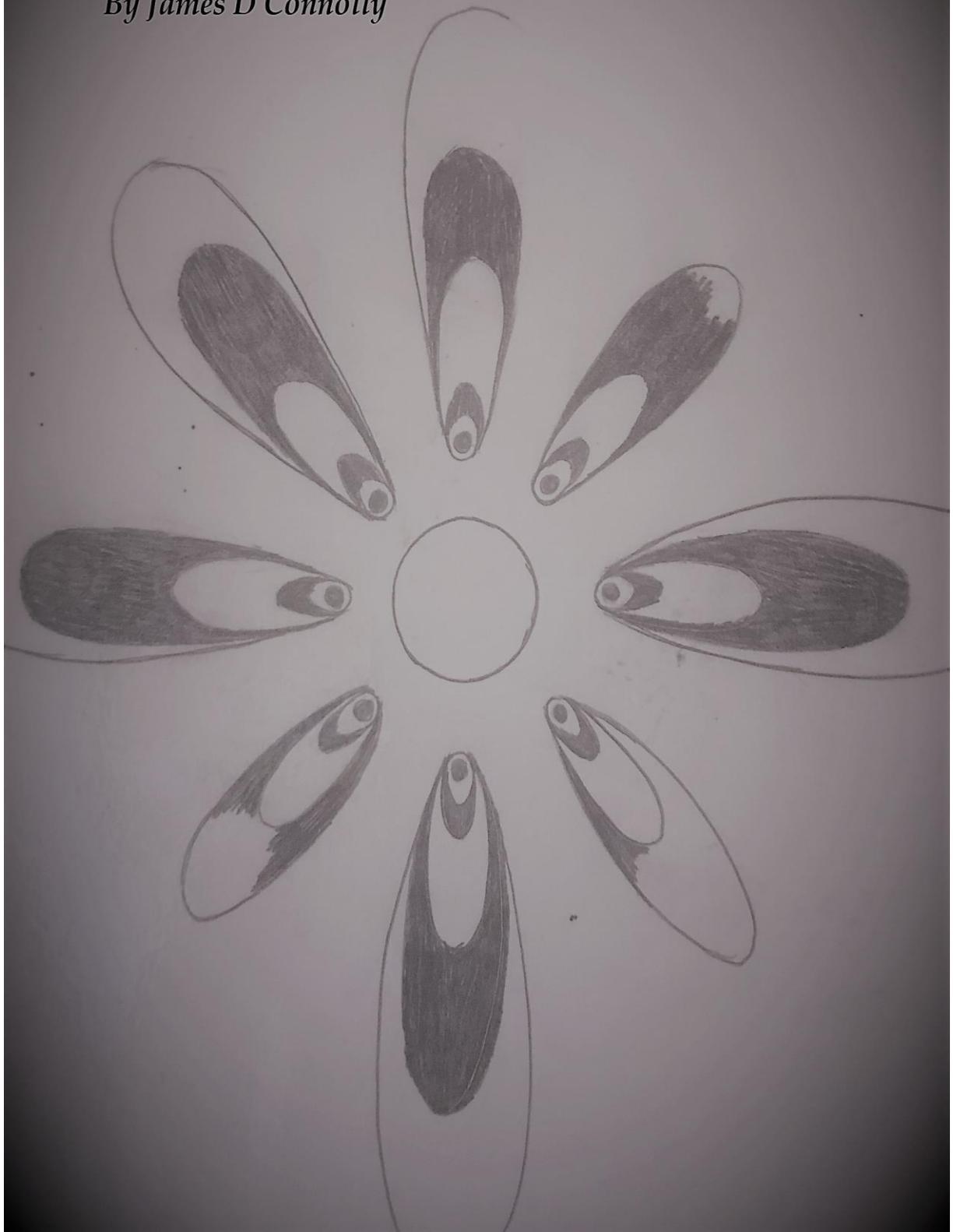


VOLITION

By James D Connolly



Volition

Book Two:
The Knowledge
Trilogy

James D Connolly

Copyright © 2021 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
DREAMS AND WOLVES.....	6
Hello.....	7
Water.....	38
Choices.....	60
Character.....	83
BONDS AND DRAGONS.....	105
Walls.....	106
Diving.....	133
Noise.....	153
Connections.....	171
LOVE AND BOUNDARIES.....	196
Family.....	197
Consultation.....	221
Fortress.....	256
Justice.....	273
AUTHOR’S OTHER BOOKS.....	285
ABOUT THE AUTHOR.....	290
REFERENCES and LINKS.....	291

PREFACE

Welcome to *The Knowledge Trilogy*. This trilogy stands on its own, as do the others before it, but is also the last three books of the *Department of Truth Series*. The first book, *Knowledge*, seeks to look at the evolving ferment of society, what our participation in its evolution might look like, and what truly oppresses us. This book, *Volition*, addresses some important aspects of the nature of human will, as well as aspects of relationships and family life. The third book, *Justice*, looks at the nature of Justice, the insistent self, and the evolution of unity. These books cannot reach the depths required to do real justice to such wide and such essential themes, but they seek to explore some important aspects of them. It is my hope that all readers may enjoy them; from teens to older souls. They are stories to be enjoyed and adventure in, with much meaning to ponder.

This second book, *Volition*, seeks to raise awareness of the oppressive forces in the world and where they rise from. It explores volition; the power of inspiration and intent to act. The book is also about relationships, family, and the power of consultation. Respect, communication, and shared exploration can change so much in our private lives, and as a race of people. The force of will, its various rising points and its manifestations in our actions, are many. The book seeks to explore the wells it arises from, and what may be healthy wells to give it a positive power. In the wash up, we need to know that we have it; we need to know how to make it healthy and useful for the betterment of our families and humanity.

I hope that the whole *Department of Truth Series* provides some inspiration and cause for self-reflection, as I wrote these books to that end. *The Knowledge Trilogy* certainly finishes off the books that came before them and completes them as a true series. I also hope that even the nature of writing and storytelling can be gleaned from the whole series, as these last three books, while attending to important themes, were just as much about exploring storytelling. My greatest hope is that you may simply enjoy the adventure, and gather some meaning; but also, that the stories may create more exploration and meaningful conversations.

So, as in all my books, 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.

I hope you enjoy *Volition* and begin to understand its power. I hope you are inspired by the power of consultation, and I hope you enjoy the other two books, *Knowledge*, and *Justice*.

Dreams and Wolves

Hello

Bianca had never had a dream so vivid before. She now looked out onto a Parisian street from a deep red phone box. It was strangely an old-style English phone box made of wood, with many small square panes of glass in its red wooden framing...and just then, the phone rang.

The old large black phone piece was heavy in her hand as she picked it up. It seemed ancient, but somehow comforting, as she now put it to her ear.

“Hello,” came the voice from the other end.

“Hello,” replied Bianca, realising, from this one word, that the girl on the other end of the line was about her age.

“Who are you?” asked the voice.

“I’m Bianca.”

“I am Vodni Duh.”

“Hi, Vodni.”

“Where is this place?” asked Vodni, with caution and wonder.

“I don’t know where you are, but I’m in Paris...I think.”

“Paris. It is a lovely name. It fits, so well, this place.”

Bianca was a little puzzled. Not sure at all where Vodni was and said so.

Vodni replied, saying, “I am beside you. Turn around.”

Bianca turned quickly to see another red, wooden and glass phone box right beside hers. The booths sat on a corner, and actually looked out onto to a town square at the end of the quaint narrow street. Across the square were some very ornate buildings. But suddenly, she realised that the other phone box was full of water, and all she could see was a figure in its midst; one which was not moving.

“Vodni!” she called out, as she tried frantically to open the door of her phone box so she could save this new friend from drowning.

It was then that Vodni Duh appeared clearly at the glass windowpanes of her phone box. She smiled through the water. Bianca gasped with surprise, and also had a giggle. Vodni expelled bubbles as the two of them looked in wonder at each other and explored each other’s features. Neither had known another kind before today. It was a wondrous experience for them both. Vodni’s kind had been visited by other self-aware beings from beyond their home world, but she had not yet been in the presence of one. And well...Bianca almost didn’t believe it, as even though she did think that there would be other life in the universe, it was still a shock to see that there actually was.

