into things, you need not *always* see the monster, and appreciate that the light *does* exist in places, in people, and in groups that are in transition. Most peoples and groups are not evil, and monsters do not always exist within their ranks, yet they may still sit in the darkness a little too much. You need *seek the light* and not concern yourself with darkness, or the relative darkness that may yet exist in people or groups.

All we have talked of will help lead you to the right place, to where the All Knowing lives in this world. There is a saying about how you may even *create* more light in this place, in others, and in life. It is simple and not of mere words...

“And the honour and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world's multitudes should become a source of social good. Is any larger bounty conceivable than this, that an individual, looking within himself, should find that by the confirming grace of God he has become the cause of peace and well-being, of happiness and advantage to his fellow men? No, by the one true God, there is no greater bliss, no more complete delight.”¹⁷

By your actions of high intent, by using the positive power of love, by championing the light of knowledge, by using what you learn, you will succeed, and even draw others with you. People are naturally attracted to the light. It is in them, and they know it, even if it lies in the shadows deep under their endless thoughts and emotions; under the traditions, attitudes, and beliefs of their being.”

This was not all *just words* for Lilly; she had already found herself naturally doing these things. She had taken the book from Ramos because he had been the ‘*most light*’ person she had come across in her life. She could now see clearly that the sun shone from him and from the words in the little book he gave her. She had known the dark, violence and monsters, but even living on the street she had chosen to be more. She had sought to educate herself; she had sought knowledge. She had sought good people and seen the light often in the people who had given her food or some money when she had been desperate. There was a good deal of kindness in people, and Suwna’s support and nurture was also very clearly, love. It was then very apparent to Lilly that generosity *too* was light; in fact, for her, the clearest sign of it.

IT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY FOR THE LOCKS TO RELEASE, and the door to finally open. Yuri was not breathing, as he had seen the joy Nadzor took from the pain he inflicted on others and never wanted to feel such pain. He just couldn’t believe that his boss had caught him that quickly. He thought that he must have somehow got a tracker on him, or in the gear. “*Who knows with Max,*” he thought. “*I should have been more diligent.*”

A dark figure stood at the door, because, to Yuri, the light behind him was so bright that he could only make out his silhouette.

“You have been a *bad boy*, son.”

“Who *are* you?” asked Yuri, definitely relieved it was not Max, but still concerned that it was someone in his employ.

“That’s, *need to know.*”

Yuri was confused, and then he remembered the voice, and he smiled a little.

“You *need to know*, old man. How to watch your back and keep your men safe when you’re on a mission,” said Yuri, now with a full smile on his face.

“And you need to know that *you’re a killer*. You need to know *that*,” responded Deveroux plainly.

“We didn’t take any lives that night.”

“But you *have*. Haven’t ya’, boy?”

Yuri just put his head down. He had thought that he had escaped the pain of remorse a long time ago. He had also felt this same pain as the angel had talked with him, and as he had recounted his story to the creature; strangely, *only now* fully realising that he did *not* want to escape from it. He wanted to be *right here* seeing his darkness, plainly in the light. It was like he sought a cleansing, as this strong need for atonement rose from deep inside him.

Deveroux sat down on a chair that he grabbed from the corner of the small room. He had come to Earth before the portals and all traffic were shut down. He came for a good many reasons. The three main ones though, were that he wanted to chase down the beast that he had failed to defeat before; he was not unlike the angel when it came to the duty of such things. Another reason was something from Deveroux’s deep past; a responsibility he felt for *this* place. The third was that he had sent his boy Jeremy into danger, and he was going to get him out of it. And that was that. He had ordered his Agents out, but he had gone in.

As his eyes now fully accustomed themselves to the dim light he could see the remorse in Yuri’s eyes, just as Yuri said, “I’ll take my medicine, old man. I would rather pay for my part in things and get free of this darkness sitting on top of me. I need to *cast it off*, and I don’t mind paying for the lives I have taken.”

“Better to pay here than in the next place, young man, and enough of the ‘old man’ stuff, *boy*.”

“Sure, *old man*,” said Yuri, immediately creating a good rapport with Deveroux.

“What’s your name, son?”

“It’s Yuri. Yuri Orlov.”

“Russian, eh.”

“Been a long time, but yeah.”

“Tell me your story, Yuri Orlov.”

Yuri was taken aback. He could now see that this man was seeking out the good in him, not the monster. He suddenly felt a great sadness, as no one, well other than the angel had ever sought to find it in him. The young man, now just in his late middle twenties, began to sob a little. He then gathered himself and he slowly related the story of his childhood, his youth, and early adulthood; all with his head down.

Deveroux could not believe that there could be any light left in any creature after such darkness had subsumed his soul. But all through the lad’s story there were little reflections of light; thoughts that were like lightning flashes in the dark night. Deveroux had grown up around many monsters, also kids and adults with monsters in them. There was a big difference. The monsters were stone and had lost the battle of existence, and the ones with monsters in them still fought on in the darkness; brave young creatures that had not been mentored or given the example of the power of good in their lives.

All are responsible for their acts though; and punishment, as Ramos had said, was a requirement for the wellbeing, peace, and security of people. Punishment was even good for

the perpetrator's sake, because these consequences may change their souls, or at least begin a turning. Even punishment is mercy and nurture when criminals are brought to account for the pain and destruction brought about by their actions.

Deveroux knew Yuri's story. He had friends where he grew up, who grew up to be mean, and others who escaped that place after being lost for quite a time. This Agent had stood his ground in the neighbourhood he had lived in when he was young. He believed in a future for that place; one in which young men could know courage and compassion, and the women and children knew love and safety. As fate would have it, he had been guided by the same small book as Lilly.

"Mmm, well, you sure have been lost in a dark place, Yuri."

"I did these things. I'm ready to pay the price. I am *so* ready," said Yuri, with an even clearer conviction. It was not that he just wanted the pain to end, he was genuinely sorry, and he wanted to free his soul from its debt.

"There are a lot of ways to pay down a debt, Yuri."

"You can read my thoughts?!"

"A little; here and there. I am from where that fat idiot came from."

"*The Fat Man*. I liked that old guy. I fed him, brought water, and tried to make it as good as I could for him. I never saw what Max did to him, but I saw the results. That old guy taught me about the darkness and his own hope to be free from it. He told me that Max was doing him a favour, as his debt was huge." Yuri then laughed, as he finished saying, "He said he was a bit of a legend, underneath."

"It's 'deeper', son, not *underneath*," snorted the Agent.

Yuri smiled, and Deveroux asked, “How would you like to go *huntin’* monsters, instead of workin’ for one, or *bein’ one*, Yuri?”

“I would sure like that, and I would sure like to work off my debt.”

“No guarantees on your debt. That’s up to the Big Man, but I need a soldier and it sure won’t hurt you to help me out.”

“Okay, sure, I’m in. *Da*,” said Yuri, feeling the connection to the Russian in him coming back, and the Englishman in him wane a little.

“We’re after a monster like you’ve never known.”

“I have known Max.”

“Max is just pimple on your butt, boy. The creature we’re after is all of Armageddon in comparison.”

“So, a challenge, *da*,” said Yuri smiling, and feeling *even more* Russian.

“Yep, and one that may torture you for an eternity, or what might seem like that if he traps you. *Think about it*, son.”

“I’m *in*,” said Yuri, again.

“Think about it for a while. I’ll be back, and *please* understand that I have *not* exaggerated what could happen to you. This is a good deal more than just some time behind bars, or even *just* paying with your life.”

Yuri watched as Deveroux got up off the chair, and just as he went out the door, he turned, and repeated, “I have *not* exaggerated.”

Yuri nodded to make it clear that he understood.

Gathering

The angel had been moving quickly from place to place, and Max's new chums were certainly not on the same par as his old ones. Thankfully, for him, he had still had two experienced men who had not gone on the mission to net the angel. Men who he had trained to fear him and knew some of the Tech'; they would teach the rest. He went over his plan in his mind again, as he had done a thousand times; that being no exaggeration. This plan and the weapon, or creature really, that they were going to use to entrap the angel was volatile, so he had to be well prepared and practised.

Jeremy and Deveroux could track the angel too. They had small devices that could pick up remnant energies and certain eddies of a deeper nature. Neither of them knew the science, they just knew how to use them and how to interpret the readings given the situation on the ground.

Yuri had now joined Deveroux, and also had his own tech for finding the angel. While they kept a look out and followed its movements, they also looked for signs of The Imaginer. The Imaginer was impossible to track, as Deveroux had tried and there was nothing that his gear could detect. He and Yuri had finally come to the conclusion that they needed a special bloodhound. They needed the angel.

The beast was unaware of any threat, mostly drawing from Max and anyone in this sad man's company. The new chums were certainly more fearful, so he tortured them in their dreams to the point that one of them even jumped ship on Max. It did not do him any good unfortunately, because The Imaginer could track him by his scent, continuing his assault, and playing with the minds of others around *him*; others who were lost in the various realities of men.

"The angel's moving so quickly now. I think we are getting further and further behind it," ventured Max's new top man.

"Keep tracking it anyway. When I'm ready, we'll draw it to us, gather it in, and take it down," said Max, now very confident of his plan.

GEOFFREY AND ODI HAD FOUND THEMSELVES SUDDENLY COHORTS. They had been on the job for a short while now. A strange influence had brought them together a week ago now. They had initially woken in Geoffrey's lounge room after each having a strange encounter. The English agent had woken with a gas mask on; Odi sitting unconscious on the couch across from him.

When they had both woken that day, Geoffrey had complained of the mask's necessity, and how hard it was to breathe with it on. He had been a smoker, and while he had now quit, his lungs were weakened and fighting hard to breathe through what he had dubbed *'this damned thing'*.

He had gone to take it off at the time, and Odiferous D warned him not to, as he also started to laugh in anticipation of what was to come. He thought that this man deserved it anyway, as even though he had somewhat redeemed himself, Odi thought a little suffering

would be quite appropriate. Especially self-inflicted suffering. Humility was hard won by those who were quite capable, and Geoffrey was certainly that.

“*Oooohhhhh, Ggggaaaarrd!*” Geoffrey had yelled, as he fumbled with the mask, working with all haste and speed to reset the mask on his face.

“Told you,” said Odi.

“Gaaaarrd! What *is* that?” complained the English agent, in a muffled voice after he was successful at donning the mask again.

“You get used to it after a while.”

“Nothing in existence could get used *to that.*”

“I did,” said Odi, making it very clear he was happy about that, more *especially* as Geoffrey *couldn't*.

“What *happened* to you?” enquired Geoffrey, as he had tried to breathe out any last remnant of the stench.

“A stench wraith happened. They’re like a skunk, but a lot bigger, and humanoid. I questioned one a little too over-zealously once, and he got scared, and well, the rest is history,” explained Odi, enjoying Geoffrey’s antics.

“It won’t go *awaaaayy!*” shrieked Geoffrey through the mask, as the stench was never one to move on quickly; even a small amount stayed a very long time.

“Well, maybe next time you’ll take me seriously,” Odi had chided, while sitting back and enjoying the show.

“*The creature* must be powerful to overcome that *gaawwd awwwwful stench*. I didn’t even get a whiff of you earlier.”

“Yeah, for sure,” Odi had said, nonchalantly. “We need to get some groovy tech’, my man.”

“Where from?”

“From *all over* this galaxy, and *one or two more*,” replied Odi, showing off. “We can net the rest from Nadzor’s. Actually, the creature informed me how to use some of his tech’ a certain way. So, let’s get on with it,” Odi had finished, calling his small team to action.

They had since gone about their business with all care and diligence. Completing a successful raid on Max Nadzor’s home, but when Odi had used the portals, he too found they had been locked down. They would have to use what they had, but were still confident. Odi was not sure why The Agency had shut the portals down, so it had made him more cautious.

“Anyway, we’ve got some plans to make,” now said Odi. “We have to gather some more intel’, and we can now track Max with his own gear.”

“What about that *creature*, eh,” commented Geoffery.

“It got us together; but what its game is, I don’t know. It seems to me that it shouldn’t need mere mortals like us to get this job done.”

“Well, at least we know we’re generally on the same side.”

Odi had nodded his head at the time, but he was not sure at all about the full nature of the creature he and Geoffrey had encountered, and even though it had gathered them for the protection of Judgement, he was not quite sure about it.

It was a mysterious presence that had taken him and Geoffrey from themselves somehow, and they had woken up informed and set to their task. Fortunately for the Englishman the creature, or whatever it was, had put the gas mask on him for when he woke up near Odi. They had been kept in a sort of daze while they had been set to their task, both only remembering bits of that experience, but both definitely recalling the smell when they woke. It was intoxicating; the most beautiful smell in the universe. It even cut through Odi's wraith-stench, which was no mean feat.

They had been working well together since then, and Geoffrey now suggested, "I can get on to my lot now, and we can see what they come up with. The higher ups will want to know."

"I think *we* can do it, and I reckon this is, *need to know*," suggested Odi.

"My lot, *need to know. Especially* as your lot are gone," charged the local agent.

There was no Agency presence at all, and with all the secondaries shut down, it was unlikely they would be back. This planet had been locked down, and that had never happened in Odi's experience.

"We have to trust the creature, and get going," argued Odi.

There was a bigger game going on here, and he and Geoffrey just had to do their bit. They didn't have all the info' by a long shot, and they didn't know the whole game like the creature that set them to their task seemed to, but Odi had known that protecting the angel from Max was definitely a winner.

THE BEAST WAS HUNGRY. It was not happy with too much of the same food from Max and his new cohorts. It rose up out of its hidden place, like a dark rolling mist leaking up out of the ground. When it coalesced it was quite excited, but then suddenly afraid, as out here the angel may be able to detect it; even worse, The Omnipotent may. It was not strong enough yet, and it needed the angel if it was to forge a new stronger metal from their joining. Like tin and copper, their coming together would form a new bronze, and with it the beginning of a new age in *its* mind.

The creature had sought ancient history and understanding of the whole rise of the human species. It saw patterns of darkness and light, and it saw the rise from wandering bands to villages, from villages to city states, then the development of nations. He saw the various empires growing and falling, until the now current times where the nation building was all but complete. They were not far from a federated system of nations, which The Imaginer knew to be part of the coming of age of any world. It saw The Unifier and those at work in His Cause, and it despised Him.

The Light was coming in ebb and flow, and while all this was bad news for the dark creature, the darkness of a distracted humanity was still on the increase. Chaos was growing, outwardly in some countries, bubbling in some, and just under the surface in others. Nobody could get on. People did not seem to want to be united, as they thought they were clever and honourable by driving to keep themselves and their fellows and families safe. In fact, their disinterest in those they saw as *others*, and a great drive toward individual material safety, were only helping break down the cohesive order in the societal ground under their own feet. Most walked proudly upon the Earth; or fearfully so, intent upon the material aspect of life alone.

This was all good news to the ancient darkness, especially as this whole world was in the throes of labour; the birthing pains of a new higher united humanity. The pain was great now, and if The Imaginer could rise soon, it knew that it could ramp up that pain and keep the chaos and ignorance of this time growing. It could make this planet a foothold, and eventually a base, to power up its energies and reach out into this endless universe of the Outer Realities.

It now wandered the streets, seeking new blood; new fears; new wants. It gathered many disparate thoughts and desperate ones as it went, but it was looking for the right mind. Someone it could terrify; someone more innocent, yet not knowingly so.

“DAMN THIS CREATURE IS MOVING FAST,” said Deveroux, out of breath.

“What’s the matter? Can’t handle the action?”

“I can take the heat, boy. Don’t you worry about that,” retorted Deveroux, as they ran to the next portal, following the angel’s energy readings.

They knew the angel must be on the scent of the dark creature now, as he was moving so fast, and they knew the best way to find the beast was to keep on the angel’s tail.

“I don’t think we are going to catch him; especially, as you are so slow.”

“Suck it up, Yuri Orlov. You need me for the portals.”

“You could give me your badge.”

They entered another doorway and ran into the blinding light, and as they burst out the other side, and through the attending wooden door, Deveroux answered, “Yep, sure, here it is.”

Yuri looked at him suddenly, not expecting that kind of trust from the Agent. His heart then fell, yet his mouth smiled, as Deveroux looked back with a ‘*Sure, like that’s going to happen*’ expression on his face.

The two ran on, and at odd times Deveroux would break into a harder run; just to keep the kid guessing. This had nothing to do with Deveroux’s ego of course; no, *really*; not *at all*. Well...*you know*.

THE BEAST CAME TO A PLACE THAT PEOPLE WERE JUST LEAVING. It was late in the night, and a moonless night, so it rolled along the ground unnoticed. These people had been doing yoga and meditation. He sensed their calm, and just as it was deciding to move on, saw the wild imagination of one poor soul. The Imaginer thought that it could get some time out of this one, as he was also less hardened by life. It was sure the young man would evince great fear when given the right promptings.

The creature followed this unaware soul home, and when they reached there it rejoiced in the fact this man lived alone. A mind left to itself wandered often, and without the notice of others it could hold him longer. After a shower and some time to settle the man sat out on his back veranda. He had a low light on, and as he sat back in a cushioned outdoor couch, he saw what seemed to be a small terracotta statue of a Buddhist child monk. Its face seemed so gentle and deeply at peace within, as it looked down. The man was immediately and easily taken, as the statue had not been there before, and it now started to look up at him.

The man felt special; like he had reached through into another place, a higher plane. His ego drew him in, as even the wish for spiritual power or heightened sight can be driven by the ego. The riches of heaven or earth were all the same in this aspect. Even though

spiritual attainment is most definitely sought, a person's humility and detachment needs grow to the same level. He now watched the small child come over to him, and climb up on his lap, and he smiled at the child.

As the child settled on his lap and closed its eyes, the man did the same. He assumed he would see what the child had come to show him, and settled himself into a meditative state, letting go to the moment. He did not see anything in his mind's eye, as there was just the dark emptiness of The Imaginer there, and he felt the deep pain and endless loss. Then he felt a deep physical pain in his chest. He opened his eyes and screamed. The child had grown sharp teeth and claws and was digging into his chest. It now pulled out his heart, and the man screamed and screamed as he was slowly devoured, not at any time realising that he would have been dead after his heart was consumed.

The saddest thing was that his neighbours did not seem to care, other than to shut him up so they could sleep, and even called the police. He was an hour or so in that state before a police officer came around behind his flat and up onto the open veranda. He thought the man was probably on drugs and called out to his partner at the front of the house. When the second officer had come around and onto the wooden deck, the first policeman started to shake the man a little, trying and get his attention.

The Imaginer was not happy that its feeding had been curtailed, and it drifted down out of the man's consciousness, through the couch, and under the decking. The man then woke, and just broke down crying as one officer called for an ambulance. They did not know what this guy was on, so they had to get him to a hospital.

“Between *these idiots*, and the endless drunks, you sure get over it, eh.”

“Yeah, but it's *the job*, eh.”

“Yeah, it’s the job.”

The beast had gathered its sustenance, just as it would gather the people of this world to its feet. It squealed a bit in joy under the wooden veranda at that thought, but then held itself silent as a wave of impatient pain then immediately assailed it. It could not cry out with all the pain it now felt from the thought of *waiting* for this wider goal to play out. It despised its own weakened state, hated itself, and hated even more the policemen who had brought this feeding to an end.

One of the officers walked down the stairs cautiously, not knowing if there was another junkie hiding under the deck. He had his taser out, just in case whoever it was decided to be violent, while also being ready to chase if they ran. As he looked into the darkness, he thought he could see movement. The monster lurched toward him. But fortunately, just as the officer turned on his torch. The creature suddenly recoiled, rolled quickly away, and through a vent in the brickwork under the veranda before the policeman could be sure he saw anything. The torchlight had been enough to save him, as even a small amount of light was more powerful than substanceless darkness.

Heroes

There had been many attempts at inculcating justice on the planet; many individuals, many groups, many governments, many churches. Even a plethora of inspired, yet fatally flawed ideas, were over a century and a half, unable to bring this revered ideal to many people's daily lives. Some of these even clouded the nature of justice in the end. So many, over all the planet, had championed the principles of higher change but had been unable to bring about meaningful change at the level of community.

There were so many movements towards justice, from the suffragettes to the non-violent protest in India, to those who protested for the end to racial prejudice. Many had suffered, and even civil wars were fought for the end to such things. Many heroes had cast themselves at the rock which denied change, and endless many had suffered and fallen.

Some conflagrations had created some success, while others were still being fought in various places, but somehow, even the equality of women, among *so many other things*,

still languished in some countries and localities. Protest had not brought the level of justice that had been envisioned, and the many aspects inequality still held ground in the world in general. Well over one hundred and fifty years of the modern era passed, and the waves of protest and process had brought things forward, but still failed to bring it truly into the daily lives of so many; from poverty to prejudice, the rock of injustice still held off the waves of change on the ground.

Protest had no doubt brought its power to bear on that rock, and broken it down, and awakened more and more others so they too could batter away at it. To stand up is the right of all, especially as it was done in India, when violence does not usurp its transformative power. But it seemed that now, there had to be a way to bring more final and lasting change, to bring justice to the ground in everyday life. It would always seem that the *whole* truth of so many things was traded for being right or thinking that the change *had* been made. The search for the full truth still fell to the extremes of opinion and difference.

A new way of thinking *was* rising in amongst all this bubbling, one based on unity and justice in all its elements. Not one of agitation or violence, not one of setting people against each other, not one of those in power finally acquiescing the will of the people they served; but one of action toward unity, and all forms of justice being brought on by the loving actions of people in their own small communities. It was predicated on the idea, that justice is not something that should be fought for; at least not as much as it needed to be built from the ground up. By a growing will and effort of people in their own small part of the world to stop *demanding* justice, and just building it through love, connection, and action.

The understanding in this was that we have to walk away from the rock that stands in the way of the embrace of justice in the world; to stand to the side of this seemingly immovable form, to leave it to itself, and simply *grow* justice by social effort; to *nurture*

justice by creating bonds and connections between people, so that they saw their own future in the future of those around them. Its essence was to not *tear down*, but to *build up*; a far more unstoppable force, as unity leads to life and greater things.

The heroes that valiantly fought, like Wilberforce in England, to many who were herded like cattle to their deaths in conflicts around the world, or God-fearing souls pushing the societal conscience to end slavery in America, to those kept poor by greed standing strong, all the way down to someone standing up to a simple injustice on the street, were now being joined by endless heroes in villages, neighbourhoods, communities, apartments buildings and the like; people who now strove hard for the *building* of justice, and the progression of unity, in our world. To build a garden takes labour, and feelings of great responsibility, and throughout the world this particular perception was growing; so much so that in time it may even end the need for protest itself. As, if you want to bring change you can fight someone for justice, or you can just go and build it. Building, while not to be disrespectful of protest, is a far better use of time and energy; and so much more powerful.

People are powerful, especially when they understand the power of love and the inherent bond between all humans. Justice follows love, and together they create unity.

Conflict

Max had donned full black body armour, including a helmet. There was a pack on his back, and he now moved a weapon that was attached to it by bound flexible cords to get used to its action. He was going to bring the angel down *himself*. He was not going to let any of his mindless scum do *this* job, when even Yuri had failed. The young man was *not* on Max's radar, or even in his interest, just as Yuri had hoped. He was intent on his goal alone; his rise to greater power.

“Get the snork,” he now ordered.

The men looked at each other as if waiting for someone else to go get it.

“*Get...the snork!*” ordered Max again, pointing the weapon at the group.

One man now signalled secretly to another with his eyes. They had realised their boss's deep malevolent intent, and that they would only continue to live, if it was in servitude to him, deciding to take Max out, and now was the time. Max read those eyes though and blew them both out of existence before the either man could bring his weapon to bear. He then looked at another man, and said, now very calmly, “Get the snork.”

The others just stood there meekly while the man went to get the wild creature. The snork was in containment but had broken free a number of times and taken two lives. Fortunately for Max, he had not been there for any of the breaches, because a snork feeds on extreme energy; be that light or dark energy. It would have no doubt been immediately drawn to Max. Strangely, both times, the snork had stayed in the warehouse, bashing repeatedly into the cement floor. It had only taken lives as they had recaptured it and returned it to containment.

They were in Max's warehouse in Sydney, and he was filled with anticipation. He had never felt *so alive*. Today he was hunting an angel, and he loved feeling his own power at even being able to say that. It did not take his attention from these grubs he had employed though, and they were *all* now *very* sure of *that fact*. He was the type of creature that always kept good watch on those around him, and one who kept the attention of those around him because of his violent volatile nature.

The man now brought out the snork. It was in what seemed to be a large glass jar, which it was, but with a field that ran through a laminate film within it. This lead infused laminate cut off outer energy stimuli when it was out of its containment vault. The man was sweating profusely, because of the small beast in the glass jar, as well as the hot Sydney summer that now sweltered outside. It could get very hot in this city, which usually took people to the harbour, or to the beaches, north and south. The warehouse had been a place that Max had visited often, and spent more time in, than his own house and basement. His most important toys were here.

Fortunately for the angel, Lilly, and the others, Max had been at home in England when they had banded together amongst these warehouses almost two months ago now. The angel had been drawn to this place by a feeling of spiritual emptiness given off by this city,

and though not realising it, also by the dark energy of The Imaginer itself. This is not to say that one place is more lost than another, or that good people did not exist in this particular city, it was that the societal norm was running at full speed away from decency and moderation, a large group of souls seeking out the material only. Confidence in lesser things, and being so self-focused, had made people spiritually tardy. Thinking they were strong, they drank their coffee, sipped their wine, focused on making money, and enjoyed all their various diversions. This is not to say that people who work hard should not enjoy some diversion or downtime, it was more that there was a run-away focus on *only* the material joys.

In any case, the dark creature had been drawn here, and had originally settled here, drawn to the darkness here and Max himself. It had connected with Nadzor here, injecting a small part of itself that could hide within him without his notice, so it could gather from him wherever he went in the world from its deep burrow. It had lain down in the rock crevasses below the warehouse, on the side away from the water, as such creatures do not like to be near that which engenders life. It had seen the angel *so* close when Judgement had met his cohorts amongst these warehouses, but at the time the dark creature was too weak; it was *still* too weak to take the angel *right now*. But if his friend Max brought it low enough, it would attempt to capture the angel's mind. It too, now salivated at the power it could hold.

Max was fully suited up and had donned a snap down bonnet over his helmet and shoulders as well; an outer suit and bonnet were made of the clear laminate film used in the jar. It was to keep him safe from the creature. He now took the glass container and looked at the wild thing within it. It was like a rough ball, made of the darkest substance, with pointy protrusions just like a black sea urchin. It pulsed like there was a beating heart inside, or like it was one, a very angry dark one. Its outwardly radiating protrusions retracted and extended with this heartbeat. It was charged with high energy, as small lightning like charges ran

through it, and static charges popped all around it. It had more energy than it seemed to be able to handle, yet it always sought more.

Max had already informed his men that the snork would attract a lot of attention once let out, so they needed to move to another warehouse that he owned when he let it loose. It was higher up and about a kilometre away, so they could watch Max's victory from a safe distance. He didn't care about their wellbeing though; he just needed a ready workforce and dogs that had his back if he had to make a quick exit. He gave the order for them to go, then made his way up an internal staircase to a high mezzanine deck. The men left the building and got into a car and a large, enclosed van, as he went up. He then made his way up a ladder to a hatch that opened onto the roof. He opened the hatch and set the snork's capsule up on the roof, with just his head now above the roofline. He was full of excitement, but calmed himself, and waited there to breathe a little, so he was ready.

Then he let the snork go.

JEREMY NOW SAT WATCHING THE 24-HOUR NEWS CHANNEL. He had been unable to catch up with the moving angel. He had got good readings to follow, and all the local portals were open and functioning, but the creature was on a mission, and it had become more and more clear that even determination was not going to be enough to catch up with it.

The young Agent had wanted to help Judgement, as even though he was not an angel, he would have been of real benefit. Two heads and perspectives were usually better than one, too. Truth be known, the angel *did* think to take him, but knowing that he would protect their other two cohorts with his life he had left him there. The creature had taken to these two souls very easily, which was hard for it, as this somehow did not seem so much to its nature. He

knew they would all protect each other really, as Suwna and Lilly were resourceful and able, but Jeremy being an Agent gave them more hope of survival. In any case, it had to fulfil its duty, and it also knew that the best way to protect that courageous trio was to quickly find and destroy The Imaginer.

Jeremy had finally returned to the others, and they were both *very* glad to see him. He had been under no illusion that the two of them may not be safe when he went off to seek out Judgement; even though he was somewhat sure that their travelling through the portals would have cut off the beast's ability to track them. He had had the same rationale as Judgement did, where protecting his cohorts was concerned, seeking to join the angel to defeat the danger at its source. Suwna had wanted to go with Jeremy too, and *would have*, but for Lilly. She could not leave her alone, as it was clear that her duty was to this younger soul. It was not about strength, or lack of it, the intent of all the players in this matter was driven by love, and selflessness.

Lilly had begged to go with Jeremy when he had decided to go searching for the angel. But he had said that he cared too much about her to see her fall in any exchange between the angel and what he now knew it hunted. He had said, "While you are very capable, you are still a child, and so it is my beholden duty to protect you." Suwna had agreed, and Lilly had actually felt really loved and protected more than disappointment, even though she had wanted to fight. This nurture filled her heart so much that water came out of her eyes, and she sobbed, feeling all the pain of all those years alone, and fighting alone. A warm hug and protective arms had enfolded her life, and so she rested in that, appreciating its peace.

"Any sign of him," Suwna had asked on his return, with Lilly expectant.

“Plenty of sign, but no angel. Bit like *you*, really,” said Jeremy, with a bit of cheek, and mostly to relax these two souls. He had learnt that off Agent Deveroux. The man’s dry wit and tough guy bravado had more than once calmed his crew.

Suwna punched in the arm, and stood back, as Lilly laughed.

“You’ll have to do better than that, little girl,” he countered.

With that Suwna dove at him, crash tackling him to the floor. She had been almost horizontal when her shoulder hit his lower rib cage and both her arms grappled around him. Jeremy laughed loud, as there was no way he expected it, and asked where she had learned that move.

“We’ve been watching the football, and we both decided that we wanted a chance to try that out. *Thanks*,” she finished, as she got up, and took a martial arts stance.

Jeremy had smiled as he stood up, thinking they might have even been watching fighting art sports too, but he then shook his head with confident eyes, saying ‘*I don’t think so sister*’; just as Lilly crash tackled him from the other side. Jeremy got up quickly, and so did Lilly, and the three of them circled each other with all the feigned moves. They were like a family, and even though now a youth, Lilly felt for maybe the first time just how family could be.

Jeremy now turned off the television, as Suwna and Lilly returned with dinner. They ate and laughed together, as who knew what the future would hold. Then tonight, as had been their practice over the last few days, they gathered around the small book, and Lilly read another small verse...

“O Rebellious Ones!

My forbearance hath emboldened you, and my long suffering has made you negligent, in such wise that ye have spurred on the fiery charger of passion into perilous ways that lead unto destruction. Have ye thought me heedless, or that I was unaware?”¹⁸

THE SNORK WAS IN A FRENZY, as it was tied to a harness on the suit of its captor. It only wanted to escape right now. It danced around in the air above the warehouse like a bird on a long tether; flying hard to break free in any direction but being flung back continually when the powered tether went taught. It seemed that it was now more intent on escape than seeking energy. Max had moved up a little, with his head and arms now through the hatch, and he stayed there. Like a fisherman waiting for fish. Awaiting Judgement.

It was barely ten minutes before the outwardly focused snork felt the soon arriving presence of the angel. Judgement had been drawn by the intense vibrations of the snork. The local police had received a small number of calls as people gathered video and pictures of the strange phenomenon on their phones; the snork on the tether. Max was out of sight to most, but not to the men on their vantage point; that was until a media helicopter came into view. The reporter was excitedly sharing the news that was now going to live feed, as this was no ordinary event, and whoever was first on the scene was always the winner.