They both somehow knew that this was more than a dream, though they were most certainly meeting within one. It was a link across a great distance, and they both knew that the link was real, dream or not. They both smiled and giggled again, as they realised the

magic of their experience. Vodni was sahona, from Wai Nova, just as Bianca was human, from Earth. Wai Nova was a planet in another spiral galaxy; the one right next door.

Vodni was novost, just as we are earthlings, and was an amphibian humanoid. She had no hair, varied and patterned blue green skin, and big eyes set flush to the curve of her oval shaped head. She had hands with three fingers and one thumb, with see trough webbing between them; her toes did too. Her people walked as we do on ground, but also swam just as naturally as an otter might. Most lived on the water, while many lived below it; although some still lived on the endless small islands which dotted her home planet.

Some people, and peoples, of Wai Nova had grown gills on the backs of their rib cages, but Vodni's had not. Gills were definitely becoming more prevalent on her planet though, as the mixing of the races there had long since reached a place of organic equilibrium. It was part of a spiritual and cultural equilibrium which the sahonas had now very much relaxed into. This one culture, one of many cultures, had settled, and the natural equilibrium of the flows of people here and there had been reached.

Vodni pushed her flat nose above the water line and breathed. She choked a little as she giggled again; at showing off for her new friend, and at seeing Bianca's mouth open and her eyes widen as she did it. Bianca giggled too, and when Vodni came back on the line, they talked excitedly about their differences, amazed, and amused at each other's physical quirks; all this, as well as the few cultural quirks they now shared with each other. There was definitely some real amusement at the different ways they ate.

They chatted on, not wanting the dream to end, but as things do, it suddenly did.

Bianca sat bolt upright in her bed, amazed, and feeling a deep magic from what she had experienced. She was so excited that she could not go back to sleep.

Back in that dream place, an Other Place, a lesser creature now walked around the two red phone boxes. Vodni had gone now too, thankfully. The low creature peered inside these wooden and glass boxes, gathering the scent of their now passed presence; the scent of prey. It walked on all fours, but as it realised the nature of its prey it morphed into a humanoid shape. It was not at all humanoid, or a free will creature. It was locked within its nature, and as it became a mix of the physical features of the two girls, it opened its copiously salivating mouth, its flesh rending teeth remaining unchanged, like those of a wolf.

THE MAN WAS OUT IN THE SUN. He was using a posthole digger to make deep holes for the steel pole foundations of the home he was building. There were no houses in sight from his partially wooded block, or even in earshot, so the man had started early. He seemed happy to be starting the self-build, and was satisfied to learn as he went, but something weighed him down a little. You could tell in the way he hunched just a bit as went about the work, and maybe a little in his now unguarded eyes.

As Bianca was not able to get back to sleep, she had got up in the early morning too. She was now wandering, as she often did, down an old road which she thought would never be used again. It was over the hill from her parent's farm, and she was a bit disappointed to now find that someone should be building here. Bianca was about twelve, and she had played here since she was seven or so. It seemed that change was coming to her secret place, but she now strangely started to feel good, even though some of the disappointment remained. It was unusual for her to feel both at once, and the attending feeling was a deep one she had not felt before today.

The man looked up from his work. He was old, but seemed fit, and had a straight frame. He waved to her, but she turned immediately and walked back towards home. He smiled a fatherly smile, and thought, “*And so you should.*”

It was like she could then feel that thought, and the good intention within it, and she turned back.

“Hello,” she said, as she stopped some way away.

“Hello,” replied the man. “I understand your caution, young lady; and it is wise. There are dingoes about, and *wolves.*”

Bianca smiled, and said, “*Young lady is so old fashioned.*”

“To be a lady, or a young lady, will never be out of fashion. Just as a man seeking to be a gentleman will not.”

“Gentleman is just, *too old,*” she pronounced, and the old man smiled.

“Oh, I beg to differ,” he then responded, with a sparkle in his eye. “These terms, to me, denote *real* class; kindness, courtesy, and strength; spiritual attainment and a higher human beauty. It’s not *old ways.* Both girls and boys, and women and men, should aspire to be ladies and gentlemen.”

Bianca could feel the understanding of what he said within her being. It was like a deeper part of her had known that this was definitely true; but even more essentially, a deep feeling that it *was* beautiful.

“It is an old man’s prerogative to be forthright,” he added, as Bianca had not responded openly to his assertion. “You see we have less to lose when we’re older. We’ve

lived a long life, and we're less afraid of the opinions of others. We also have much to give; so *out it comes*," he added, while making a hand signal like he was throwing it all up.

Bianca laughed, and the old man saw the joy of a young generation; the spirit of excitement and drive toward new things; the positive attitude and exploration of newness; the lack of any fear of change. Each new generation brings forth great newness and change, as is its power, and as it should. He had learned clearly that it should not be hemmed in by old ways, but, that it also needed to be respectful, a little humble, and also seek the wisdom that existed in other generations; the understanding of life which lay in the experience of older souls.

"The future is *ours* to build. We need *new* ways because some of yours didn't work. You've had your time," said Bianca, as if it was 'a given', and feeling a change inside her. She had not talked to adults like this before; *ever*.

The man laughed out loud, and heartily, and it got Bianca giggling a little too; as much with the joy of this new inner freedom, as it was the infectious laugh of the old man.

"It *most certainly is* yours to build. It was nice to meet you," he said, then simply went back to his work.

She was very disappointed at this, and said, "Do you need to keep working? I was enjoying talking."

"You just told me that the future is *yours* to build. I was leaving you *to it*," responded the old man, with a bit of cheek, and Bianca smiled.

She looked at him and realised that she wanted to know more of what was inside this old man's mind, and she fell to some humility. Bianca really appreciated the way he had shown her to open her eyes, and the light energy he had done it with.

"Where are you from?" she then asked.

"Oh, I've lived in many places," he replied, as his eyes went far away, "and now, I find myself here. Life is like that." He then looked at the holes he had dug, envisaging his new home. "I've always wanted to build my own home. It seems that I never really had the time. It will be nice to just build this place, and potter around a bit; maybe start a garden." Then, like a prayer, he added, "*I appreciate this chance so much.*"

Bianca had not noticed his demeanour, the sadness that sat below the surface in him, as she had been looking at the holes and trying to make sense of the foundations.

"It looks like a funny shape," she commented.

"It will be an eight-sided structure. You have to get the measurements right, because the whole thing rises off the foundation and it's set around a central spot," answered the man, coming out of his small reverie. "It will be small, but it will have a wide emanating veranda coming off three of its sides. I like being outside." He then sighed with the ease of someone who was tired but satisfied to be here; slowly building an old dream.

"I like being outside too. It's *alive* out here; but I have to get home now," said Bianca, as she realised that she had been out for a good while now and did not want to alarm her parents, even though she had wanted to talk a little more.

"My name is Bianca," she added, as she went to go.

"It has been lovely to meet you, Bianca. My name is Jack."

IT HAD BEEN A HARD WEEK AT SCHOOL FOR BIANCA. She had had so much on her mind. Far more it seemed now, even beyond the vivid dream and her talk with the old man. She was feeling big changes in herself and was embracing them, even if at times quite unsurely. But such *is* change; *isn't it*.

She had been sure that she would talk to the old man again, even though her mother had been a bit concerned and her father had now warned her against going there; making it clear that it was not wise. She knew they loved her more than life; hearing in their words their need to protect her, not control her. She had wanted to pretend to agree with them but go anyway. Yet in the end she had been honest with them, asking, “What if I stood back, and had my phone with me?”

“Maybe one of us can go with you next time and talk to the man. He probably doesn't want you there anyway.”

“I didn't feel that at all. He is old, but he makes me think, and I am a lot more interested in talking with him than I am even my friends right now,” she replied, still curious about the old man and what they may talk about.