The snork then felt once more an intense power source building below the warehouse. The Imaginer had begun to build up, ready, just in case it could snare the angel. The snork fired itself down through the roof and exploded into the floor. The power tether did not break, as it bounced upward and then down through the roof again, and sometimes through the partial mezzanine floor, to crash again and again into the now broken cement and rocky

ground. The Imaginer saw what was happening, and so powered down. Its *time* would have to be *another* time.

The reporter was going nuts into the microphone as the snork smashed through the structure repeatedly. Max was more than a bit shaken. His perch was in danger of collapsing under him and the angel was not here yet. Knowing the nature of the snork, he then assumed that the angel had been smart, and come in from below. “*Maybe that fat piece of work has tricked me again,*” he also thought. He hung on long enough for the snork to return its attention towards the incoming angel, and Max now started to laugh out loud. The angel was here, and the snork finally doing what he had expected it to.

The angel came in. The snork fired itself at it. Max took a deep breath in. Judgement caught the snork in one hand as he sat in the air, wings beating. It looked at the snork as if trying to understand it, then turned its attention to Max. Max rose up the ladder and onto the roof. The media chopper was hanging wide but zoomed in; the reporter now had an angel and the images live feeding to their 24-hour news channel. Max felt mighty as he turned on the weapon. The snork’s spikes then exploded outward with the energy that now ran through its tether, and the angel found that he could not let the seemingly angry little creature go. Judgement then fell to the roof on his side. He tried to get up, as the purple colour of his eyes intensified.

The angel then managed to push through the pain and get up. He was about to pounce on Max when that lost soul turned up the juice through the tether and out through the snork’s spikes. The angel, fell crippled again, to the roof. The Darkness sensed that Max had succeeded, and was about to charge out of its hole, when two men appeared on the roof.

One of them walked up behind Max, who was now revelling in his own magnificence; as do those just before a victory, or just before their fall. This was to be the latter; as a certain

smell found its way up Max's nose. It had body, was almost particulate, and he even felt it crawl down into his throat, as he looked around. There was Odiferous D with a big smile on his face. All Max's gear could not protect him from Odi. Geoffery had moved in on Max's other shoulder, and after putting his hand under the film bonnet, let a pulse from a device on his arm relieve itself into Nadzor's frame; all while saying, "Hello old chap. *What's all this then?*" But it was not a question, and Max hit the roof in a ball of pain.

Max was in excruciating pain and choking heavily on Odi's fumes. He was trying to complain through a closed mouth, afraid to open his mouth again to the foul thick stench. Geoffrey's stun weapon had created a feedback loop in the tether, and the snork imploded, just as he leant down and asked Max, in an ever so gentlemanly and deeply caring fashion, "What's that old chap?"

The implosion though, was soon followed by an explosion, which unfortunately smashed down on the roof and all on top of it. The news chopper too backed off as the shockwave hit it.

The building was already damaged, and as it took the big hit from the snork's explosion, it collapsed under those on top of it. Odi and Geoffrey were cast to oblivion it seemed. Max though; definitely fell with the structure, as he had been low on the roof. He was cast down and was soon smashed and broken beneath, and within, all the roofing and mangled steel supports that fell. The angel was fortunately cast high by the blast. The feedback loop had allowed him to let go of the snork as it imploded. It had *instinctively* rolled itself into a protective ball and tucked its wings in as the explosion's shock wave had hit it.

Emergency services were now rolling in, as the angel unravelled its frame and extended its wings. It then flew over to the media helicopter. He was not at all laid down from the pain and shock that he had endured, and he said clearly, "I seek a mighty darkness

here, but I also see great darkness in you. Stay from me, and get not in my way, or I will cast my judgement on this world quickly. There is great darkness in you. Turn now, *for your own sakes*. Far worse than *me* destroying your world is the *slow rotting torture* of *you* destroying it. *I am Judgement!*” it finished ominously, and with that, shot high and out of sight, in a blur.

The building had begun to burn, as electrical wiring and some propane tanks met violently in the twisted fall of the warehouse roof. Max was just awake; the shock still yet covering his pain. He had been skewered by two large bits of steel and was almost bodily crushed as well. He saw the fire now coming toward him through the wreckage, and he screamed; that was until The Imaginer moved up around him. Now surrounded by this darkness...Max *knew It*. He had felt this presence many times before in his sleep, on waking, and an inkling here and there. He simply thought, “*You?*”

“*Us*, if you will it,” suggested The Darkness.

“*No!*” shouted Max, as he would never ever allow anything to control him.

“But I am powerful, and with your body, and your mind, we can rise to all power. We can defeat the angel, and *together*, we may not even need it. I have a great power that is deeper. It lies within thought itself, not in your weak physical reality,” said the beast, but all the while still planning to take the angel. Max’s body was simply suitable and would be a good vessel for now.

“Why...need...me,” was all Max could muster, as he felt some of the heat of the fire through the darkness that now surrounded him. He wanted to survive, but also wished that death would come quickly from his wounds; before he weakened. Burning to death was *too* horrifying an end for him to endure, yet joining with this creature was, *even for Max*, a greater nightmare.

“So, I can walk among you, so I can be seen, and feared. To gather more of the rich harvest of hate and fear here. You can have everything you have ever wished for. Nothing will stop us.”

Max liked the ‘us’ at the end, just as The Imaginer knew he would, and then the thought again of roasting to death before his wounds took his life pushed Max to a decision.

“Yes,” he said.

No greater mistake would ever be made, as more of the dark creature entered Max’s being. Part of it held back the flames, while it worked to heal his broken body, and slowly expel the steel that had entered there. It sat in this chrysalis within the fire, while Max was overtaken by fear and want like he had never felt. It was not his reactions to the process; it was The Imaginer, *moving into his mind*.

“*THE ANGEL!*” CALLED OUT SUWNA.

It was the next morning, and Judgement was on almost every channel. The world was abuzz with the news and the media played the scene again and again. One channel showed the angel close up, with its ominous words, almost continually on loop. It was surreal for most, and it had shaken many. It was such a change in reality that it slapped people very hard, waking many out of their slumber, and sadly too, bringing out religious fools who knew nothing. They talked of something called the rapture, and of Armageddon, like they had always been very knowledgeable. There were even, *suddenly*, endless experts on angels.

In no way could this angel be seen as the mystical creatures of light that were of the Torahic, Biblical or Qur’anic traditions, or indeed any other Faith, but many preachers, mullahs, and various believers, claimed Judgement as their own; also, many crazy types who

had been the victims of their own imaginations. It was the usual story of experts, so called experts, conversations, and conjecture, but thankfully, also a great deal of soul searching also rose from the angel's words.

The friends couldn't help but watch the footage over and again, just as most of the planet did. They listened to the reporters and the seemingly endless line of comments and experts. The three friends, made comments like, "*They don't get him at all.*" "*They are missing the point.*" "*Who is this guy?*" "*That's Judgement, eh. Couldn't help himself.*" "*I'm glad he's okay. I hope he can still fight The Imaginer.*"

Lilly's latest comment was, "This *whole* thing has been *so surreal*. I just didn't really see that until now."

"A huge step for any person who hasn't Travelled. But imagine what it's like for a whole planet of people suddenly aware of other things," added Suwna, in support.

"We *have* travelled," said Lilly, adamantly.

"No, I mean, to have been a *Traveller*. We see so much that many don't."

"Lilly, there are very few Travellers like Suwna, and Agents travel too, as duty and need prescribe. But mostly, people live locally on their planet, and in their own level of existence. The Agency is watching this *Travelling* thing, which seems to be locked into one family so far, but to make it clear to you, even *I* find this surreal."

"Watching *my family*, are you?" charged Suwna.

"Yes," said Jeremy, with a confident and '*We certainly are*' smile, just for her benefit.

"Well, keep watching, *tough guy*. We'll make your *head spin*, *Mr Agent*."

Lilly laughed.

“*Sure*, Traveller girl,” retorted Jeremy, just for the sport and realising that his name calling was not quite up to scratch, even wincing a bit at his rather ordinary effort.

Both antagonists’ words were rising from a growing endearment and a joy of play though, not necessarily to defeat the other.

“You’ll *never* stop us, you know. It’s in *the blood*.”

“Yeah, *sure*. Your Grandpa told me...” Jeremy then stopped suddenly and took on a pained expression.

“My Grandpa what?! What are you hiding? You’ve *seen* him, *haven’t* you,” charged Suwna.

Jeremy was very upset with himself. This lady had unfortunately had the time to get to know him, which was unusual in his line of work. Situational contact was minimal for Agents, and facial reactions often slid by without notice with any people involved in his investigations. Suwna also made him act a little less professionally. People you are really comfortable with are like that.

“Yep, I found him,” admitted Jeremy. “He knows The Darkness, and I needed information, so I went to find him. Travellers leave a certain trace, and his is especially well known. He was always ‘sailing a little too high and wide’, as my boss put it. He was wandering in all kinds of places here and deeper, and we had to get a bead on him. Not that we had a trail to follow a lot of the time, as he seemed to just turn up places.”

“How is he?” asked Suwna, speaking gently with her love.

That question took away *any* question that he had about this girl and her nature. It was not an attack from someone wounded, it was not blame on another for her pain, it was not even sport. It was not about *her* at all, it was about her love for her great grandfather.

“He’s well, but I am sad to say, unwilling to join in the effort to find the beast. He told me that he has fought his battles, expressing that this is up to ‘you young ones’.”

“Really?!”

“Yep. *Really*,” responded Jeremy.

“What is he like?” then asked Suwna, thinking that she did not know him at all; which of course she didn’t. She had had very little time with him the two times they had met. The first time she didn’t even know who he was.

“A man; one who has obviously travelled *beyond my experience* and seemed a little beyond my ability to *truly* see, you know. But he was a very normal, kind, and easy soul.”

“That’s my Grandpa Jack,” said Suwna, now with a sure mouth and some tears. “Does he know I’m here?”

“Yes, he got that out of me. He said that he decided to keep his feet on the ground *no matter what*, some time ago. He said he has faith in the young, you, and in The Almighty, and that he was not afraid of this creature. He told me that the only thing he feared was The Uncreated’s disappointment.”

They all gained some surety in that; like he was right there with them. Suwna started to well up a little more.

“I am sorry Suwna. God knows I would...”

“Don’t say it, Jeremy. I trust that the design of my life will bring me to him. I *just do*. Even if somehow, I’m mistaken, I’m okay with the wisdom of life. I just *really appreciate* this small contact right now. *Thank you.*”

Jeremy was very happy to have given her *something* at least. The friends then watched the news a little more, and the night’s discussion began winding down with Suwna saying, “People here don’t know the truth of all this like we do, and we are confused enough, how do they have a chance with all this endless guessing on the media.”

“I had a friend called Margie, who would give me her old food, and sometimes the fresh stuff that she *pretended* was old,” shared Lilly. “She had a food van that she took all around the warehouses and industrial places. She told me that she stopped watching the news because it was now all opinion pieces and gossip. Not *real* news. I can see that more clearly now.”

“On my world, the way of such things has evolved,” put in Suwna. “It’s not biased, or inflammatory, and seen as a service to others. The integrity and effort to find out as much of the *full* nature of something is very much reached for. It took a little while as the ascendancy of ego and fear slowly waned in our new culture. There is a little bias here and there; flavours of it occasionally sneak in. But seeking the truth of a matter is a *foundational driving force* of our culture and civilisation. We seek the truth of things together and see it as our individual responsibility too. Our media people see themselves as servants, who provide a *clear glass* on things they look into, or a light shone more intently on something for the sake of clarity and truth.”

“If the truth is clouded, conclusions are less valuable, and decisions less effective,” added Jeremy, from an investigative standpoint.

“We just remembered *humility*, and *each other*, after our world had shaken,” finished Suwna.

“It reminds me of something Judgement said too, and there is a verse in my book that says that no matter what, you need to look into things yourself, and think for yourself beyond any outer biases. It means other things too, but anyway,” offered Lilly, as she sought the particular Writing, and on finding it, read it out.

“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 through 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 a sign of My loving kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.”¹⁹

DEVEROUX WAS WATCHING THE NEWS. The angel had been moving too fast, so they too had had to regroup and reset their plans. The Agent was keeping an eye out for anything that may be a sign of the beast they were hunting, or more sightings of the angel, now that the cat was out of the bag where Judgement was concerned.

They had seen it all play out at the warehouse on the live feed, but even with the portals they had had no way to get there quick enough. They saw the explosion, and Odi and Geoffrey get blasted.

“Damn that smelly fool. He shouldn’t have been there, I should have.”

“Who are they?” Yuri had asked, while a deep relief had come to him with Nadzor’s demise. He knew who the man on the roof was. He knew him by his mannerisms, and his very short-lived elation at one point.

“One was an old partner of mine; a good friend. The other was a British agent, Geoffrey. Can’t say I saw that kind of sacrifice in him; but *there you go*, eh.”

“They did it *all* wrong. What a shame,” commented Yuri.

“No, they did it *right*. The *rightest* way you *can* do it.”

“Sure,” answered Yuri, stung, but starting to feel more of his soul moving.

Deveroux’s words *had* bit hard at first, but as he thought about it, it felt more like his being was stretching after a long deep sleep. It felt good to feel things moving, bringing the blood flow and freer movement back to his inner being. Sacrifice, and its attending deep meaning and beauty, was strongly dawning on this younger man. He could see things more clearly, and now, it was obvious that some sacrifice was required to be a Protector like Deveroux. He also understood that most Agents sacrificed their lives by a full life of service to others, even if they didn’t lose their lives.

“You are more of a lifer, aren’t you?” asked Yuri of the older Agent, following his thought process.

“You mean my work? Hell, I don’t know. I can’t see me changing.”

“I mean you probably won’t die on the job, just live a life of doing it.”

“Who knows, Yuri.”

“You seem to be one of those guys. I don’t know what kind I will be, but I have a purpose to be something. I’ve seen many die quick, and they only went because of ego or stupidity or fear; certainly not out of sacrifice. But you get my drift?”

“Yep, keep that high intention in you, boy. To give your life to something takes will and effort, but whether you die, young *or old*, keep your *self* at bay. It can bring all your efforts to naught.”

“You didn’t strike me as a spiritual man.”

“There’s a saying,” continued Deveroux, “that if one gives oneself to love and burns away within it, there can be no self. The heat of that state is so great that you have to be nothing to sustain it, or somethin’ like that.”

“I don’t know. It’s all new to me,” responded Yuri, but feeling the power of high motive in what Deveroux had shared.

“Yep,” agreed Deveroux, not really sure about what he had just shared, but deep down he loved the power of its essential message. “I’m sure there are degrees of all this high intent, and no doubt, ebbs and flows of the higher spiritual state in all of us as we go along, but what I think it says is that nothing less than selflessness can provide for real sacrifice. That is if the pure joy received by the soul in such an act *is really* a sacrifice.”

Both men could feel that, but both men now let it go. They weren’t all into it and had been clear on what it all meant. It wasn’t about more words for these two; it was about how they would act on them, live them, and how they would change them. Maybe too, about how resolved they might be, if and when, the time suddenly came to sacrifice themselves like Odi and Geoffrey. Yuri knew somehow that it needed to be every day for him now, and that it would be a way of life in itself.

“You know,” said Deveroux, now watching one of the news replays of the snork, “that snork was after something in the warehouse.”

“A snork.”

“Yeh, that wild little thing, there. Their a *real* nuisance and hard to contain.”

“What is it?”

“*God knows* what it is, but it smells out intensive energy waves, and goes to town feeding on the source.”

“Max would have had plenty of tech’ in there,” offered Yuri, now realising that he was not in the know about *all* Max’s business. “Maybe there was something in there, like a generator for his weapon?”