They had decided between them that her father would go with her one afternoon, and right now, they were walking over the rise to where the man was building. As they came over the crest, she could see that he wasn't there. She was quite disappointed, until she realised that the ground he had been building on was also not cleared. She went red, as she was embarrassed to tell father. They went all the way closer, before she stopped in front of the uncleared bushland and finally told her father that this was where the man was building.

“Are you sure, darling?”

“Yes. It was here.”

“You must have been daydreaming.”

The young lady was obviously more than a little upset, and her father was thinking that there was much more to this than his child daydreaming. He held her close and said, “It’s alright, darlin’; we’ll work it out together.”

“Thanks Dad,” she said. “I also had a dream that felt *soo* real.”

“Really. A dream, eh. Tell me about it?”

She knew her Father’s love and support, just as her mother’s, was as solid as a rock and as limitless as anything could be, so she now told him with all her joy about the dream as they walked off home.

As she finished, he said, “Sounds like you’ve been listening to too many of that Able Jones’s stories.”

And it was then that she suddenly knew who Jack was. He was younger, but that was him. It was Able’s, Grandpa Jack. He had passed on a year ago, now, so natural questions of *How was he here?* and *How was he younger?* came to her mind. The sleuth in her then came out to play, as she turned to her father and said, “Yes, Dad; probably.”

Since the angel had come, though, people’s perception of what may be normal had undergone some profound change; Bianca’s father included. It had also enticed many to drive forward toward a better humanity; but many hadn’t of course, and the forward motion brought on by the winged creature’s visit had now certainly waned. It had fallen back into a gentle apathy for the most part, as the various forces of ego and selfishness had sadly, and too easily, reasserted themselves. But that new wave *had* added some impetus to a Deeper Tide

rising in the world, even if humanity's progress was generally ebbing right now. Such is the nature of process; such is the nature of growth, and change.

There was also something her father had never told her about Able Jones. It was why he let her listen to the young man's stories until late on feast nights, even when he was tired and wanted to go home. When Bianca's father was younger, before he worked fully as an environmental scientist and met his darling wife, he had been a fruit grower. It had been full time work, and then part time after his curiosity about the nature of growth had taken him to study. He had been an orchardist for nine years all told, and soon after his study was completed, he had woken up with a purple hue on his skin; skin just like Able had somewhat recently returned to the community with, only not as dark.

He had not even remembered going to bed the night before he woke up with that colouration. It was very strange, and he had never found out the reason for it. The purple hue had faded in a few months, but he was happy, and certainly a little relieved, when Able Jones eventually returned home the same way. The boy had wandered off when he was young, and his parents and Grandfather had not been forthcoming on what had happened to him. It seemed that it was a family matter and it had stayed that way.

All these strange goings on had allowed him to support his daughter far better today, and he thanked God for it.

"What if we asked you to talk with someone? You know, just to explore these things a little. I will protect you. Would you do that?"

"Sure Dad, but we do live in strange times, eh," answered Bianca, referring to the angel.

“We *sure* do, my love. We *sure* do. I’m *so* glad you don’t mind. There is a lovely soul I know, called Cas. She seems very kind. Her husband’s a real *nutter*, so she’ll have had plenty of practice.”

Bianca giggled, but cried a little too, and so did her dad in his love for her. He reached out and held her in a hug from the side as they walked along. She was a little scared but loved it that he had made light of it all and did not treat her with some kind dishonesty. This girl was also far stronger than *she* even realised, and they both *knew* that they would face this together.

They had a trust, these two, as he had never let her down. He never stopped loving her for an instant, and he had kept his long-held promise to be kind when she admitted to something she had done wrong; even though there were consequences to face up to. He did not coddle her, often letting life challenge her. Mostly he would ask her how she felt about what had happened, what she thought about it, and got her honestly reflecting on the nature and consequences of her actions. At these times, it was very uncomfortable for her, but she felt safe, as both her mother and father allowed her to learn within the trust they had built with her. She felt and grew *her own* conscience as she sat in that warm embrace of total trust.

Her parents did not spoil her, which too, had allowed her to grow strong. She also loved how her father would always ask her what *she* thought, when she had asked him a question about schoolwork, or a life situation, as well as when she messed up. These empowered her somehow. There were only ever a few ground rules, which made her, and her brother, more responsible for their own behaviour, and both parents had always been there to listen and support. In any case, the trust between these two was total, and he now gave her an extra squeeze of reassurance as they walked home together.

CAS'S HUSBAND WAS SITTING THERE IN HIS SPACE SUIT. Bianca found it hard not to giggle her head off, as she walked past him. Change had become very apparent since that visit from the angel and laughed at her strong will not to laugh. Then said very seriously, "Don't let 'em get to you, kid."

"I won't," she replied. "Dad won't let 'em, anyway."

He then regarded her father, and *his* kind regard, despite the space suit, and said, "You are kind *today*, but I am *not* a...*nutter*."

Bianca's and her father's eyes went wide at his comment, realising that he had used the exact word her father had used to describe him, but they kept walking to the desk. They put it down to coincidence, but when Bianca looked back, he winked, and when her father had glanced to the side from the desk soon after, the man's eyes were very clear about the real intent of his words. Garran strangely even heard the use of his name, Garran Gardiner, in that look, like he had been a naughty child, so only his full name would suffice in this small scolding.

As he sat down with his daughter, he said, "I think we are slipping down that rabbit hole *together*, love."

Bianca smiled; happy that her father was right in the boat with her, just as Cas came out to greet them.

"Hello," said this amazingly calm lady.

"*Not* a 'nutter'," commented her husband again, as Cas ushered the two of them into her consultation room.

She looked back, and her husband gave her a ‘*yep it’s him*’ look. Cas just looked honoured to be meeting them. That was *really* something, as Cas’s *reality* was *so great* that she was in awe of very few. This humble father would not know of his deep place in life’s very essential deeper flows until his passing from this life. He would be taken to work in the next life, in quite deeper realities; so much so, that while he like all else, was created, he...*would always be, and had always been.*

VODNI DUH TOLD HER MOTHER OF THE DREAM. They sat and talked about its content and all the nuances within it. They explored this particular dream, most especially as it was that very day that Vodni’s flows had begun. Dreams did not rule life here, but meaning was definitely the mode of life in the water world of Wai Nova.

This planet had long ago reached maturity, and the peoples become one people. It had been hard fought, but they had overcome what seemed to be insurmountable obstacles to most at the time. The Spirit of The Age, as they called him, had come with clear instructions of how these obstacles could all be overcome, and a blueprint of a great and beautiful new social structure that could be built. It seemed complex, and it was, but it was mostly a lack of unity that had held back the future of their kind, and the birth of its maturity. There was also an undercurrent of spirit which drove historical changes in that time, deeper energies which fired the bellows of this natural unfoldment.

“She was a land creature and walked as we do. She did not seem to be one of water. I sensed another presence just as we left. It was a malevolent force. I felt it strongly.”

Vodni’s mother smiled, knowing what these things meant, and shared them with her. The young lady’s eyes went wide, as it was the first time her mother had talked to her of such

things. But such was her age that now was the time; the time for the wisdom of such things to be shared. Young women have so much more to discover in these few years ahead, and her mother knew this time's importance. Because women bore children it made the understanding of the realities, dangers, and joys ahead of them, a more immediate concern. It would seem that mothers are born before fathers, and the younger women of this planet explored in far wider scope what was to come in life; indeed, as the younger women of any planet do.

“It was an amazing dream, and it felt real,” said Bianca, as he finished explaining her experience in more detail to Cas.

Her father had gone out into the waiting room after some initial discussion, as Cass thought it had come time in the session for some, one on one, alone with Bianca. Garran had seen the wisdom of her request, and smiling with love, had nodded a nod of *‘Go to it my girl’*, as he got up and left the room.

The two had then talked for a good time about her recent dream and its seeming reality. Cas was not a Traveller, but now assumed that maybe this was what it was, so she did not spend a lot of time on it. She eventually suggested that Bianca should relax and enjoy the dreams, as there weren't many who had such lucid dreams. It was to settle the child, and if she *was* a traveller, this advice may also aid her first steps.

There was something else, something Mother Time could sense, that required her more immediate attention, and she asked, “It is your time?”

“Yes,” answered Bianca, knowing what she meant.

“There is a story from a people who lived a very long time ago. It so much fits today's world, especially with people's over-emphasis on sex.”

Bianca went a bit red but was beginning to see that her flows had started something or had set her on a wider river that would flow more strongly and have more impact on her. Her mother had also talked to her about the physical aspects of this new beginning. She could see that she needed to grow up and consider many things; things that she had been free of before today.

“There is so much more to a person, than this *one* element. We are *so much more* than the sexual act. It is a shame how highly society elevates its importance these days, and more and more to the exclusion of higher qualities and motives. *You are made of stardust*, and there is *so much* you may create, and grow, from the powers of intellect and spirit. This is more than a time of physical change, and you are *far more*, Bianca.”

Bianca nodded, and then Cass told the story of *The Dream and The Wolf*. Of its content, suffice is to say, that it told of many dreams and many wolves, out in the world, and within us. That these can take a young heart, of boy or girl, in the midst of the great change and its confused emotions, and they can find themselves in a place of loss, slavery, and torture; locked into empty voids of only *seeming* meaning and love. It told of how our dreams and wishes, which ignored the realities of life and the wisdom of spirit, would create bad decisions, and bring many wolves to our door. Cas then explained, that especially in this current age of the empowerment of women, even while there were more solutions to the physical consequences of the fall from the *cliffs of imagination* and societal imitation, that the wolf pack was growing and even more empowered by an individual’s decisions to walk the lesser ways.

Neither of these young ladies of different worlds were expecting that womanhood was to be thrust on them so suddenly. Of course, they were not yet mature, but the realities of their gender were now quite immediately making them more aware of a fuller view of life

and impelling them to seek, more intimately, its future implications. They carried the great power that men would never know, the greatest experience that life could offer in the physical world; the honour of growing another life within them, and to issue it forth into the world.

“It’s not that the boys need not grow, and also deal with dreams and wolves; they *most certainly* have to,” explained Cas. “They need to bring the powers in them as men and individuals to bear too, and to see things through higher lenses. Actually, with maturity, and the equality of men and women, rising, men will become more cognisant of women’s realities in life and will finally come to consider their part far more fully, and much earlier, than they may now. Maybe then, fathers and mothers will be born at the same time.”

“There’s a lot to think about.”

“There is, Bianca, but you *have the powers* to do so, and the power of will. Volition is that which rises from knowledge. It powers our actions. Choose well, and don’t get too caught up in your emotions as you go through this time. It is good to feel them, and listen to their message, but not to allow them to act for you. Volition, and therefore actions, need rise from knowledge, and from what your father tells me, you have a good source.”

“You mean Mum and Dad?”

“And your Faith. It will guide you on your course, and free you at times from the mind’s confusion and lower attachments. Avail yourself of it and know that your emotions will swing due to your body changes.”

“Sure, okay.”

“Along with these physical changes comes enhanced intellectual powers, for the gathering of a wider deeper view of things, and the seeking of a life path. This time in your life is not just a physical change; it is mostly a spiritual and intellectual change in all young men and women your age. The spiritual, the intellectual, and the physical follow a single timing. Each age, as you go on in life, has its own struggles, its own wisdom, and joys.”

Bianca just loved Cass. She had put so much into perspective for her, and she now knew there was a great adventure ahead of her. Cas then asked Bianca to sit back, close her eyes, and relax, as she slowed time and spoke gently these words...

“When the currents of bodily moods come...when emotions confuse...and when the mind cannot see beyond its own tangles in this change time...sit back.

The storms will come...be honest with yourself...and even your emotions will tell you things, but...sit on the mountain. Look down on yourself and allow the process and smaller confusions time to unwind and be seen...Time is your best friend.

...

Sit back within...and know that you are a spiritual creature; while you seek who you are...and what life is. Come to know yourself...accept yourself. Learn of your uniqueness and how to give it to the world.

Reflect often...seek deeper guidance...allow the flow of change. Speak gently to yourself...be accepting of the necessity of this journey. Use your will...and celebrate the joy of each new gift...but know that only time brings answers and growing clarity.”

Then Cass repeated these words, twice more, before a time of silence entered the room; after which Bianca slowly opened her eyes. There had been at least two hours in this one hour, and as she sat up, she said, “I just have to walk through it, and explore?”

“Stand free in your higher self, but yes, it is an experience to be *lived*, to be *walked*, like any other; one that brings magnificent realities to view, and new powers to our door.”

THE DREAM GREW WIDE, like a circle of light that started from a pin prick in dark surrounds. All eventually came to light, and there he was...

“The amazing!...The incomparable!...Altar-Ego!”

The crowd in front of the stage went wild, as the large lights spelling his name flashed brightly on and off, and a man in a white suit danced onto the stage. He did it with such debonair style that it just blew the audience’s mind.

“I love you, Altar,” screamed one girl, and he nodded to her with those magic eyes of his, and she just screamed some more and swooned away.

Bianca giggled, and the music suddenly stopped; the great room suddenly fell silent. He stood there on stage very upset that anyone should have that kind of reaction. The crowd held their breath, and looked from Altar to Bianca, and back, and back again.

Just then, thankfully someone held her hand. It was Vodni. Her hand was soft, but gently leathery. Mostly though, it was welcome, as Altar’s visage changed. He was now showing his very magnitude by not being concerned about her for too long, and he went on with the show very magnanimously, well at least with his facial expressions. After all, it was all about the fans.

“I am so glad you’re here, Vodni. He is so funny,” said Bianca, with a smile.

“The crowd don’t think so,” noticed Vodni.

“Yes, they love him,” she agreed, and with a ‘confused why’ look on her face.

Altar was going on with the show and sneaking a glimpse at these two new friends as he did. He was a little concerned that he could not gather their attention enough, so any time he noticed them talking with each other he would be even more and more magnificent!

He eventually finished the show; going off stage after five encores; of course. He had just made it through the curtain when he fell down on all fours and then flipped onto his back. He lay there flat on his back, crying with all the sadness and acting ability that he could muster. The stage crew were a bit over Altar and his over-acting. He rolled around a bit, and peeked out of closed eyes, but no one came over to him. Not getting any attention, he got up and stamped his feet all the way to his dressing room. Fortunately, the huge silver spangled star on his door lightened his mood, and he called on one of the roadies to go bring those two girls backstage.

“They just need to know why I am so popular,” he finished to the roadie, with the grace of royalty and all the humility his face could muster.

“Yes, Walter,” said the roadie, sighing deeply

“Don’t call me that!” called Alter...

“What do you mean Alt...er? Alt..AR! Alt...AR!” he almost screamed at the writer who was penning this story. “Can’t you spell?! You’re supposed to be writer! That’s Alt...ar Ego! Don’t make me get another writer, and I am not too happy with what you’ve written about me so far.”

“My apologies...Walter,” replied the writer, cheekily playing with Walter’s feelings, yet a little bit freaked out that his character should actually be talking to him; that and the fact that he was actually now talking back to it.

“Ohh God! Why is everything and everyone against me?” went on Walter, as he slumped down on the chair in front of his mirror, throwing his arms and head down on the table that held it. The writer was now even calling him Walter.

He then felt even more down, because his reflection in the dressing room mirror had given him a good look at the depth of his face’s deep pain. He was after all a great master of emotional rendition. He was certainly taken, and even buoyed a little, by his brilliant rendition of his own sadness, but it was no good that its sadness affected his heart.

The girls then walked in through the open door of his dressing room. The dressing room visit always impressed his fans. He quickly mustered himself, and turned to them with all eloquence and verve, and said, “Hello girls,” throwing his best debonair face and shoulder movements at them. But the two of them just giggled to each other, and then they laughed, but not really wanting to, at the face he pulled after hearing their mirth.

“Take a look in the mirror, Walter,” said Vodni, to trying and help him see himself a little.

“It’s Altar!”

“The man who brought us backstage said your name was really, Walter.”