“No, a snork only goes for power sources from *deeper*, or extreme energies deeper in a person. Electricity’s not the kind of stuff it feeds on. *Man*, look at that thing go. It was really after something...something that even took its attention from the angel...”

“What?” asked Yuri, realising Deveroux had stopped short.

“*Our quarry was in there,*” stated Deveroux animatedly, as he now fully realised it.

“The Darkness?”

“Yep. Other than an angel, there’s nothing else that could be here that would draw a snork *like that*. That dark thing is *emotion city*. Damn! *Let’s go!*”

Pride

The angel now walked along a city street in France, and someone had noticed him. After drawing a good deal of attention to Judgement, the man was joined by other men and women, and children of all ages. The crowd built up behind him as he walked a street that could have been a street in any city; well except for the Parisians that now followed him. Well known for speaking their mind, they started to heckle the angel; as was their right, given what he had shared that violent day at the warehouse.

“Who are you to judge us?” yelled the man, who had first followed the angel, now gathering a little courage as he glanced back at his fellows. But, as the angel turned, they stopped, and all ducked, just a bit; like a wave went through this small crowd of forty or so people.

“Stay out of my way,” said the angel, calmly but commandingly.

It then turned down a smaller, narrower, and quainter street, and continued on. The small crowd was not easily put off though, even by a mysterious creature like this one, so they followed it some more. Truth be known, some were just curious.

“*Why*, we should stay out of *your* way, Mr Angel? Who are *you*? We are not scared of *you*. We are not scared of *anyone*,” then said the same man.

“Then you are a fool,” said the angel, as he waved his arm, and laid them all gently to the ground. It was like he had levitated them, backwards and down. Then he came over and looked down on the paralysed protester. The man was now, most definitely afraid.

“I have business here, which may be to your whole kind’s benefit; but if you seek by this protest, to *stay* my hand in the judgement of your kind, you are *only* convincing me otherwise. *Pride* is a great part of that which I must destroy. Fear *your own self*, not me. *It* is your enemy, and it *alone* will destroy you.”

With that, the angel jumped, spread its wings, and shot off. The people then found that their muscle function had returned and started to get up and wander off on their business. Three of them remained to talk, and soon decided they would go to a cafe and talk some more. One young teenager remained in the small street, and after a short time, the angel landed there again.

“I knew you would be back. I won’t get in your way.”

Judgement was a little taken by this young soul. “So, you are the only one not afraid of me, and the only one with *any* vision.”

“Seems that way,” responded the girl, quite coyly.

The angel was about the business of finding the dark creature, but there was meaning here, and he had to serve it. He indicated to the teen to walk with him to a set of cement steps nearby, and they sat down to talk.

“What meaning do you seek, little one?”

“I don’t understand why you, an angel of all things, would want to destroy us?”

“I don’t want to destroy you.”

“But you will, or like you said, you may.”

“*You...destroy you...young one. Your kind destroys itself.*”

“Then how do we *stop* destroying ourselves?” asked the youth. She then immediately looked confused, and stated, “*I’m not destroying myself.*”

“Who is God to you?”

“God is a figment of man’s imagination. My father says weak people need a god, and we don’t need one to be good people.”

“Then why do you talk with me?”

“You are not a figment of my imagination.”

“The All-Glorious is not a figment of mine.”

“That is easy for you to say. How can *I* know?”

“Have you looked for Him? Have you sought traces of Him? Have you striven to find evidence of him?”

“No.”

“Then *please*, do not ask me to talk with you when you do not seek meaning,” said Judgement, standing up.

The young lady then said thoughtfully, “I *do* seek meaning,” now just realising that she did. “Can we keep talking?”

“Yes,” agreed the angel, a little curious at the child’s seeming change of heart.

“I don’t see God at all. I see nature, and I believe in science.”

“It is *all* evidence of Him. I would venture to say that you have received a bias from your father, just as the biases of other blind fools who actually believe in God do not see evidence of Him in science or nature.”

“But...”

“But what! Do you seek meaning, or for me to make you feel better about what you perceive as true?”

“I see what I see, and I don’t see Him.”

“Again, you speak words that hold no meaning, as you have only sought the nature of your existence through the puny minds of men, not through the Great Ones.”

“You mean Buddha and Jesus? I think they’re great, but I think religion is just there to control people.”

The angel sighed, and said, “You do not seek meaning. You do not listen. You do not act. I was kept here by your humility, but it must have been something else that I saw in you. I have important work to do.”

“*I am trying.*”

“Trying is not doing. Talking is not finding. *Doing is finding.*”

“I know I haven’t looked, but...”

“I would give you the time, yet I have no time for the endless *but*s that may yet fall from your tongue. All I can say is that you need to look for yourself; seek for yourself. See through your own eyes. Seek the evidence, not hearsay. Throw away your biases and the biases of others. You are responsible for your existence, and to have not looked deeply

enough into your own being is only to fall to your lesser nature. *Then* to fall to the endless stream of profiteers, and ideologues, that praise alone the material and the puny mind.”

“I will. But start me off. Give me some proof..”

The angel put up his hand to stop her continuing. “It is the time of adulthood. Demanding proof and debating it with me, is not seeking truth. This is like a child sitting in a highchair, demanding another spoonful so it can spit it out. How responsible is it for its own nutrition, and as you are much older, how responsible are you for yours?”

“I eat well,” said Marie-Therese, gently, but surely, knowing the angel talked of knowledge.

“You eat the words of men, and when I seek to feed you, you spit it out at me. You need to forage for yourself. I wish you well, and please also seek Him *inside of you*. He is less a mystery that is outside you, than He is the Spring that you rise from. *Look inside*,” advised Judgement, as he again got up to go.

The young lady then said to him, “Maybe I am a child yet. Maybe you have to feed me some more today.”

The angel was taken by her determination, as even with her bias she was willing to see beyond it. “Will you trust me, and not spit out the food I offer,” requested Judgement, turning back to her, “but take it in, and consider it?”

“Yes. I can choose then.”

“*It is not enough*. After my leaving, you need seek *proof and evidence* of what I share with you. Will you seek it out, and with some effort?”

“I don’t know.”

“Then, you do not want it.”

“Why must I want it?”

“Why did you wish to talk with me?”

“To find out why you want to destroy us.”

The Angel looked wounded, and said, “Meaning will not find you, if you *wander in circles*. You are destroying yourselves, because *you* will not seek to understand your true selves. You do not seek God, so He cannot see you, and you must then fall into darkness.”

“What do you mean He cannot see us?” asked the youth, now quite confused.

The Angel then quoted from the small book that Lilly had gotten from Ramos.

“O SON OF BEING!

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee.

***Know this, O servant.*”²⁰**

“Okay, that’s interesting, but you are just like most religious people. They quote things and think that what it says is very obvious.”

“I am not throwing a rock at you, I am offering you...” the angel then looked up to gather a word from its experience with Lilly, “*cheesecake.*”

The youth smiled, and nodded, to tell the angel he had got it right.

“The religious ones you talk of are in misunderstanding, as never should The Word be *used* on another, or *fired* at another, in a discourteous or violent way. It drains all meaning from it.”

“I still don’t understand that saying you quoted, though.”

“The writings of any Messenger of God are not simply evident. There is great depth in them. You must seek confirmation of them inwardly, and proof of them if the world. They must be contemplated, and reflected on, and explored in life. When taken into one’s being then they may change one’s soul. Change one’s actions. It is truly your own actions on them will provide the greatest proofs.

Your reality is deep inside of you. You need to seek out and digest spiritual writings...*spiritually*, not only with the intellect or with the emotional mind, and they need be discovered as you live your life, in finding the evidences of these truths on the ground of life. You need to look with your *inner* eyes and *listen* with your inner ears to find The Merciful. You, like so many, seek outcome without knowledge, you seek meaning before experience, you seek goals without action, you seek victory without hardship. Even *worse* than this, you seek pride before The Creator, and you seek the phantoms of the minds of men over the Knowledge of He Who is All.”

“How do we find the Knowledge of God?”

“With effort, through search, and ultimately through His latest Messenger. There always needs be a Mediator between the Unknowable and puny learning creatures. You see, the world of humanity falls to illness in each age, and his Physician is sent to bring life again to the dying body of your kind. All else, but His complete medicine will ever suffice the patient, as The Physician has said, all else is *palpable error*.”

“I have never heard of this physician.”

“Because, *again*, you have not looked. If you seek meaning, then you will be guided. If you truly want the truth, you may be tested, but you *will* be guided.”

“This is all so foreign to me.”

“Life was foreign to you when you issued from the womb, see today as the same.”

Marie-Therese took that in, as the angel continued, “I must go now. Seek the New Sun of the age. Reflect; seek your true nature and make effort in these. The Words of The Messenger, and your actions, are all that is valuable to you now. *All of you.*”

With that the angel walked off down the alleyway, and Marie-Therese saw words written in the dust where he had been. They were in the same calligraphy that Jeremy Jones had seen in the village when Judgement had arrived on Earth, and she grabbed for her phone to take a picture before the dust it was written in blew away.

“O SON OF SPIRIT!

I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I moulded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another?

Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.”²¹

As the young soul read it, she opened her mind to its fresh waters, and also breathed in a lovely scent that now wafted down the street.

LILLY LOOKED UP AT THE TALL BUILDINGS. They were in Hong Kong; one place where east met west very intimately. Turkey was another great meeting point of these, as was even Australia these days. It was a western country that had embraced Asia. It was now just as much a part of Asia as it was a part of the west, but then again it wasn't. It was a country that had gathered into it the waves of change and waves of new cultures; not easily at first, but had definitely done well in creating a *unity in diversity*. It had great sins but had also been much maligned; it had true victims and those who were victims of themselves. Like all places in the world there was grave historical pain and some contemporary stupidity, but it was moving inexorably in the right direction.

The three friends had moved around a little, as days of no news of the angel had turned into weeks. Jeremy had wanted to give Lilly a chance to see more of her world, while they waited to see what fate would bring. There had been a lot of sightings, and a good deal of false sightings, as well as much discussion on The Angel. So many did not know what to do with this experience; some looked back into the old beliefs of their childhood, while others were adamant that they would not be looking into anything. It had shaken the world though and had people reflecting more on the nature of their world, and themselves; many seeing that maybe we had got a lot of the basics wrong.

It seemed, greed, ideological fundamentalism, judgement of others, social intellectualism, and antagonism, now rose off a singular focus on the material aspect of life by most; a 'holier than thou' attitude of many modes of belief, as well as various modes of thought. The *spirit* of humanity was not leading it. It seemed that intolerance, self-

gratification, and the morality of money, led the world; even though so many *had* felt the pain that self and money, anger and pride, had created. Most realised that *our humanity* had to be returned to humanity. Most *were* tired of holding up a system that led to people becoming lower and weaker.

“Wow, this place is really great,” said Lilly, taking in the rich mixing of cultures.

“It is,” agreed Suwna, just then looking at Jeremy.

She had so much enjoyed wandering with him. Thankfully, when the Agency came to Earth, they had set up card facilities and accounts for their people, so they had funds for food and a place to stay; like the portals, just another card up Jeremy’s sleeve.

Lilly raced off to have a look at a statue of a dragon, and Suwna turned to him and said, “We have to arrange for Lilly’s future, if there will be one.”

“Yes. I suppose so. How can we do that?”

“I like this planet. It is at an amazing time in its development; an exciting time, and I have been travelling for some years now. I want to find Grandpa, and maybe I can look after Lilly somehow. You know, so she has someone.”

“We all need someone,” said Jeremy, then realising what he said, and blushing a little.

Suwna smiled wide, and said, “For a big strong man, you sure are bashful.”

A very loud, short sharp laugh, suddenly burst out of him, and then he shook his head, saying, “It would seem that I am.” Then very quickly adding, “You know...*strong*.”

Suwna then had her turn to laugh, and he joined in.

“I’ve really enjoyed this time with you, Jeremy,” added Suwna, thinking there was no longer any point beating around the bush.

“I have too, Suwna,” he replied, with steady eyes on hers.

“I suppose you’ll be off on another mission after this. That’s if this mission *ever ends.*”

“I wouldn’t mind *this mission* going on forever.”

“Yep,” said Suwna, now blushing a little herself. “It is most likely that I’ll stay here. You could visit sometimes.”

“This is the outer realities, Suwna. They mightn’t even let *you* stay here.”

“I would *like* to see them *stop me.*”

“If you did get to stay, I don’t think they would even let me visit you in the outer realities, as we hardly work here, and only in special circumstances. Let alone, that my job is an *all or nothing* kind of thing, Suwna.”

“Oh,” she said, looking down quite sadly.

That ‘oh’ hurt both of them more than each had thought it would, and in that moment, they again looked at each other and knew that they could not be separated; yet even so, still may. The clarity of mutual affection had found its place between them, and in them. This powerful knowing was clear to them both, as somehow, neither doubted in any way that the other felt any differently. They had stepped into a deeper bond, even though its future seemed impossible.

It was then that the angel landed beside them and regarded those around them with battle eyes. He had been *harried*, and *heckled*, all over the planet. *Every* place he had gone.

“*They do not learn,*” he said to the young couple, just as Lilly raced up and hugged him.

The angel looked down, and said, “You still, may yet be the *only* hope for this planet, little one.”

This was not a selfish statement, as angels do not know of such things. It was also not one of self-comfort, or relief from the endless birds that had had harried this magnificent flying predator. Angels do not wish for this. Such angels as Judgement wish only for truth, duty, and battle; and these, *only* so it may show its deep love for The Creator.

Its words to Lilly also came from its mission, the one beyond the destruction of the beast. It still sought the lights of pure love in this world. The power of pure love, unconditional, in Lilly’s embrace, had created a light in the spiritual darkness; one seen very clearly by the creature’s inner sight. Strangely, and fortunately, just a small spark of it can light up very large spaces.

DEVEROUX AND YURI WALKED THROUGH THE BURNT-OUT SHELL, and in a short time after following some readings from Yuri’s tech’, they found the cocoon. They saw the body shape, and the black congealed mass that it had broken out of. Yuri also identified some of the special technology that Max had donned in his fight with the angel within the congealed substance.

Deveroux was thinking that they now had a person to look for, no longer just a hidden force. He looked at Yuri, and said, “This may be a good thing.”

“Not if your creature is inside Max.”

“Not the greatest combination, I suppose, but a natural one. I don’t think Max will have any *real* input, even if his consciousness survived the battle.”

“He’s resilient. There would have been a deal, if I know Max.”

“I don’t think Max would have been holding any good cards at the time, boy.”

“Enough with the, *boy. Old man.*”

“It’s a family thing, *son*. My old man called people *boy* and *girl*, no matter their age. It’s an endearment.”

“Sure, just like, *old man.*”

“*Damn, boy. Just roll* with it a bit,” requested Deveroux, shaking his head a little as he looked around a little more.

THE PARTY OF FOUR NOW WALKED THROUGH KOWLOON and had entered the Walled City Park. It was a beautiful place but had a heavy history. Once the park had been a Chinese enclave in early British Hong Kong, and had housed many Chinese in a small area, which over time grew into a great six square kilometre high block of living spaces. The old towers had been built right beside each other, and the alleyways and upper walkways through it were narrow. The towering fortress had been a little like the favelas, but in towers; packed full of many small living spaces, dark alleys, and leaking water.

Over the years all kinds of crime and cheap Hong Kong knockoff factories thrived here. Businessmen would seek cheap labour here, as well as on the sampans in the harbour. Criminals would seek its safety, as police would not follow them beyond its outer walls. It

was a stronghold of the triads, yet most people who lived there were not at all involved, like *the many* always are; just people trying to live.

The great block of towers had been demolished just before the turn of the new century, and Judgement was quite impressed as they read the history; now looking over a model of it that was situated there. He was impressed with the resilience of the good people who had lived there, and by the fact that it was demolished to leave a beautiful open natural place.

“They have scrubbed the stench from this place yet leave the memory of the resilience of a people. There is *meaning* here.”

Just then there were many footfalls. A small army of police, in full body armour and sporting automatic weapons converged on them from all points of entry. Then two helicopters rose over nearby buildings and set themselves to the east and west of the friends.