“Yes, it is,” spoke the disembodied voice of the writer.

“Who was that?” asked Bianca, looking around in wonder, but seeing no one.

“Oh, don’t worry about him,” pouted Walter, as he turned to look again into the mirror.

He only now noticed his makeup was all smudged from his tears, and from his throwing himself on his forearms on the dressing table. He was so intent on his own pain, and his brilliant acting ability, that he had not noticed the smudged mascara. He just cried, and the girls didn’t know what to do. So, they looked around at the walls of his dressing room, leaving him somewhat alone to get it all out. One wall had all kinds of certificates on it, for all kinds of things; there was even a ‘Gentleman and a Scholar’ certificate, which seemed just a little photocopied and a bit handwritten over in parts.

Out in the concert hall though, making its way against the tide of leaving fans was the changeling. It had sensed that the two girls had returned to this place in between worlds and had made its way confidently here. It walked smoothly, like any predator, and it smiled as it looked to the stage. The creature was still in a mixed form of humanoid that would appeal to both girls, as it was not new at this. It had fed on many a young creature that it drew in with its facades, and its charm.

It slowly made its way up the stairs, explaining its presence smoothly to the stagehands, and continuing on. It was more the confidence that it showed than the story it told them. Confidence, mock confidence, and mistaken confidence even, seemed to convince weaker minds somehow. There were always those who did not think for themselves and many who reflected little. Its breath slowed, and its heart raced as it now walked through the backstage area, and on hearing their voices, it straightened its back, and put on its best humble face.

Providence though was smiling, as just then, Walter burst out of the room; bunging on an even bigger turn just as the beast came to the door. It was knocked senseless by the unprecedented drama and waving arm movements brought forth out of the great wells of Altar. So broken by his own pain, he did not see the creature fall behind a large rack of his super-flashy costumes.

Thankfully, the girls were gone again by the time the beast regathered itself; simply walking out of the dressing room past the stunned creature. But as they walked away, Vodni gathered the scent of the creature that her mother had warned her about, immediately telling Bianca to wake up.

Waking suddenly, Bianca wondered why Vodni had warned her away from the dream, as her new friend had not explained. She was confused, but very glad of the realisation that she could decide to leave the dreams; thinking that *just maybe* she had some control over her experiences. She lay there a little while, reflecting on Walter and what the dream had taught her. It is not that everything needs reflecting on, but this joyous power can grant great awareness from even the simple things and happenings of life.

As she relaxed, a concern about the realness of the dream, driven by a dread of real danger, then rose within her. She wasn't sure if it was an emotion, or intuition, as she was yet to discover and experiment with these and learn the difference. It may have been either, but she was almost sure that it came from her fears. Wherever it rose from, her lack of ease got her up and out of bed. She decided to go for a walk in her special place, as it was now a place of her childhood; a place of simpler times. She longed for the simplicity of her childhood again, even though she knew that things had changed within her, and that she just had to move along this new road.

Garran had been with Bianca when Cas had asked about the vision, or delusion, of the man building the house. They had explored it, and Cas had advised that if it did not come again, that it may just have been a physical outcome of her new flows. That some hormones may have affected her brain, or that it might have even been a spiritual insight dealing with *the change*. Cas though, knew that she most likely had a Traveller on her hands, but chose not to open that up in front of Garran.

Being *Garran's* daughter, it made sense to her that the child would be somehow special, but even Time did not understand *who* this young girl was. Time, Cas, was so focused on seeing Growth *himself* in his early existence that she did not see the full nature of the girl who sat in her consultation room. It was a great joy to her to see Garran, and she saw the stability, the calm process, and the humility in him *even now*; in this time before he would fulfil his role *deeper*. It was a shame that she had to deceive him, but for the child's sake, and for his right now, it was best. Bianca too had had kept her secret that it was a younger, old Jack Johnston, who was building the house, as she wanted to keep that well to herself.

Bianca now looked off into nowhere as she wandered the old road. All she had recently experienced was a huge amount to take in for someone so young. Yet experience is wonderful, new, and exciting in the young, and they hold the ability to ride its waves with less concern; even though the old have many similar experiences to look back on to guide them in new places and have hopefully grown greater powers to hold them at ease. The young have a youthful resilience and seemingly less fear too. Not many get the challenges of a Traveller though, so it would be true to say that Bianca was feeling a little lost, as it all now started to catch up with her a bit.

“Hey, Bianca,” called Jack, now tying a knot of string around a post. He was tying it to three others already cemented into the ground. It was to hold the post in place enough for him to cement it in too.

He also had string lines going here and there, crisscrossing each other. Bianca just ignored him, and kept walking, as it was all too much. Then she suddenly felt something rise inside her, it was will. It was strong, and it asked her to turn and talk to the man; to face up and to walk through her pain. It seemed to rise from the knowledge of the importance of talking with him, over her tiredness and confusion. The importance of something over tiredness and confusion, putting things aside for now, or pushing on, were surely the greatest power of mothers too; if that was to be her path.

“Hello, Jack.”

“You seem burdened, little one.”

“I am. You see, you don’t exist, and I go places in my dreams, and I have come to the change.”

Jack let go the pole, and stood there, regarding the young lady.

“My goodness, *that’s a lot*. Is it *all* new?”

“Yes.”

“You *will* succeed, and it *will* make you strong.”

“I don’t feel strong, and you don’t even exist.”

“You *are* strong. All Travellers are strong.”

“Travellers?” she asked, almost in a daze again.

“We are spiritual wanderers. That’s why you can see me.”

“*You’re real?*”

“Yes.”

“And *my dreams?*”

“If they flow, and are lucid, then yes. You are travelling, and it *is* real...well, *yes* and *no*, I suppose. You are rare. I only know of a dozen or so, and only one other so far who doesn’t need instruments to travel. Us naturals just wander, seemingly randomly, but there’s perfection and order in it.”

“That’s all if you *are* actually real,” said Bianca. “No offence; just saying.”

Jack laughed a little, and said, “Welcome to the world of a Traveller.”

He then felt for the child even more, as he felt all the weight of his seemingly endless journeys begin to overwhelm him. He had always accepted them, but now, like a great wave, they sought to crush him.

“Are you okay?”

“Yes, and no,” said Jack, strangely smiling and sobbing all at once. “It is a *wonder* to travel. *So wondrous*, but it’s *hard* too. Like having children or serving a great cause. These are wondrous, *but hard*. Every *truly great* thing is.”

“It *is* hard, but, yep, it is wonderful to have met Vodni, and we’ve become friends. She is from a water world.”

“Really. She’s your age?” asked Jack, letting his pain drift away in the service of this child.

“Yes.”

“Do you travel there?”

“No, we only meet in my dreams.”

“Do you talk in a real conversation?”

“Yes, like normal, and not strange or disjointed like a normal dream.”

Jack just cried, and Bianca commented that for an old man he sure did cry a lot.

He chuckled again while fighting back the tears, and said, “I am just *so happy* for you. It *seems* that you will have a friend, maybe. She may be a Traveller too, or even a Communicator; but no doubt one of these. What is she like?”

“I can tell she’s strong, and we are definitely friends.”

“That’s wonderful, Bianca.”

“Do *you* have a travelling friend?” she asked.

“She comes and goes. I had some regular friends early on in my travels, which helped me, but I have not seen them for a good while now, and I only see her here and there. Not here this time; maybe next time,” he answered, this time looking up and beyond the house as if seeking her, or at least the memories of her.

Bianca could feel the sadness and tiredness in this poor old man words, and she saw it was a deep loneliness too. She decided that she would give him company; *real or not*. Coming with the strong volition to do this, came a realisation of the great beauty and freedom in being more concerned with someone else’s needs over her own. Such things give gifts

beyond imagining, and can even take us from our pain, delivering us to relief, and most often to happiness.

THAT NIGHT BIANCA DREAMED OF A VERY STRONG WOMAN. Bianca walked towards her, but the lady stayed silent, just pointing in a certain direction. Bianca walked on looking to where the strong lady pointed. There was a beautiful garden, and as she walked up to it, she could see that it was just beyond where Jack was building his house. He was not there though, and the garden was certainly not there when she had talked to him.