“I grow tired of their ignorance; and their arrogance before The Almighty.”

“They just see you as a threat, Judgement. They aren’t going against God,” said Jeremy, as he and the angel instinctively moved in front of Suwna and Lilly.

But then Suwna stood forward, to cover the angel, and Lilly did the same. Jeremy smiled, as did the angel. There was *meaning* here.

“*Battle* with me, Jeremy Jones?”

“*No*, there are innocents still here, and *these two*.”

“I will battle with you Judgement,” said Lilly.

“*No, you won’t*,” stated Suwna, like a mother protecting her child.

“But...”

“No darling, *to stand* is stronger.”

Lilly was taken by this lady. She was strong, and there was no fear in her. Lilly felt in that moment the power of putting one’s life on the line for what is good; especially without seeking to take the lives of others to do so. It was a *powerful* and *beautiful* feeling, and her being celebrated it. It was beyond *any* feeling she had experienced before. They stood their ground, to protect the angel, so it could protect humanity from the darkness.

“Battle with me, Jeremy Jones,” requested, but stated, the angel again, as the units took up their final positions.

“These two are in harm’s way...” and before he could complete the sentence, the angel had taken the two young ladies off to a safe position. It returned just as quickly and landed beside him. The angel had landed poised for battle. It had come down in the same stance when had fallen to Earth, on the soil of Africa.

“They *need* to understand their powerlessness. They *need* humility. *Battle* with me, Jeremy Jones.”

“There are still many innocent people here just doing their jobs, Judgement.”

Judgement saw a little meaning in that but commented that some of them were indeed not innocent or honourable at all, as he scanned the troop with his inner sight. “I do not do this for pride, or wrath, I do it for *mercy*. This world...*these peoples*...need to arrest their fall into oblivion. *Battle with me.*”

The Agent was not even tempted. He put up his badge and called out to them to check it with British Intelligence. This did not get a favourable reaction, and then he realised his

error. The Agents had come to Earth in a hurry and did not have time to attend to a deeper study of its geopolitical reality. Hong Kong had not been part of what he had learned about, so he was unknowing about the area's past. Thankfully, an intelligence officer put up his arm for them to hold, and he walked out to Jeremy and the angel.

“There is strength in this one. A little misplaced in the nature of his god, but there is honour in him,” commented the angel, as he rose to his feet and stood with Jeremy.

The people in body armour all sighed a little with relief as the angel rose to a more normal stance. They had no idea what they were up against, in truth, but knew that lives would end in any active confrontation with this creature. When he had left and returned in such a blur, they, and the lead officer, *knew* that conversation was *more than an option*.

The Chinese agent reached them, and talked about sovereignty, boundaries, and behaviour. Jeremy talked to him about the angel, and that it was, for now at least, in service to humanity.

“I am *always* in service to humanity,” commented Judgement, as it gave its best battle eyes to the officer.

“It seems unrepentant,” said the officer, as if disregarding the angel while talking to Jeremy.

“You are *all* unrepentant, and *this*, as always, will be your undoing. How many ages must pass, how much pride must be endured, how many wars must be borne by the innocent before you finally understand your puny selves; your puny minds?”

Statesmanship was not a strong arrow in Judgement's quiver, if it was even in there at all, and Jeremy just sighed a little.

The Chinese agent said that the angel was to leave, and at no time allowed into Chinese territory or airspace. He then continued, by saying that Jeremy must come in for questioning.

“That *can't* happen,” stated Jeremy plainly, as the angel saw a little of the strength of this Agent from deeper shine out. He was humble this one, but he was strong. In any case, pride has little to do with strength.

“I *must* insist.”

“That *can't* happen. I have greater considerations than your protocols, and I doubt your intentions in this particular request are totally honourable.”

The angel then looked into the man's eyes, just as Jeremy was. From their stance and the look in their eyes, the officer knew what would come next if he continued to insist. He had taken this to the brink and made his position clear, and that was in the wash up, his job done. He stood there though for a short while, just for the sake of theatre and pride; for face. But these may be ugly things, even in good souls, and the looks of Jeremy and the angel only turned to disdain.

“There is no longer honour in you,” accused the angel, and the man even felt it was so at that moment, but his duty was his duty.

“It is time for you both to go,” he ordered.

“A great darkness has entered your world; a deeply manipulative creature, and it grows stronger every day. The angel is the only thing that can defeat it, and we need to be able to search *everywhere*,” offered the young agent, as a last chance bid to seek a better solution.

“We can see to *our own*. The world is large, *others* can accept you if they wish.”

“To *my* people, we are *all* our own,” charged Jeremy, and the man became furious at this slight.

“You must go!”

Judgement stepped into the man’s personal space, and guns were brought up ready to cast their deadly loads in his direction.

“Temporal power always fades away; seek the wisdom of the past in this. All who seek the separation of peoples have fallen to a wider unity in time as humanity moved from tribe to nation in your evolution. Unity is not yet finished with you, or any other places on this earth that see any people as *other* than *themselves*. Seek history’s lessons and show some humility. Then, your country, and the others who do not see, may yet be of value to all the peoples on this flying rock. The *chaos* inherent in endless lines of difference, and the chaos of the myriad quests, large and small, for material and ideological power, looms ever closer. It, *daily*, grows ever deeper.”

“It is *not* for you to *judge* my people, *creature*.”

“I do not judge your people, or any people, you judge yourselves by your actions. I talk of such things to *all* people, not just yours. *All* countries, *all* people, are *most certainly*, *all* responsible. Until humankind realises the reality of their inherent oneness, in this time, and act toward it, there can be no future.”

“*You must leave*,” stated the officer again, strongly. “You must accept our sovereignty, and our wishes.”

“Ignorance and pride will not save you,” charged the angel, plainly, as he gathered Jeremy in one arm and shot upwards in a blur.

The Chinese agent looked to his men and waved them to stand down. He was more than a little shaken, and despite the angel’s words, was indeed an honourable man. His work was to help keep order, especially as there were strong forces at play politically and otherwise here and in the world.

He thought over the angel’s words as he walked back through the other officers; all now very relieved that the conflict had not escalated. He could feel the rising tide of humanity’s wish to be one, but he also saw his country’s rise to power, and he saw other ‘*powers that be*’ in an arm wrestle for the material world, and for ideological dominance. He had to do his job, his duty. If the dawning of a world society, a human society, was to come, then it would, no matter what he did. He knew *deeply* that some order was better than no order and so would keep to his work.

Later, as things wound down and he got into his car, he then realised that one world civilisation was *already* existent; in some disorder, *but existent*. It was now, suddenly, *so apparent* to him. Looking back, he also saw how it had developed naturally in the ebb and flow of history, until this point. The world was indeed intertwined and interdependent. He shook his head as the picture filled out in his mind. He would continue to honourably serve his people, but he could now see the final inevitable evolution towards one world; one humanity. Sadly too, as he started the car, he felt that *even with* the inevitability of this unity of peoples, that it may take a long, or a great and final shaking, to complete the job.

MAX NADZOR WALKED DOWN A CITY STREET IN NEW YORK. People thronged the footpaths and cars filled the multiple lanes of the busy streets in among the tall buildings here. He felt more powerful than he could have ever imagined, and The Imaginer was so excited by this place teeming with endless minds, ripe and abundant with all their attending fears and wants to feed on. The creature congratulated itself, as did Max. But then, as always, the great emptiness that attended any satisfaction came to The Imaginer. Nothing was enough.

Max though, was still enjoying the sheer power of his renewed body. It was far stronger, and he loved his now short white hair, that sat up, and was seemingly mowed flat on top and shaved to the skin on the sides. He was wearing a new high-end suit, and he knew he looked sharp, as people, and quite a few women noticed him. The man did not know he was just a facade, as he was still empty inside, and only a vessel for the dark beast. But he did not think so, he only felt power inside him.

People

Lilly was growing tired of Judgement's endless negativity about the world and humanity. She had talked with him until late in the evening the night before, and the four comrades had continued their search for The Imaginer today. Tonight, she was going to put forward more evidence of the angel's failure to see the good in people. The small crew had decided to stay together, and battle together, should it become necessary, as they were deeply bonded to each other now. They were all now totally focused on humanity's future, and they all had the right to fight for it; man, woman, youth...and angel.

The two adversaries were now sitting in a coffee shop in Cairns, watching people walk by in the late evening. The day before, and today, had been sweltering and very muggy; so much so that they felt like they were cooking, and was part of the reason for Lilly's shortness of patience. Jeremy and Suwna had decided to go for a walk along the beachfront to catch the cool breeze and have some time alone, so the youth had no backup with angel right now. Lilly had wanted to go, but knew that they would like some time, so had invited Judgement to stay with her. He would not get it at all, she had thought, so asked him to stay with her while she finished a banana sundae.

Right now, she was in the middle of explaining that people didn't know about the Messenger and could not be held to account for that, and that there was an endless power of good in people when things got heavy. She cited the cyclones, the great storms, which came ashore in this region of the planet; how people banded together to help others before and after the event. She was going well, when in midsentence she stopped and giggled.

Judgement looked around with a dry look and saw the strange man from the library in Washington. He was just now putting his hands down by his sides and taking all emotion off his face; one that had mocked the angel. He then looked *very* innocent after the angel had looked to him; or was that a guilty look, like a child would, when caught out making a face in the classroom behind the teacher's back.

Lilly laughed again, and the angel turned back to her. He knew there was not going to be a smooth continuance of the conversation with this one around, and of course he was right. The man then disappeared from the doorway of the cafe and appeared again in an Apollo space suit; this time just peeking out from the bottom corner of the large front window. He then made out that he was doing a space walk down the street past the window of the small cafe. Lilly was laughing and thoroughly entertained, as it managed to make its rendition of space walking quite funny. It slowly disappeared beyond the window, and then swam in the air back by the widow and doorway. At the end, it flipped over like in low gravity and was making a face as its head disappeared in the corner of the window.

“Who is he? Please tell me.”

“I can tell you that he has one name, though it is not mine to share. He is a deeper force, and a far more elemental emanation from The All than even I am.”

The laughter continued, and Judgement watched how the young lady interacted with this deeper emanation. It seemed to be in deep consideration of this interaction. He did not care what the creature behind him was up to. He only sought to see where inside her this joy rose from. With its inner vision it saw her soul, now free and alive, away from a life of want and struggle. She was like a flower starting to bloom. She had worked hard to stay so free inside, as with her life, she could have chosen darker thoughts and a more wanting path.

The Essence was now a union soldier marching back and forward, as if standing guard on the front of the shop. It would turn and give its facial assurance that this was all very serious at times, and that it had her safety well in hand; well in a comical sort of way. It then finally turned to her and changed to a darker skinned man, still in the uniform. He stood there and looked deep into her eye's, somehow making clear the nature of his deep struggle and the feel of that time. Lilly cried a little then, as the creature faded away.

“He is potent, that one. He is ever active, and his essence runs deep in all life,” remarked Judgement, as he felt the creature's presence wane.

Lilly just reflected a little on the different garbs he had dressed in, and in the look from the man of two races who he had changed into at the end. Seeing what was on her mind, the angel said, “There is meaning there.” Making sure that Lilly did not discount anything in the show she had witnessed.

The angel then considered what the essence had shared through Lilly's memories of its antics, and he saw that there was *even more* meaning than he had first seen there. It seemed this essence was giving witness to human evolution, and the potentials that lie within it for the future; witness, that was just as much meant for the angel to see.

YURI AND DEVEROUX HAD MADE THEIR WAY TO NEW YORK, and they now sat on the lower steps of the three-storey brownstone that they were lodging in. They were feeling the chill, but somehow the outdoors was gratifying to their beings, as they had searched in many enclosed places and met some very unsavoury characters. It was like the cool night air was cleansing them somehow. The winter had not been so strong this year. The seasons had definitely changed here over the past twenty-five years or so, but in a way they hadn't too; keeping the same patterns generally.

“You said he would be here,” now said Yuri, plainly.

“Yep, just a gut feelin’, and we have good readings,” answered Deveroux.

“See, I don't get gut feelings. I don't think they're real. I think they're just guesses that sometimes work out in life.”

“You don't know much about life, do ya', boy?” asked Deveroux, challenging the younger man. He always challenged his Agents and had a feeling that Yuri may yet find his way there; at least from what he had seen of the young man so far. Deveroux's influence as a highly experienced agent might get the lad this invitation to greater service, or The Agency might see it differently; but this older Agent had a gut feel about all that too.

“I know plenty, old man. I don't live on a cloud, or deeper. I live in reality; on terra firma.”

Deveroux snorted, and then had a little chuckle. “You are so wet behind the ears kid; *seriously.*”

“Well fill me in you” We won't share what this young man chose to use as a reference to the older agent's reality. Suffice is to say that it was not meet, nor seemly.

“Do you kiss your *momma* with that mouth boy?”

“My mother died violently when I was eleven years old, *old man*.”

“Sorry to hear that, kid,” responded Deveroux, genuinely.

“Yeah, thanks,” responded Yuri, now seeing the father in Deveroux.

He had seen the mentor in Deveroux over their short time working together, and now, a little more. He was glad of it, as any father energy he had known so far in his life had had major disorders, and truth be known, they were weak and fearful inside. “So, tell me about your *woman* feeling’s, Agent man,” he added, with all the disrespect he could feign.

Deveroux smiled, “You haven’t met my wife, boy. She would chew you up and spit you out, and I don’t *have* girly feelin’s. You’ll learn that about me.”

“Yeah, sure, but *what about* your girly feelings.”

“Well, it’s like this, *son*. There is an indigenous culture, in a place you call Australia, not that any culture is not indigenous to somewhere on the planet, but one of the elders of a place there told me once that we have three brains; the animal one, the spiritual one, and the one on our gut.”

Deveroux stopped, to feel if Yuri was waiting for what was coming next. He didn’t look at him, and kept his gaze down, but he could feel the young man waiting. It seemed that he still wanted to learn, and the Agent knew that was a good thing, so he continued, “So you know, the animal one is the lower nature, you know, food and shelter; and it drives for what it sees that it needs. People like Max get stuck in that brain and use human intelligence very badly from *that base of operations*. The spiritual mind, or the rational soul, accesses the higher human intelligence and the higher powers.”

“Higher powers?”

“Yeah, things like memory, imagination, observational thinking, logic, inner vision; then things like kindness, courage, generosity, moderation, sacrifice, love, and on and on. It’s the part of us that needs to be the primary driver. It needs to be the brain we think with first and access the other two with. *Actually*, we have to consider ourselves spirit, and overcome the lower nature; the animal brain, the ego. We have to sit back in our higher consciousness and use all our ‘*brains*’, as my old uncle said.”

“So, what’s the brain in our gut.”

“It’s our intuition. It’s the *feel*. I reckon it’s also our overall knowledge and life experience, and something to do with the animal instinct too. But if you’re thinking about something, or deciding something, feel what your gut’s telling you, just like you trust your eyes.”

“So, it’s *that* good.”

“Yep, sometimes you’ll just have a feeling. Other times you get pain or tightening in the gut. But flashes of things or inklings come from the soul seeing ahead or feeling something associated with the situation you’re focused on, I reckon. A few words, for me, are usually an answer when you ask for guidance. Gut, to me, is the animal reaction to things we instinctively see, some is our knowledge sending a warning or insight, and the spiritual brain is our soul seeing and hearing wider and deeper.”

“A lower drive can be valid. I wouldn’t have wanted to get out Max’s grip if it wasn’t for my will to survive.”

“I get that, and yep, you should listen to feelings like that, but *not react*. It works better to be detached and consider the feeling primarily in your soul, and then *respond*. Like I

said, access all your brains and powers with ‘*the one who watches*’ it all in you; your soul, your free will entity, the deepest part of you.”

“Is that something to do with the ‘deeper’ you come from.”

“No, that part of you exists in Deepest. It can’t reside in this physical place. Your being is stretched across realities, or more so, emanates from deeper realities.”

“Wow, that’s cool, old man. I love that” Again, Yuri’s language was not for gentle ears. But suffice is to say, that he was definitely taken by this new information.

“So, how do I access the higher stuff; and the gut stuff.”

“You listen and watch, instead of reacting and talking. You act and see how things feel, you sit back and watch yourself, your thoughts, and actions, in situations like you’re watching others; and you learn.”

“It sounds confusing to me right now. Is it useful in your work?”

“It sure is, and, that work, *if you keep on this way, could be your work,*” put out there, Deveroux, knowing he was not being able to promise, or even know Yuri’s heart truly yet. But he had to encourage the young man to good in any case, and he knew that particular carrot might help it along.

“Are you *insane?*” pronounced Yuri, who had clearly been considering it since his first discussion with this Agent from deeper, but not letting himself believe it possible until now.

“I don’t know if *I am*. But there’s an outside chance if your heart finds a way.”

“Is that another brain?”

“It’s *the* brain, and love is *the* force. Acts of love are what life *is all about*. Spirituality is just being a good human and doing good things from a good heart. Not a heap of words or mumbo jumbo,” finished the Agent, as he got up to go inside and hit the hay, heading up the steps to the brownstone’s front door.

Yuri contemplated this strange current in his life that had taken him in a new direction. He realised that it was all because he had acted to free himself and risked his own life for what was right that day in Rio. He called out after the older man, saying, “I couldn’t have imagined getting away from that freak once, let alone having a chance to do work like yours.”

Deveroux turned at the door and leant against the structure of the doorway. “*You* wanted this. We *draw* our life to us, lad. Our thoughts are prayers, and our *efforts* to change *do not* go unrewarded.”

THE EVENING AIR WAS REFRESHING, especially as the breeze came off the water here. The humidity in North Queensland could almost make any breeze useless, but some air movement was good movement, and of course, always good relative to the heat of the day.

Suwna and Jeremy walked past the marina and were heading north on a walkway along the foreshore. It was great to be there, free from the concerns of their situation, at least for a little while. Such simple pleasures are required for life, and some spaces between strains, even small ones, were more than useful. It is good to run hard, but it is also good to have breaks from the intensity; to rest and reinvigorate the body and the spirit.

These two young adults were definitely feeling more than that. It was a lovely place to be, and they were allowing all to be. They had chatted on and off as they walked and had a

few laughs at the expense of a certain angel. It seemed to have no social graces at all; let alone regard for the sensibilities and feelings of the people of this world. These two, not being of Earth, could appreciate the varied intricacies of various individuals and cultures, so had drawn on some measure of courtesy and tact. Tact was another arrow that was most definitely not in the angel's quiver.

"I have to find him," said Suwna, referring to Grandpa Jack.

"That's going to be up to The Agency."

"My movements have never been up to your precious agency."

"Well, it's all just a bit too hard to crack, all this. I gotta' say, I don't see the way this works out if you are adamant to stay, or even travel where you wish."

"What do you mean?" asked Suwna, but sure that Jeremy was indeed thinking long term like she was. She had felt it, but it was nice to see it out there in plain sight. Honesty has that power.

"I mean, well...I mean...you...*you and I*...am I walking *alone* in this?"

Suwna stopped and turned to Jeremy, bringing him to a stop too. She smiled wide, and then a deep look of love passed across her face. Jeremy instinctively took her hand and said, "I want this to *be* something. I want this to work, but I'm struggling to find a way that it *will* work."

"You know, Jeremy, I feel the same, but at the moment this world is closed off, and we may not yet escape whatever this dark creature has up its sleeve, so let's just do *now* for a while and let life *come to us*. Who knows what the future may bring."

Jeremy nodded, more than appreciating her demeanour. He did not let go of her hand, as they naturally continued walking along the pathway north again. Suwna appreciated the renewed poise in Jeremy as he let go trying to problem solve the future. He was an aware young man, and she really liked that maturity in him. Jeremy loved the insight in Suwna. She had reoriented his being with a simple truth right now, just as she had done quite a few times before in this strange case of angels, darkness, and love.

LILLY WAS NOT EVEN A LITTLE BIT FINISHED WITH JUDGEMENT, and his further education on the nature of people. They had travelled again and were now in Los Angeles. Fortunately for the angel's companions, The Imaginer was still busy with his new mode of transportation and the close supply of limitless goodies.

Judgement and Jeremy had been out and about looking for the creature. Jeremy had been using the portals and the Agency issue sensor, looking for odd readings. He was sure he had a residual reading at the airport, but there was nothing there now. He thought that maybe the creature was moving by plane, but put it aside as little ridiculous. He couldn't be sure that the reading was even the creature, but he had noted it down anyway. It always paid to be thorough.

The angel scoured the city from the air, looking with its deeper vision and feeling for cold or dark energies. It felt something over the airport too, so when it returned and they had compared notes, they decided on a strategic plan for checking other airports around the country. Starting with the light of a new day they would all travel through *the portals*. They would not search or travel separately now, as they knew they were closer, and all of them using the portals would give The Imaginer less chance seeing them coming. As well as that,

they were stronger *together* if they should come upon the dark creature, and all of them were better protected in each other's company for now.

There was also a growing need in Suwna and Lilly for this to be done, faced up to, and finished. None of them wanted to run scared forever, and all now held a very shared conviction that the job had to be done for their sake, as well as for all on the planet. Angel or not, trained or not, powerful, or just able to put something in; each needed to be part of the solution.

"You need to stop looking for meaning, to find the truth," now offered Lilly, a little unsure of what she had just said, yet at the same time very sure of the rationale it represented, and the definite *feeling* that knowledge was housed within it.

It was late evening, and Suwna and Jeremy were again taking time together; walking, looking around, and eating out. That left Lilly and Judgement to again battle against each other for the future of humanity; if indeed, the darkness was to be overcome.

The angel was quite taken by this small sentence. Yet, it was strange, as it should not have made sense. It also, with its inner vision, felt the knowledge that lay within it.

"Explain your words," challenged the angel.

Lilly was not sure, but started talking to find it, "In everyday people, every day, there is kindness and working together, and laughing together. In every small thing there is evidence of connection. There are families who struggle with each other, and in life, yet holding on and helping each other. There are people sacrificing for their family. Not all parents are lost like mine, but even they maybe did the best they were able to do. Most people are working, living simply, and making do too; people just doing life. Most are innocent of your charge and just need more time to see."

The angel went to talk, but Lilly knew what was coming, and circumvented it by saying, “Yes, I can see more now that we *are* falling as a kind generally, and we do need to renew and remember our spirit, but there is endless meaning in *every* small thing out there.”

“There *is* less spirit in your world today, young Lilly, and people *are* responsible, yet it is true what you say.”

“Let’s go for a walk, and talk to *people*; everyday people. You might be surprised at what they do for each other, or even how they deal with each other.”

The angel nodded, then gave a mischievous look; one like a grandfather going against a child’s parent’s wishes, and Lilly responded with the natural grandchild response. They had promised to stay put, so as to protect Lilly from harm, and to keep the angel away from people, as he seemed to like to battle a little too much. He was being treated like a senile old man, and Lilly a helpless child. As to what was the truth of this matter, you can judge; but in any case, the two cohorts hit the streets to talk with *people*.

Over the night they ran into many souls; some broken and desperate on the street, all the way to well to do folk who were very much harder to engage or draw initially into a conversation. But the fact that the duo always started with a question, and that it was from the young lady, on how much kindness they experience or how much of it they think is still out there, most people engaged easily. The angel had tried twice at first, but to those he asked, it just seemed to be an odd question coming from a man with an unkind, or at least, stiff demeanour.

They had found so much kindness, and stories of its influence; more around the poorer souls, and more so around family in the well off, but they *all* had agreed that there was plenty of it in their lives, even though strangely still not so much in the world they perceived

around them. The angel was wondering how that could be. How could it be so high in their experience, yet they saw less of it? Maybe both were true somehow. It was well worth the walk, the angel had thought, and beyond the obvious aid to her arguments that the night uncovered, Lilly had also enjoyed not being corralled in a hotel room again.

As they were now heading back into the hotel, and as a doorman walked to open the front door and greet them, a group of younger souls walked up to them and asked a question too.

“Are you visiting the city?” The question being put to them both, not just the seeming father.

Lilly piped up, “We are here tonight, and off in the morning.”

“Where are you from?”

“I’m from Australia.”

“I’m from...” started the angel, and Lilly cut him off, saying, “He has lived other places too,” a little concerned about them realising that he was the winged creature whose image was still being played quite regularly on the television.

Some Governments had seen it as a hoax at first, but now knew the creature to be real. Most of them, like the officer in Hong Kong, did not really know how to react to such an occurrence and had no clue as to the ability of the angel to carry out what it had seemed to threaten. But there was chatter and surveillance adding up out there. Information gathering and sharing was going on, and it would only be a matter of time before the creature was confronted in another governmental intervention.

People were nervous, some excited, but most nervous, and governments did not like nervous populations; well, that, and they wanted to keep their constituents happy, to retain, or gain power. To be fair, they did see it as their duty mostly. The chatter of social commentators, and mouthpieces of varying groups in societies around the world, had not helped allay concern. The media was getting a good feeding and putting out plenty of conjecture, so for those in power, the angel situation would have to be brought to a favourable conclusion soon. One government *was* ready to act but had received intel' that the creature was hunting something worse than itself, and prudence had stayed their hand. They were in talks with many other countries, sharing intelligence with some, and were about their work, while endless voices around the planet had been calling for action.

“Family holiday?”

“Something like that. You seem very friendly. Not that people haven't been, just not used to people walking up to us like this,” commented Lilly, trying to gather who these people were, and somehow not seeing that she and the angel had been doing exactly the same thing all evening.

“We are young, and we see the world, and we talk with people about how they see it. There is so much talk of small things, and people complaining of others, and we like to talk with people about deeper themes and higher thoughts. We want this world to be a better place, so we also try to remind people of their nobility.”

The angel was a little impressed with the content, but more so, the honesty and forthrightness of this small group.

“We just saw you and I thought let’s talk with *these two*, and you know, wherever you live in the world there would probably be a youth spiritual empowerment group running there,” referring to Lilly.

Another youth then piped up, and said, “We’re really looking for locals though, to find out whether some of them want their children and teenagers to do spiritual empowerment programmes. If there are enough who want to, then we can come and do it, and help them develop it and other things into the future. People have got to take charge of their own spiritual and intellectual development, and rebuild the links and nurture in communities, *you know.*”

“Yep, *for sure,*” said Lilly, smiling at the angel, and saying with it, ‘well what about that, eh’.

The angel was seeing clearly, more clearly than Lilly, the size and scope of these small community actions all over the planet and had come to an awareness that it was growing quickly. Also, that aid in development, social and economic, was also a rising power in this well-intentioned Cause.

He thought to challenge them though, “The peoples of the world are fractured. Polarity of thought grows wide; more extreme and more violent, even as we speak. How do you account for your positive attitude towards the failure of people to see clearly?”

“We believe that the inner powers of the soul in people are well able to change the world. We do not fall on the rock of apathy,” said one young man, as he rose his being to meet the angel where he saw he was.

The others were a little concerned, but the angel nodded, and then two of them twigged to who the creature was.

“You’re the angel!”

“Yes, please keep it down. We have had trouble where we’ve travelled, and we have a big job to do, so please...we can talk, but quietly,” requested Lilly.

“You travel with him?” asked one girl, more than a little surprised.

“We are four. We are cohorts, and this creature is, for now at least, hunting something very dark. We came out tonight so I could show him the good in people.”

“Yes,” said a young lady, “we believe people are noble creatures. We look to the good, and we try to remind them of their nobility; their power to love and unify.”

“Mmm,” began Judgement. “Do you believe humanity is redeemable?”

“I would say that we are a human family, and that the coming of maturity and unity of our family is *inevitable*,” answered one.

“We are all the same; all *people*. We *all* have families, and we *all* love and struggle. We are so different and unique, but we all walk the earth and are warmed by the same sun. We all laugh, and we are *definitely* one. For the first time in the history of humanity, our oneness, cannot rationally, let alone in the heartfelt part of our nature, be disproven,” added another.

“Politics, ideologies, and culture only seem to separate us, but we just need to make the effort to understand each other, which we are very capable of doing. We just need to see that we are all *together* in this and live that way. We do have the inner resources; the powers of our souls,” added the first.

“We just need to see every person as a member of our own family rather than the generalised embodiment of another race or ideology. I know we will find that we are more

the same, than different. Even a sibling can seem to be from a *whole different planet*, but we still love them,” finished the young lady.

“We are all human. To me, *one family*, and I act that way. If we *all did*, the world would transform *right now*. We *are* redeemable, and *we are* working on it,” finally added a young man.

The angel smiled, not so much at the clear understanding of the potential of humanity and the crucial time of unity that was now knocking at its door, but more so, the passion with which these young souls had delivered their beliefs. So much so, that he sought now to *truly* challenge them. So, they would know the depth of their fight.

“There is meaning here, but why do humans kill their unborn?” he questioned, as he turned and walked away into the hotel.

LILLY WAS NOT TALKING TO JUDGEMENT IN THE MORNING, as she was *so* angry at his lack of kindness to her new young friends; *well...until she told him so* at least, as they now walked behind Jeremy and Suwna on a busy city footpath.

“It *was* kindness, Lilly. You see, you *and they* need to understand that while humanity has great potential and is generally ‘*just doing life*’ as you call it, it *is* falling into a darkness greater than The Imaginer can even imagine. It is hard for me to tell who your greatest enemy *is*; The Imaginer, or the lack of vision of a creeping darkness that is ebbing in upon you. The questions *must* be hard, and those who act must know well the field on which they battle; especially in the lateness of this hour.”

“We *will* turn things around. The I Am *has* given the remedy; it just needs time to dawn in people’s hearts. At least that’s what I believe now. It was so clear from all I’ve

learned with you and from this quest. Now even more so, hearing what those good people shared with me last night.”

“Today is today, Lilly, and we have talked enough. Now let us act, and we will see what the future holds. I *do* see the good here. I *do* see the ability of the noble souls within people, but I need do my duty. Trust in your I Am, trust the All Merciful, all is good.”

Lilly wanted to argue, but *it had all been said*, and now it seemed that events would bring what was to come. All we can do is act, and let the future is come to us, as it always does.

It was then that the four travellers walked through a door that Jeremy had selected. Lilly loved this, and even though still a bit angry with the angel, she was excited to share the experience of the portals with her friend Judgement. The angel did not miss the significance of that, as it could feel her heart, but it had also become very curious about the portals themselves. The winged creature had not travelled through such byways before.

The four walked into the light beyond the physical door, but only three walked out. They waited a while, but the angel did not emerge. They could not go back in to find him because all who entered a doorway must come through before anyone could enter again, at either end. It was the nature of these portals and a very useful aspect for secure travel in the work of The Agency. The friends waited there for quite some time before the angel finally emerged.

He had spent some time feeling the nature of this particular portal. He had come to know its nature and its particular story. When the creature eventually exited it asked Jeremy how many portals were on this planet. The Agent answered that there were so many that

sometimes they often intersected. He added, “There are more levels of them too, and some smaller ones that haven’t matured enough to get through.”

They all wanted to know what the angel was curious about, but it was no longer curious about the nature of the portals, as it had found the deep beauty their nature. But seeing the curious faces and hearing their inner questions, he explained it to them.

“These portals or byways were created by bonds of love between people; people in different places here and in other countries, now and of the past. Some go back to the deep human past; many are the family ties of souls as people ventured out from their places of origin, and others, of people who were taken from family. Great loves too that lasted over distance, and many hearts at both ends of old trade routes; others created by population movements. I looked even deeper, Lilly, and you *are* all one people who spread out across this terrestrial globe. Then you adapted and evolved, and then over ages you again mixed and traded; moving again and again. Empires rose, fell, and spread, and the people mixed even more. You *are* one, and such are the *bonds of love* created over your history that you have come to the age of coalescence. *These* now link you and draw you back together.”