She walked through the empty, but verdant and colourful garden, and after a while she sat beneath a tree there. She had been drawn to it somehow, and sat up against its trunk, just looking around the garden, when she heard a voice; telling a story it seemed...

“The trunk of the tree was at an angle to the ground. Its leaves and fruit dripped luxuriantly from its strong branches, more so in the direction of the lean of the trunk. A young child walked up to it and tried to reach a ripe piece of fruit. As she did, the tree bent a little in the wind, and she gathered it.

“Thank you,” she said.

“My pleasure,” replied the tree, as two eyes opened near the top of its trunk.

“You can talk?” she said, surprised.

“Of course. I was once like you.”

“Really! What happened?”

“Oh, a longing to show my love.”

“Why would you want to be a tree? And how does that show your love?”

“I did not want to be a tree. I was a gardener. I was to grow a garden here.”

“There is one now.”

“Yes, but many years ago there was not. The ground was rocky, and when I did get a nurturing bed going it seemed that fools would come and destroy it; even friends from here and from other places uprooted plants, as they told me that I was doing things all wrong. They would make the work so hard as to be unbearable. I studied though, and I learnt, and I practiced; even going away to learn more about how to nurture a garden. Some did come and helped the garden develop, but it was only for a time. One by one they came, and one by one they left. It was no one’s fault. It was just life, people’s wanderings, and people learning. Life is like that, but my love would not let me stop finding another way to bring Verdant Life to this place.

I had times of great trials, and my own deep failings, that sought to push me from my Lord. At times, games, or estrangement, my own impatience, or the allure of the world on my heart, held me in their tangled vines. Times of great loneliness also came, but I worked alone. Then again would come more new souls, bringing their fears with them, and at times confusion, but I would not yield my purpose within the storms.”

“But why are you a tree?”

“I had to plant myself in the end, as I could not bear that a garden of some kind would not be built here; that some fruit would not be here for those who would come in the future.”

“That seems silly to me.”

“Such were my times, young soul. They are not as your times are.”

“But why plant yourself? You are human, and so, much more.”

“I planted myself, so I could show the magnificence of my Lord, and show my love to Him.”

“But you can’t walk now, and you can’t leave.”

“No, but I had to, you see. My love would have destroyed me if I had not sacrificed myself and sought to be a tree. Many now enjoy my fruit; fruit that whispers of The Beloved. People sit in my shade and enjoy my sweet fruits. They now tend this Garden, to and others I am told.”

“But now a garden is grown, you can turn back into a man?”

“I had not thought of that. I have watched the garden grow and know well if all its processes...but I have no reason,” it said, as if finally. Then the tree’s eyes questioned something.

“What is it?”

“There is one who sits under my shade and enjoys my fruits often. I treasure her company greatly.”

“Then free yourself. Go find her.”

“I have been a tree for so long. I don’t know if I can...and I do not know if I can water down the fruits that I bear to suit her in any case.”

“Try.”

“They will become less sweet, and I will wither if I cannot show the depth of my love for The Great Gardener.”

“You can free yourself; you can,” expressed the child, with real passion.

“I cannot leave my work.”

“Yes, you can, because the garden is grown!”

“Oh, yes, it is,” said the tree, as if it somehow needed a second prompting to actually see that, seeming to slump as tears flowed from the deep sadness of what it had endured.

The child was not finished with her encouragement, and added, “I am told that the leaves and twigs and some of the fruit from your branches, fell to the ground and built the soil here. Your fruits drew people here too. But it is not your garden. It is His, and those who now tend it.”

“Is the Will of The Gardener done here, among the people?”

“Yes. It is mostly. And we continue to learn.”

The tree began to weep more deeply now, and as it did a man began to break free. The deep sobs pushed him out inch by inch out from the fork of the tree. Then, with his arms free he drew himself up and completely out. He sat there in the fork a while, in clothes from a different time, and looked around, as if seeing the garden for the first time.

He then climbed down, breathed deeply, and continued looking around. And it seemed to the young girl that he had been so busy seeking wisdom deep in the Heart of Revelation, and producing his fruits of remembrance, that he had been blind to what had been grown

here. Or had he simply been resigned to The Creator's will for him; even though he knew the garden and its story intimately?

The tree remained, and came back together, continuing to give forth its fruits. The man and the young soul then walked gently around the garden that day to see its wonder; exploring what else had grown from the soil of brought forth by toil, and through the inspiration of Revelation.

Water

She stood in a lounge room with strange, rounded seats. It was the lounge pod of Vodni's family home. Her people lived on the ocean, but were settled in a large, sheltered bay; the only one of the small island that formed it. Vodni's family lived in a series of pods that were linked together with rope bridges. The pods were anchored to heavy sandstone boulders, and had heavy, spiral rope springs, that allowed them to rise and drop with the tide but steadied them in any swell. They were to ease the movement of the pods, and also buffer against the drift hit of a suddenly taught rope.

There were other pod-chain houses here too. The pods were the shape of smooth river stones and dotted around the deep green water of the bay. They were all green up to the window bottoms, and white on top. They were dispersed around the bay and from high above they looked like a starry night, in a deep green sky. The waters here were rich with kelp,

other seaweeds, and sea animals, and the islands of this world were, in large part, farms for the growing of certain foods. The soils had been built up over centuries since the meteor had washed away most of the dry soils of this island world. The great rock had crashed into the sea and sent waves in all directions. It had also smashed into a great junction of three major planetary plates; these shifting, and creating more displacement, waves, and underwater tremors. These shocks and waves took many lives above and below the surface, destroying what had been built over more than two thirds of the planet. This world had banded together in this violent upheaval; finding its maturity and unity within this cataclysm, and in more widely heeding the guidance of The Spirit of The Age; a Great One who had come to prepare them for planetary unity some time before.

Bianca could feel the tide below her feet as she watched the still hidden sun begin to light the sky. She loved this time of day, and she also felt a little like Goldilocks as she sat down on a chair that suited her well. Her sense of herself and her ease at being on another world buoyed her. She was adapting quickly to her new reality, as the young tend to. The young lady shook her head in disbelief, and a little awe, as she sat at ease in this strange home, waiting for its inhabitants to rise. She would *never* have been in someone else's house without permission, and *still wouldn't* if she had not been taken on the new path she now walked.

She then got a glimpse, a small sight inside her, of a creature so weak of body and limb that it struggled to keep its head up. Its head was huge, and she wondered how the small frame managed to hold it up. It *would* lose balance at times, and its head would fall straight to the floor, top first; its body then like a rubber band would follow it, the creature ending up doubled up with its feet still firmly on the ground, and its small eyes looking back at its own feet. It then seemed to remember its feet, and it used its very weak arms to lift its head, with a

great trembling effort, back into its position. It took a lot of mental balance to then keep it there, and once a new thought came in, the creature would struggle to hold its weight while keeping this precarious balance. It was a strange creature, and while it made her giggle, Bianca realised a great deal from this joyous glimpse.

“Who are you?”

Bianca rose and turned towards the voice, as it said, *“What are you?”*

“I’m Vodni’s friend,” answered Bianca, only now just realising that she intuitively knew that this was her new friend’s home. It could have been anybody’s.

She lost any doubt as Vodni now thankfully came across the rope bridge from her sleeping pod and stood beside her mother. The two sahona’s stood there with wide eyes. Their eyes were quite large anyway, and Bianca started to laugh. Vodni followed suit and went over to her; with her mother not sure, but letting her. She hugged Bianca, and the young lady from planet Earth teared up a little. It *was* real. She *was* a Traveller, and all the wonders of that gift were only just beginning to unfold.

SHE HAD PASSED THIS WAY. It could sense it. This creature lived in the dreams of endless self-aware beings. It had no place to live, other than in parts of the dreams and some of the emotions of souls as they walked the material worlds of the outer realities. This animal creature gave the dreamer all they wanted, and then devoured its soul from this inside place. There were many outer world predators, both animal and humanoid, but this creature of the dreams of emotion was a predator of the soul.