“How?” asked Lilly, thinking this may be the saving grace of her kind. She was so happy, as the young people that she had talked to had said to her finally, to do all she could, and then trust the deep systems of life, and one quoted to her...

“Be patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and confidence in God.”²²

“It is the deepest nature of things,” explained the angel, in a very gentle voice. “Love is the essence of life. Bonds of love never dissipate. These portals are eternal, and they

continue to grow like the roots of a plant, especially with the now exponentially increasing bonds between places and peoples of this time. They grow inexorably wider and deeper, creating the future foundation of human unity.”

“So, it’s good news, right?” asked Lilly.

“The darkness needs be pushed back, *it must be battled, no matter!*” warned Judgment.

“But it’s good news.”

“You *still* need to fight. You must *not* be complacent.”

“But it’s good news,” repeated Lilly, more calmly.

“It is good news, Lilly,” agreed the angel, finally.

Confrontation

They were all there now. They all sensed that this would be the place. The small band had been the last to arrive in New York. The angel had confirmed to his companions that he could now sense The Imaginer, and that it was no longer hiding.

Judgement now prepared for battle by time in prayer, as Jeremy checked his gear, and also prayed a good deal as he did. He had purchased some extra protective gear and made up some other tech' with Suwna's help over the two days they had now been here. He and Suwna had also worked out a plan for her and Lilly's safety if things should suddenly come upon them. They had no idea that Deveroux and Yuri were here, but they had gathered readings of the angel's presence, and the Imaginer's. Jeremy's boss had also known that wherever the angel was, his younger Agent would be there too, and it picked him up no end.

Yuri had filled Deveroux in about these travelling companions, and he was happy to know that the lad had the angel on side. He wasn't sure if Jeremy knew about the darkness

but was concerned that it would be tracking the angel for sure. It would be like cheese to a starving rat, and so the Agent and Yuri now tracked the angel, as well as keeping instruments looking for the energies of the cocoon that they had found in Sydney; narrowing down its movements. These two knew they were all there, so since their arrival in New York, Deveroux had checked and rechecked nearby portals for signatures. He had eventually found a badge signature, and angel readings, exiting a portal in Manhattan.

If the beast would have smelt its quarry out by now, so the conflict would be sooner rather than later. So as soon as they got all the readings sorted, these two cohorts were on the job too. They had been out scouting through the night and had only caught three hours of sleep, but they would be sharper than without any at all. They had just woken, and eaten, and were now donning the last of their gear.

“You good to go, Yuri.”

“Yep, *all go*,” answered Yuri, as he pulled a strap tight on his backpack, pushed an Agency issue pulse stick into the back of his pants, and nodded.

“Let’s go,” said Deveroux, nodding with surety that they were going into battle and that they were as ready as they could be.

Letters

The angel looked up, coming out of meditation and prayer, and it now looked quite different to its travelling companions.

“It is time to battle. It is time for you to be safe,” it said to Lilly. Then, “It is time for you to battle with me, Jeremy Jones.”

“It is *that*,” agreed Jeremy, with a serious face.

A deep feeling drove through Suwna’s heart at Jeremy’s words. This man she cared about was going into a battle between forces that were far beyond his power to protect himself from. She looked at him and began to well up.

He came over to her and squeezed her shoulder. “This guy,” he started, referring to the angel, “and that Imaginer; they’ll find out that they’re punching well above their weight with *me* in the fight.”

Suwna laughed a little, though her face resisted it, and said, “Oh God, Jeremy,” as she clutched a letter he had given her. It was two letters really. One to his family, and one to her, that she was sworn not to open unless he was gone. The letter to his family may never be

delivered, but he had to try and set his affairs in order. That conversation had been last night; and hard enough. This one was *far* harder.

The young Agent then sat her down on the couch, looked into her eyes, and gathered her attention. “We have to *do, now*. You and Lilly are *your focus* now. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

The cohorts had decided on their plan with some upset from Suwna, as they had *all* committed to the fight. But each person’s part was clear. This was not a fight Lilly and Suwna were powered up for. It would have just meant their pointless death if they went into battle with Jeremy and Judgement. This way Suwna and Lilly were a hope for the future, and for the protection of many others.

“Take my badge,” had instructed her then. “If things go badly, you’ll have a chance to keep you both, and maybe many others, safe by using the portals. If things go well, I’ll want it back though,” trying to bring some humour again, but failing dismally at the time.

“*Oh God, Jeremy,*” now said Suwna, making it clear she was concerned for him, not herself.

“I am trained for this...This is what I do. I am a Protector, and *God knows* what you will have to face if it goes south.”

“*It will not go anywhere,*” said the angel, now changed even more.

It was like its musculature had grown and its eyes were now a deep violet; almost black. The look on its face scared Lilly a bit, but it did not respond in any way to her fear. “The beast waits at the white bridge, at the portal we entered by. It is time to battle.”

The angel was talking about a bridge in Central Park, probably the most well-known park in the world. A green zone reclaimed from the city as a balm to the people who lived there, as nature is the place of the heart and soul. New York was a place where endless streams of souls entered to find a new life and sought opportunity for a better future. It had come at great expense to the First Nation here, and to others, as they fell before great waves of people that eventually washed across this continent from here, all the way to its other shore.

New York had been named the City of the Covenant by the Son of the Persian I Am when he had visited here. The Servant had talked here, on issues of race, the equality of men and women, and on the need to remedy the extremes of wealth and poverty; he had talked of peace and impending war, during his visit in 1912. This visit to the United States, to the second cradle of His Faith, was after he had endured forty years a prisoner and an exile. He came to talk at many gatherings of high-minded people, to bolster the community of The Greatest Name, to link these early believers with the heart of The Cause, and to bring this Faith to the West in deeper measure. Such was His depth that he also came to give alms to the poor, and to remind people to laugh.

But today was no laughing matter, as Jeremy stood straight, nodded, and smiled at the two young ladies, saying, "Be safe."

"*You too,*" said Suwna, with Lilly crying a little at maybe losing good friends today; well, to her, family.

"*Go,*" said Jeremy, as he smiled kindly, and Suwna nodded her head with a small smile, yet sad eyes.

With that the two of them were out the door, and Jeremy watched until they jumped off the tall hotel building across the road. The ribbon caught them and whisked them away.

“*We battle*, Jeremy Jones.”

“We battle,” called back the Agent, with no excitement or fear at all in his eyes. He had given up his life and was now focused only the job ahead. He was at real peace as the angel took hold of him, and they took off.

MAX WAS ECSTATIC, AS A DARK THIN FOG NOW ROSE AROUND HIM. He stood on the ornate white bridge ready for his destiny, and The Imaginer could not have *imagined* a better place to take the angel from itself. There were millions of souls ripe for him to feast on here, and the bridge would be a fitting metaphor for the beast’s full entry into this world, into the Angel, and to the heights of power.

It was so happy in that moment, so free from its own pain, and as this lower satisfaction of anticipation so filled them both it was almost in no hurry to take the angel’s will. The Darkness had only known these short times of peace between things, and lived for these short spaces in its existence, even though it was not really aware of it. It was always focused on the anticipated satiation and did not believe for a moment that it would not finally, *finally*, be satisfied on this day. It now savoured these short moments before the conflict.

The angel then suddenly appeared in the sky above the bridge.

“I am Judgement. You have been found wanting. You do *not* exist.”

Max’s men started firing immediately from the tree line. The weapons fired lightning-like, continuous, bolts of energy that seemed to grapple the winged creature. There were three

weapons all firing at the same time from triangulated positions. These energy discharges shot out of handpieces connected by thick power lines to some portable machines on two-wheel trolleys. The discharges created ropes of energy around Judgement, while the ends of them sought to stab the now already struggling creature. These stabbing charges were intent on gaining entry into the angels being.

He did all he could to fight them off and still hold himself in the air, as he struggled to break the ropes; these wandering discharges that had formed around him. He could not seem to do so, until suddenly, Yuri and Deveroux raced through the discharges, the smoke, and twigs and leaves which were being shredded off the nearby trees. The wildly wandering discharges moved erratically between the weapons themselves and the angel; looping out and back in, and moving around, below, and all about him.

The two cohorts dodged and dove, and fought, through gun fire of other men hidden on knolls, and from some in the trees as well. Yuri and Deveroux had what seemed to be energy shields on their forearms, impervious to bullets and energy streams. They also had larger ones tied on their shins. They were stiff and projected up to their mid thighs; yet only tied from the knees down to their ankles. Each, or both, would duck down behind these leg shields at times of heavy fire. They would simply sit down and bring their knees together; the shields naturally giving them cover from enemy fire.

It was seemingly impossible, but they slowly neared, and then took out two of the three streams. They took down the men firing the energy weapons, after they had taken out their support with pulse weapons that knocked them out. Jeremy had a particular job to do and was now under the bridge. He saw Deveroux and Yuri, and wanted to race out, but he couldn't. He was the angel's wing man, and he had to get up on the bridge without being noticed with his own especially re-engineered weapon.

The angel now sent the remaining discharge back in a violent pulse to its source, obliterating the man firing the remaining active weapon; also hitting the man who was there to hold him steady, as the wandering lightning seemed to have weight to its movement. The tip of the last discharge though, had split off and come around behind the angel. It now pierced him between the wings and drove inside through to his heart.

Max cheered, knowing they had him. He lifted his arm to fire his control device when Jeremy let go a pulse from his light staff, right on the back of his neck. Max went down in screaming pain, but the Imaginer shot out of him and up towards the angel. Judgement was now in grave shock, and its eyes were turning white. Max was screaming, not only from the pain, but because he knew The Imaginer would now gather the angel alone. This Darkness was *always* going to take the angel for himself; it was just *when* it would do it. Max then suddenly expired, because The Imaginer was no longer sustaining his functions; this also, as it was *always* going to be.

The dark creature screamed as energy discharges from two of Max's weapons suddenly hit it on its way to its goal, which seemed to restrain it. Yuri and Deveroux were using Max's weapons now, knowing they would have a better effect than their own; well, Yuri had signalled the same, and Deveroux, trusting in the moment, had followed his lead. The angel was still in horrendous pain, as the barbed tip tore through its internals, now blasting out the front of him. The Imaginer saw its opening, its last chance, and it took it. It charged upwards with great strain against the discharges, and part of it gained entry through to the heart of the angel. The rest of its dark cloud then fell away, like dust, from the discharges.

The angel hung there for a short time, and then fell to the bridge, just holding itself from the harm of its fall with enough beats of its wings as it came down. It was now on both

knees on the bridge, with its head down in defeat. Jeremy stood there, afraid to know what was happening inside his compatriot. The beast kept at work on the angel, as the winged creature was now very weakened. The angel had never known such emotion and pride within itself, as the beast had not gained any entry when he had battled it the last time. Judgement had never realised his own power before, or a will, other than the Will of The All-Mighty, and started to fall to their charms, as The Imaginer went about its work.

But then, the angel realised that its want for these things gave the intruder power over him, and so immediately sought release from these lesser things. The winged warrior now fought back hard, but it was too late. The Imaginer had gained ascendancy over its will. The angel then weakened further as it realised that it had, again, failed to turn back the darkness. The Omnipotent had given it another opportunity, and once more, it had failed.

It was not long before the angel looked up at Jeremy with glowing, now deep red eyes. They were no longer the eyes of his cohort, so he immediately fired his re-engineered pulse weapon at its heart and kept on firing as The Imaginer now easily tortured the young Agent's mind. Jeremy would not let his friend be taken, and he would not leave Suwna, Lilly, and this planet to the beast. He bore the physical, mental, and emotional pain, and he held his ground. His will would not allow failure, even in the excruciating pain that he now endured, not really knowing how long his body would hold out. He *was* dying, but he would not yield, when through the smoke and haze he thought he saw a light descending.

It was another angel, floating almost unnoticed down from the firmament. She landed gently on the bridge behind Judgement. She then put her hand on Judgements back; on his heart zone where the discharge had gained entry. The Imaginer's red eyes were then cast angrily around to her; with all its vile hatred and what was clearly fear. Judgement then fought to cast out the beast again; just as the other angel now sought to draw it out.

She became light, and so did Judgement, as he now slowly stood up and they took each other's hands on the bridge. They stood there, firm, and the dark beast could now be seen clearly racing around inside Judgement, trying to survive the onslaught.

The Imaginer then released Jeremy, and turned all its power on Judgement's will, once more. The young Agent fell to the bridge, and darkness enveloped him.

The two Letters continued to go about their work in full unison, and finally cast out what was left of the dark beast; Judgement's eyes then returning to the purple they once were. They now held the beast in a ball of light in the air just beyond them. The creature then slowly dissipated into nothingness, as the two angels poured more and more light into the hovering sphere.

The Second Letter helped Judgement as he stumbled with the final release from strain, and Yuri watched Deveroux go to the aid of Jeremy while he kept an eye on Max's fallen men. Judgement then slowly came over to where Jeremy lay on the small walk bridge, with the other angel in attendance, just as the young man woke up.

"You battle well, *and to the end*. You *honour me*, and *all* who are yours."

"Did you hear that boy?" said Deveroux.

"Yep."

"Yep, *Sir!*"

All Jeremy could do was cough a bit, as the laugh caught in his throat.

"Don't choke on us, boy," said Deveroux, with a big smile.

"Yep, *Sir*," he said with more gusto, and another cough.

The power of two is so much greater than the power of one, and the power of many even greater. Truth be known, two forces, or the force and what it acts upon, are required for all things. In any case, the battle was done, and the angels rose high above Central Park. They rose, hand in hand. An elevated position being their natural place.

The battle had gathered more than a little attention, and rescue services and police entered the park, with a police chopper above. The two Letters sat in the air and seemed to be in prayer together. Each then closed its eyes; settling to meditation and reflection. It was not readily known, but angels only closed their eyes when they were with their loved one, and all that was happening around them was now disregarded.

Deveroux made his presence known to the Police, and nodded to Yuri, as the police cleaned up any of Max's remaining men. The young man nodded back, and then just sat down exhausted on a park bench. It had been a wild ride for him, but he was free, *really free*. There was so much possible now that he *truly*, just as the angel, had his own will back. He trusted Deveroux to his word, and he sat there knowing that no dark force, no matter what it offered, would ever control his will again.

When, after a time, the angels opened their eyes, there were two news helicopters hanging in the air above them. They rose up and each turned to one of the human flying machines and began to speak in tandem.

"I am one Letter," called out Judgement.

"We are two Letters," called out the other angel.

"I have seen your failing," stated Judgement.

"I have seen your triumphs," added Mercy.

“We have come to defeat the darkness.”

“We have done so.”

There was a space then, as they regarded each other; as if they were considering what would be said, if indeed, there was more to say. They then turned back to the cameras.

“Beware *your own* actions,” advised Judgement.

“You have His mercy this day,” declared Mercy, lovingly.

“But this mercy will now only continue to flow by your actions.”

“Actions of love,” explained Mercy.

“*No future...no life...is to be found without these.*”

Reunions

The angels now stood on a small grassy bank. Lilly and Suwna sat with each other beside them; thankfully, now back with their comrades, but exhausted from the stress of the whole experience. It had been an intense ride since they took up with the angel, and on their return, there had been major hugs, angels included. Jeremy and Suwna allowed themselves permission for a longer hug, which agent Deveroux did not miss.

He was talking with local law enforcement now, but knew he had to get a message through to The Agency to reopen the portals. The total lock down included messages too, as any vibration was to be obliterated, so they were a bit stuck. He knew Odi would have probably had a back way of some kind, as none of the movement they picked up between realities had been him. Deveroux and his two men, one of these being Yuri, may not be able to get home, though he was thankful that this situation had not taken any more lives than it did. He was very happy with the result.

A thick cloud then came in low and around his feet and started to rise up the small green bank. It was invisible and wafted up slowly. They were all attacked at once, and all but the two angels brought immediately low by the noxious cloud.

“Anyone for tennis?” said Odi, as endless insults and coughing arose from those now running for their lives. He loved Earth humour and was *really* enjoying himself.