The attention it gained in the minds of those who dreamt, kept them busy, while it slowly drained their souls of the light within them in these Other Places. In the end that soul's outer life would be disordered by the lack of spirit that remained there; so intent on dreams of what might be, in their outward lives, they would be open to other predators in the outer realities too. These souls would prefer what they imagined, rather than what was true and good, and so the outer predators would descend upon them, one after the other.

They would crave *the dream* and risk more of their *light* to gain it, and again they would be attacked, drained, and know pain and disorder within. Dreams and hopes are wonderful things, but they can be dangerous, and predators are predators, even if they are people; even those that are simply just a little unaware of themselves. There *is* love, nobility, and loving creative futures in potential within our beings, as *there are* these also in those we may love and find love with, but one needs be careful of one's dreams, and too, beware the wolf.

The lesser dreams and greater wolves rise from one place, and a soul must needs be discerning and awake to see where their dreams arise; from the aspects of our lower self, or from inspiration of the soul; from whispering inside us, or the whisperings of the world and things pertaining to it. Indeed, they rise from what we give our attention to, and they naturally produce volition to act upon them; things both high and low; things of the spirit, or things of matter. It is not blameworthy to eat, as that, like many other things, is the beneficial prompting of our physical reality, but the more the soul is aware of itself and focused higher, the best all promptings, and therefore the attending volition, can produce what is healthy and good.

THEY WATCHED THE SUN RISE ON A NEW DAY TOGETHER. It was so special that their bond of friendship had brought Bianca here. Vodni's mother had gone gathering for the mid-morning meal. This was their first meal of two; the other in the early evening. Usually, they just swam out and ate together, by collecting below and floating on their backs to eat. Their eating style was very natural and was simply gathered and eaten. There was usually no preparation of any of the ocean food; well, except on special occasions and their special Days of Deep Remembrance, when people ate together in larger groups. They would even wash themselves in the sea after eating, and as they fed twice a day, they had no need for baths or showers.

As natural as this all was, they were very agriculturally savvy beings. The sea *had* seen them through the great time of change, but there were necessary foods that could only be grown in land soils, even though partaken of less often. Because of the small surface area of land on the planet, and especially after the great waves had taken so much of it away or made it too salty to grow land plants for some time, they had gone through an agricultural revolution. Science too had grown strong off this and other necessities of those times. The drive for more scientific knowledge eventually took on its own life among these more organically living creatures. So, many sciences and new engineering grew from these needs, and from the rising curiosity of these peoples.

The girls were sitting on top of the lounge pod and watched the sun rise higher into the sky. It was a smaller sun, or it was further away, and it seemed whiter, so it was another awe filled experience for Bianca. Such small differences were still quite surreal. Vodni just loved showing her new friend her world and Bianca was now very much easing into *travelling*. She had adapted to her new reality quickly, not only because she was strong, but because she had also been granted the wisdom of Jack's experience, her father's love, a

particular part of her mother's nature, and Mother Time's wider view. All is organic in life; all has its place, and all is valuable. Even separations between gender, age, and race do not really exist. They certainly work together to create a whole. All has its beauty and makeup to bring to the whole.

The two girls had bonded quickly. What was it about the bond between girls that was so strong? This bond between young female friends seemingly far more intimate too, as they gathered together from life and shared their experiences deeply. Boys it seemed, while definitely having special friends, and best friends, seemed to ford out alone more so. *Maybe* it was not this way; but just seeming so. Maybe it is different in different cultures, and would change in the future, but there are certainly differences in the two genders; ones we should embrace, not seek to homogenise; each individual, no doubt different too.

Vodni's mother now returned with her net full of sea plants and a large lobster looking creature. She also had land fruits, which she had traded some fish for with the farmer on the island. She had also picked some small yellow orange fruits that grew wild on the foreshore. She looked up at the girls as she climbed out of the water onto one of the small rope bridges. She smiled, and the girls smiled back, feeling very special and very happy.

They ate together later in the morning, and fortunately, Bianca didn't like fish. As this meat would have poisoned her system, especially as *sahonas* ate everything raw. Vodni's mother had gathered the land fruits because she naturally assumed that '*land food for a land creature*' was a wise idea. Vodni's father and two brothers were underwater *constructioners*; this word, while odd, seemed to best describe their work to Bianca. There was a strange translation happening, where most words were clear, and others had to be more *felt*, as some of the sounds and words they each heard did not translate properly.

Vodni's mother was a biologist who dabbled in theoretical physics. Their physics was the thinking and maths that had sprung from the endless experiments and scientific enquiry that had surged out of the great wave of change. She had a pod where she studied physics and did her paid work as a biologist. Her paid work was mostly in the local waters, and on the land farms on islands nearby.

"So, Bianca. Where are you from?" asked Vodni's mother, now that she and her young visitor were more settled after the meal.

Such a simple thing, a meal. Something shared that opens trust and the heart. An offering of sustenance and sharing. A gift. An invitation. It runs deeper than we might imagine.

"I am from Earth."

"Earth," she said, out loud as if trying to feel it more. "It is a land planet?"

"It's more a water planet. Our oceans are just over twice the size of all our land mass, and about a third of our land is more desert."

"Desert?"

"Little or no water; little or no plants, some rocky, some seas of sand dunes, but sometimes they bloom with the rain, and the green appears in an instant."

"Oh, how lovely."

"Are your oceans green?"

"Green and blue of all shades; blue from space. There are sandy beaches and islands, and rocky shores."

“Your deserts, tell me more about them?”

Bianca did all she could to answer this request, and they discussed the life there and how it survived. It seemed that Vodni’s mother was far more interested in how the life survived with so little water, and how some of the desert was even farmed.

The conversation then moved around to people, and the nature, and differences, of their societies. Bianca told of the wondrous differences in cultures on her world, but also about the distrust, power games, and suspicion which still wracked her home planet. It was very telling and a bit embarrassing for Bianca, as most of what she shared shocked the two novost, or sometimes made them turn their heads away. They were not being rude, they just did not want to see it, or show their guest the distaste that would shine through their wide-open eyes. Their society had moved on past difference, control, greed, ego, and most especially fear and suspicion of difference, some time ago. They had worked together gently now for hundreds of years, with a built-in social justice, or a spiritual economics, where endeavour was rewarded, everyone put onto society, and where giving was most highly prized.

“I feel bad telling you these things,” said Bianca.

“Don’t worry child. Tell us, where is your planet?”

“I don’t know from here. I don’t even know where *here* is.”

“So, you didn’t come through a wormhole?”

“No. I just found myself here.”

“*Extraordinary*. Maybe your soul projects itself by intent to this place and forms a body where it travels to. Atoms are the same throughout the universe,” posited the lady.

“*Wow*, yes. That makes sense,” agreed Vodni.

“I don’t know. It just happens,” responded Bianca, with a shrug.

“Yes, Bianca, it does just happen, but your soul has to be producing it. Vodni told me that you met in dreams, and that is very much the realm of the soul. Well within the soul at least, maybe not beyond it. The soul exists in a deeper reality that underpins this one. It has its own laws, as we are finding, and between this soul realm and the outer material reality, another set of laws exist. It is a transitional reality really, but too, has its own laws; sharing aspects of both realities, as one would expect. It is what we call the *parimana* reality. We found it long ago, and now use it for communication mainly.”

“Wow, so you are *really* advanced, as well as kind, in your society,” commented Bianca, feeling this scientific understanding of her journeys very heartening and very interesting. She even thought that she would now definitely study physics in high school.

“I am sure your kind will evolve to higher nobility too; by choice, or by necessity as we did,” commented young Vodni, kindly.

“It was a *mix* of these for our peoples really,” qualified her mother. “And we had Guidance. We *were* ready; but it will most likely take striving and some sacrifice, no matter the currents.”

IT WAS A VERY HOT DAY, but Bianca was keen for a walk and a talk with Jack...well if he was there today. Her visit to Wai Nova had been very special, but she had only been allowed her night’s sleep there. She had no way of reaching it in her waking consciousness and was very keen to talk to another Traveller about it all.