Beside him was Geoffrey in a gas mask, allowing himself a very British smile, and saying to Odi, “What’s the matter with *this lot*?”

Odi shrugged, and replied, “*I don’t know. Bit weak, old chap,*” while smiling broadly at Deveroux, whose eyes were now watering.

Geoffery then smiled broadly too, and even allowed himself a little guffaw and a chuckle, as he winked at the Second Letter. The angel smiled broadly too, as if doing it for the first time, and *thoroughly* enjoying the experience. No one else was though.

“YOU WILL NEED SPIRITUAL ALLIES WHEN WE GO,” stated Judgement.

“This book is an ally,” said Lilly, of the small book. She was very sure of that, but also beginning to feel very alone. This whole adventure had brought *so* much to her door, and now she had *so* much to lose; people she loved, most especially.

“Yes, your best ally no doubt, but there needs to be those who support your spiritual being. Find allies for battle in the people of the Creative Word.”

“I have some good friends where I come from too, and a couple of them very wise,” said Lilly, remembering them and feeling a little better.

“Take from them the gifts of *spirit*, their *love*, and earthly wisdom. Your spirit will know what it needs. Trust it, as well as the guidance of the Creative Word. You interact with the All Knowing every day in any case, as He *continues* to create you through all things. He is manifest in all things, if seen with spiritual eyes.”

“It will be hard to be alone again.”

“You are never alone, and all are continually tested, and challenged. You have succeeded in *all* you have done, even in great difficulty, young child of the Outer Realities. Trust your inner reality, and you will *continue* to succeed.”

Lilly’s eyes welled up, realising that she *had* succeeded, and that she *was* strong. She looked up at the angel again, and said, “I do worry that I’ll struggle with normal people now, and normal life. You are all very strong, and *not* very normal.”

“We are all flawed and somewhat blind, like any creature in existence. *You* will be such, and you *will* meet many such people. Some of them will support your spirit, and others will challenge your beliefs and ideas, but even this is good, as it will force you to better understand what you believe, and why you believe it. Do not be afraid to be challenged, and even face the fire of disagreement. Courage is powerful in this, as is detachment. Always reflect.”

“What about friends who don’t go with the God thing; I don’t want to lose anyone else. Not now.”

Mercy then said, “Those who truly love you, love you, and will ever continue to, no matter. You *will* also find that your fellows either orient you more to The All and the spirit or encourage you away. This is unavoidable, but if you know who you are, and are honest, you will draw only those who accept you, *as you are*. You need to discern, but not judge. Spend more time or less time with some; again, it is no judgement, but you *are* responsible for your soul. Choose your companions well. Be *true* to yourself, and true with your word, and you will draw friends that are *true* to you.”

“I see.”

“You need choose your companions like you choose the food that will make you strong, not weak. You cannot battle unless you are strong, and you may be overcome even by those who care. *Do you understand?*” explained Judgement, at pains that she should understand the importance of his advice before his departure.

“I think so.”

“Do you understand?”

“I need to stand, and not be eroded; eat well, and seek true support.”

“Ahhh!” sighed the angel, seeing the understanding clearly bloom inside her. “One last thing,” he said, like a father losing his child to adulthood, and imparting as much important advice as he could. “Your lower self will *always* challenge you. Never give in; *fall*, but *never give in*.”

He now turned to the other Letter, to Mercy, and they jumped high, and gently flapped their wings, holding themselves two meters above the ground. They looked to Lilly alone, and shared the spirit, before then flying straight up, spiralling up around each other like a great natural dynamo, and shooting out into the universe.

“Wow,” said Jeremy. “I thought they would have hung around for a while; could have learned a lot more from them.”

“Do *you* have friends who support your spiritual being?” asked Lilly.

“I have a few good friends and a loving family,” said Jeremy, smiling at the question. “But in a way I fought my own way forward. It wasn’t until I reached twenty-five that I found my first spiritual mentor, if you like. I just struggled along myself, read The Word, and

talked with the Big Man. But generally, I find anyone who reminds me of my nobility and high spiritual destiny bolsters me, or anyone who reminds me that I am more than physical.”

Suwna came over and hugged Lilly.

“You can’t stay, can you?” asked Lilly, knowing the answer, as she could see much more for herself now after this adventure.

“I want to Lilly. But it seems that it’s so much against the order of things, that it’s really not possible,” answered Suwna, trying to work out how she might yet circumvent her expulsion, or find a way back here without being detected. It was not that she was rash, or against the rules that order life, she just knew that love had to find a way. She had two reasons to stay here now, and she *would* find a way.

“Before you go, I have a question. I need to ask you, because I trust you,” requested the girl.

“Sure, honey, what is it?”

Lilly pulled her aside, as it seemed a very private question. When they were out of earshot she asked, “Why do we kill our unborn? When are they considered people?”

“What do you think, Lilly?”

“I think it’s wrong, they are always people to me, but maybe sometimes it is necessary. Judgement wouldn’t discuss it with me. He just said that it is self-evident, and against all good.”

“He’s right honey. A human life is a human life, and new life begins at conception; even scientifically that is undeniable. I don’t take life, and I never will.”

“But what about to save the mother, or what about those who are attacked?”

Suwna changed a little, and Lilly saw a deeper part of her come out, as her words were breathed out into the air and into the girl's being, "The women of my world are spiritually strong, and sacrifice is prized, given some medical consideration of the situation of course. There are *so many* options in *any* situation, and taking a life is not acceptable to us, as the new life is innocent and has to be protected. A society that does not protect the lives of the unborn is a dead society, and that such things should be for *convenience* totally appals me. To end a life which has begun at any stage is so disgusting to me. The injustice burns like a fire in me at the thought of it."

"But, what about someone being attacked, making a kid?"

"That would be between the mother and God. It would be the most *difficult* of decisions and not another's place to decide for them. It happens so little on our world, but like I said, the women on our world are spiritually strong; and a life is a life. We are spiritual creatures, and we think that way first."

"Thanks," said Lilly, feeling her womanhood and spirit responding. "I will miss you. It will be *so hard* to see you go. I always lose people...*Why?*" she asked, beginning to cry, and sobbing deeper as Suwna hugged her closer. Suwna too, began to cry.

"*Girls. Always cry'in*" commented Deveroux, as he and Jeremy came over to the pair.

"*Agent Deveroux! Don't you have any...*"

Deveroux was smiling, and the reality behind his smile dawned on Suwna, as Lilly looked up from her nurtured place.

"*One proviso, but you have permission to stay here young lady,*" he said to Suwna. "Odi got us through. Thought it was the most immediate need. Special dispensation from the

higher ups, or from the Essential Realm. Hard to know sometimes...probably both,” he added, like it was all business as usual.

Suwna looked down at Lilly smiling through her tears, and they both, naturally released each other, held hands, and jumped up and down with each other in celebration.

“They probably just don’t want that *Grandpa Jack* of yours visiting deeper again,” added the Agent, as Lilly then raced over and hugged Deveroux.

Suwna joined in, and he acted all annoyed about it, but his heart was full right now. As he looked at Jeremy though, he knew that his boy had just lost a lot by these two winning. He nodded to the young man, and the young man nodded back; Jeremy feeling a deep sense of honour, and one of melancholy, as he accepted the course of fate.

THINGS WERE GETTING TIDIED UP. It had been a long day for everyone, but especially Jeremy. He would not be allowed to stay in the outer realities with Suwna. She had been granted a special family dispensation to stay here but had to give up her amulet. The Agency would arrange for some proper identification for her and provide a bona fide background down to medical records, so she could look after Lilly without getting on anyone’s radar.

“Maybe it’s time for some holidays, son? Stay on here for a bit; relax, and see the sights, you know.”

“That might just make it *all too hard*, sir.”

“You have to come back home, but *damn*, you’ll *regret* not spending as much time as you could with her. *Believe me*,” said Deveroux, like it rose from a memory that he strangely could not recall.

“I love her.”

“Yeah, I’m sure you *think* you do, and maybe *you do*, but even so, sometimes life doesn’t allow us to be with the one we love. We’ll love them to the day we die, but it happens. It’s just one of the challenges of life, kid,” explained Deveroux, as he was again taken by his own deep feelings; ones that he knew were his, but he still could not regain a memory for.

“Yeah, I don’t know about that, sir,” admitted Jeremy, a bit lost in it all.

Deveroux had had some strange experiences in his years as an Agent, so let these strong feelings inside him, and his search for this hidden memory, go. He did not want to lose this kid, and he was a little concerned that the young man may do something stupid with all this emotion flying around. Jeremy was more than a good Agent to Deveroux; he had potential to be a great leading Agent, and also, he just *really liked* the kid. The mix of confidence and humility, strength and gentleness, was still rare in their ranks, and there was a grace following him that Deveroux had never had the luxury of.

“Well, it’s your call, Jeremy.”

The young agent was taken with the boss calling him by name like that. He never called anyone by name, maybe their last name if they had blown something, but it was definitely not said in the same tones. He sighed, and said, “Look. Yep, I would like to stay for as long as I’m allowed to.”

“*Good call*, kid. You know that angel wrote courage in the sand when he met you, and he was right. You *do* the hard stuff, and you *do it* with grace,” said Deveroux, meaning it, but still throwing up a little bit in his mouth. The man couldn’t go with all this *expressing feelings stuff*; he just *couldn’t*.

Jeremy laughed, knowing his boss very well, and said, “Are you okay sir?”

“Damn!” said Deveroux, with his eyes beginning to well up a little. “*That will be all, Agent.*”

“Yes sir,” said Jeremy, swelling with pride, and filling with thanks for this older mentor as he walked off to tell Suwna the news.

It was not what they wanted, but it was *something*. It wasn’t the time they knew they needed, but it was *some time* at least; and one should always be thankful for what *does* come our way and allow ourselves to enjoy it.

IT WAS A MONTH LATER when Suwna Smith walked up behind a middle-aged couple, who were out the front of their modest home doing some Sunday gardening, and asked, “Jack Johnston?”

As the man turned around, his heart leaped for joy, and his eyes filled with tears. He stood there looking at Suwna, and smiling, as he held back some sobs, and said, “*Suwna.*”

“Yep. *Found you again,*” she said, beginning to cry.

Jennifer turned, a bit wide eyed, and smiled at the young lady.

“This is that one of ours, darling. She’s the one that the Agent told us was here,” explained Jack to Jennifer. “I think he was sweet on you, young lady.”

Suwna blushed just a little, and looked to Jennifer, only now realising that she had found more than Grandpa Jack. She broke down, and they all came together, and held each other there; as family do.

JEREMY JONES SIGHED. He just had to sort this out. It had been *too* long, and he *had* to deal with it. He got up, opened his wardrobe cupboard, and walked through a portal to The Agency. He went up a few flights of steps and walked into Agent Deveroux's office.

"You're keen. Thought you were on leave, boy," said Deveroux, but he knew Jeremy had been away on Earth for some weeks, and also back for a couple more. He knew that the young man had been unable to bring himself back to work.

"You know why I'm here. I need permission to go, sir," stated Jeremy, definitely.

"It's never been done before, Agent. I don't like your chances."

"I don't *have a choice*, sir."

"Even if you get a free pass to the Outer Realities, it'll more than probably be a one-way ticket. Are you up for that?"

"*She's* there. It *doesn't matter* if I can't come back."

"I get that, boy," said Deveroux, sighing strongly through almost closed lips, and shaking his head. "*Hell*, the Judge said to me, just this morning, that it wouldn't be long until I saw you."

"She is a *clever woman*, sir...So, how is your wife?"

"*Gorgeous as usual*," said Deveroux, smiling wide.

Jeremy nodded respectfully, and said, "Glad for you, sir. *Gotta'* do it. I *have* to go."

“You’ve only had a couple of weeks to cool down. It *is* wiser to wait. I would sure like to see you take another month. Things can change with time, and life is tough on Planet Earth.”

“I’ve been there, sir. I can handle it.”

“You *visited* there. I’ve *lived* there; grew up there. No easy roads, boy.”

Jeremy’s eyes widened. He knew it, he just knew it. He had felt it in his time on Earth of the outer realities. He knew how Deveroux fitted that place like a glove, and there were times when the older Agent knew things that weren’t in the briefings. This had been one of the strong personal reasons why Deveroux had gone back in when they had shut the planet down.

“*I knew it. I knew you fitted that place, and I know there are no easy roads.*”

“You don’t know *anything*, boy,” said Deveroux, knowing Jeremy’s intuition was strong, but wanting to give him some advice. “*Just remember that; and you may yet survive your life on Earth, have a good life, and be of some damn use.*”

“Okay,” said Jeremy, then suddenly realising that the door he had come to batter down just *may* be opening for him.

“*If you get there, stay humble, and learn.*”

Jeremy smiled, nodded, and said, “Yes, Sir. I will.”

“We’re gonna’ miss you, Jeremy. You have been a great example to the younger agents and a credit to your generation. I’ll talk to some people, and maybe, *just maybe*, you’ll get your free pass. No more portals though. No more travel. You’ll be an Earthman.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Just *like* your girl made the choice to stay there, and hand over her amulet, you’ll have to hand in your badge and there’ll be *no* visits back *here*; and *no second chance*.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“To Protect,” said Deveroux, dismissing the younger Agent.

“To Protect,” said Jeremy Jones, savouring the honour of saying it for maybe the last time.

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 be in agreement 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 is 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 spiritual wisdom written into 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.

He has been writing philosophical realisations and poetry, under the acronym JDC for a number of years, and has now written upwards of nine novels; which will be published, when edited and developed.

QUOTES

“The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased, O believers in the Unity of God, that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish.”²³

Bahá'u'lláh

“It is incumbent upon every man, in this Day, to hold fast unto whatsoever will promote the interests, and exalt the station, of all nations and just governments. Through each and every one of the verses which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed, the doors of love and unity have been unlocked and flung open to the face of men.

We have erewhile declared -- and Our Word is the truth -- : "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship." Whatsoever hath led the children of men to shun one another, and hath caused dissensions and divisions amongst them, hath, through the revelation of these words, been nullified and abolished.

From the heaven of God's Will, and for the purpose of ennobling the world of being and of elevating the minds and souls of men, hath been sent down that which is the most effective instrument for the education of the whole human race.’²⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

REFERENCES

1. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; 202*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 248
2. Shoghi Effendi. (1996) *The Promised Day is Come*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 5
3. Bahá'u'lláh. (1996) *Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on Spiritual Reality*. Palabra Publications. Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org. p. 46
4. Bahá'u'lláh. (1996) *Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on Spiritual Reality*. Palabra Publications. Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org. P. 49
5. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. V, p. 7-8
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (2009). *Paris Talks. Bahá'í International Community (Ed.)*. Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org
7. Universal House of Justice. (2015) *Ridvan Message: To the Bahá'ís of the World*. Bahá'í World Centre. p.1
8. Shoghi Effendi. (1994) *Compilations, Lights of Guidance*. New Dehli. Baha'í Publishing Trust India. 449, p. 134. From a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the believers in Australia and New Zealand.
9. John Stuart Mill. (1864) *On Liberty*. London. Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green.
10. George Orwell. (2013) *Politics and the English Language*. New York. Penguin books.
11. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. XXVI, p. 61
12. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. LXXXII, p. 160
13. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*: Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. LXXXII, p. 162
14. Bahá'u'lláh. (1988) *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 172

15. Shoghi Effendi. (1994) *Compilations, Lights of Guidance*. New Dehli. Baha'i Publishing Trust India. 391, p. 114-115. From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 18, 1954
16. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1990) *The Secret of Divine Civilisation*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 3-4
17. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1990) *The Secret of Divine Civilisation*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p.2-3
18. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part II. From the Persian: 65. p. 58
19. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part 1. From the Arabic: 2. p. 10
20. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part 1. From the Arabic: 5. P. 11
21. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part 1. From the Arabic: 13. P. 13
22. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. CXXXVI, p. 296
23. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. XLV, p. 99
24. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. XLIII, p. 95

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