“*Hello, the road!*” called Jack, sweating like pig.

“Hello, *the house,*” called Bianca back, with a big smile.

“Pass me some water could you, darling?” he asked, pointing to a large cooler bottle and some cups beside it on an old tree stump, as he finished trowelling level the top of the cement around the last of the steel foundation posts.

“I can see the pattern now,” she commented, as she got the water for Jack, but was also a little beside herself to share her trip to Wai Nova.

“*Tell me,*” requested Jack, seeing the impatience bubbling out of her.

“*It was amazing!*” she exploded. “I was on another planet! *Really!* It was a water world and I met Vodni’s mother. She’s a scientist, and they eat by hunting fish and picking seaweed. They eat them *raw!* *Eeeeww!*”

The old man laughed as she went on telling him more about her time there. It was good to have company, and as the heat had been quite unbearable these last few days, it took his attention away from it. It is a wondrous fact that company is more than beneficial to us; like nutrient to a plant, it is required. No amount of things, or thoughts, or even peaceful solitude can suffice us. All these reach their end, as they must, or as some connection is sent to us or gathered up to keep us alive and relatively sane. The gift of friendship, marriage, and family runs deeper and wider than we care to imagine in these days of self-absorption.

“So, what do you think?” asked Jack, after listening to Bianca’s stories, and then her reflection on the nature of travelling.

“Well, I couldn’t tell you where it is, but the time thing, and the soul concept Vodni’s mother talked of well...”

“*Will*,” came a strong and powerful voice from behind Bianca.

“No, I said, well...”

“*I am Volje*,” boomed the creature, as if to say, *silence*.

Jack had met this essence of life before, and he said, casually, “Listen Big V, just relax and let her reflect. The young one is new to all things deeper. You’re just coming on a bit too strong.”

But such is the seriousness of such an essence that it would not be held back. “*I am Volition. I am Will. I am choice. I am the bringer of all action. I am the bridge between knowledge and the realities; between knowledge and its action in the worlds. I bring the power of knowledge to bear in the worlds.*”

Bianca was in awe, also now recalling that this was the strong lady from her recent dream, where she had heard the story of the man who had planted himself, but Jack just shook his head. He knew the great power of this creature, but he was more than over it. He was tired, and just wanted to build his new home and be there for Bianca. He saw these as his purpose in his current cycle of learning. He had had many journeys, many cycles within these, and endless challenges and learning within them. He had seen worlds and met creatures beyond imagination, and even beyond words, but now he was tired to the bone, so he decided to just let Volje do her thing.

“So, you are...our *choices*?” asked Bianca.

The creature relaxed, almost as if, only just now, noticing Bianca. “Hello, child. I am *will*. I am more than choice. I am the requisite and natural force that rises out our lower nature or out of our soul’s interaction with the Creative Word. Guidance and Knowledge

brought forth by The Physicians imparts a force. I am that force that grows from it; at least, in my purest form. The Physicians are the embodiments of the names of God, and their words and instructions in each age are the Unerring Balance. Through them all is remade in the deeper structures of this place and within flows of understanding; a New Order is set, and new sciences have been allowed to flow out of the treasuries of God.”

“I don’t understand.”

“I am Will, and I am will. I am the requisite force of The Creator, The Physicians, and I am also within you. I am the will to act. I power all actions, creative, noble, and even of the lesser creature. I am *not* a choice, as you have said; I am simply the force that results from what *you* bend your knee before, or what *you* see as important.”

“So, you are good and bad?”

“I simply am. The Physicians call peoples back to maturity through the Creative Word. If you seek *higher* volition, you will find me higher *there*. You see, Knowledge, True Understanding, is first. *It* drives renewed *higher will* in each age.”

“So, like my Faith.”

“Yes,” answered Volition, suddenly and strangely calm. So calm in fact, that it got Jack’s attention. She then smiled, which had Jack even more stunned, but this essence of life had seen *something else* in the girl now before her. She then continued, saying in a very nurturing tone, “If I may gift you some pure essence...*Flee* this place *and* attachment the things of this world, as they will stunt your higher will, your evolution, and the evolution of your kind.”

“I have heard that,” said Bianca.

“What use is it to you, just *hearing it?*” stated Volje, changing again.

Bianca replied, “Yes, I *know* that if we are detached, we are freer.”

“That is merely *knowledge. Words unheeded...unlived, are lost. Alive* in your actions they change worlds; *not otherwise.* You must *walk* the Earth, but you need walk it within the awareness of spirit and so bring the deeper beauty here.”

“By will.”

“By volition; volition that naturally comes forth out of our interaction with the guidance of The Physician. Knowledge empowers volition, and drives action; *knowledge, volition, action.*”

Bianca had known the Creative Word of her Faith and had learned of these things. She had learned to bring her actions more in line with beauty, but today she was beginning to see what she had *kind of* missed a little before. Her responsibility was greater than she had realised. It was not just about her keeping out of trouble or feeling good about her good actions, as it was as a child; it was now about what she produced in the world. She now understood her wider responsibility in the choosing wisely the source point of here will, for it drives what we do. What we do, or fail to do, increases us or lessens us, and so too, those around us, not least our own children.

“The spiritual *over* the material, even though all can be enjoyed within the sublime boundaries of moderation; moderation informed by the Unerring Balance,” finished Volje, and was gone.

“Wow!” said Bianca smiling. “You *sure* know when *she’s* around. She sure came and went quickly though.”

“Will, certainly *can* come and go. All these forces of life are *really something*. You should meet Change, he is a *very* crazy dude,” offered Jack. “Actually, he’s in love *with Time*.”

Bianca smiled, then asked, “Is space and time real?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Because, of you mentioning time,” she replied, Bianca not realising that Jack meant the essence Time, “and from what I’ve experienced, space and time sure don’t seem as real. I was on another planet, in an instant.”

“Space is a part of the nature of material realm; the outer realities. It is one law of physical reality; just as *time* is created by it. Time is evident, yet also mysterious, as the past is only held in our memories, and in the *physical* reality, *ever gone*; the future too is not yet existent but constantly arriving. Only meaning remains as the future’s mystery unfolds. It is all about the perspective of it...from the two vantage points; the physical part of us, and the soul part of us.”

“I kind of get it.”

“This material place is here for us to learn in, as we go in a linear path from past to future, but in deeper realities, in the soul’s eyes, place and time are more about the meaning which links them.”

“Then how did I travel?”

“The soul is *beyond* time and space, and exists in a realm with other laws, ones less constricting; a far more encompassing, and essential, reality. It is said that the soul is still, but also that it soars. Your *soul* travels. It soars, but it is still. Its reality is far superior and does

not only take flight in the realms of meaning; it also affects the world by material action, through our physical expression, and also by thoughts and prayers it brings things to be.”

“But we *are* still *here*. Well, when I’m awake. The *reality* of things makes us do things, like having to protect ourselves. We still have to live in material consequences,” put in Bianca, as a reality check for Jack.

“Sure. We are made of two parts, and need give each it’s due and place. But you don’t have to be a Traveller to shift your *awareness*, from a creature with DNA set strongly to keep its body safe...to a soul who will give their lives with great joy. And like Volje said, if you ‘flee from this world’ the world becomes of far lesser consequence, if any at all.”

“But people get sick. People get killed. You can’t be free of suffering. It says that in the Creative Word. These hard things even help move us forward, and compel us to action, so why do we want to be in another place, or be that detached?”

“Certainly, but the soul affects everything. Its health creates health, and its illness creates illness; these even manifest in the physical body. Our soul’s energies manifest in the physical world through our bodies, our words, and our actions. There is no doubt that there are physical realities at play, and that physical life is a perfect school for the soul, but the spiritual is first; foundational for humans, and intent needs to rise from there.”

“So, it’s all at play here; spiritual and physical?”

“Yep, but it’s like this...We’re best to remedy the killing, poverty, and to see suffering’s true nature, through centring in ourselves the spirit. We need to address these things both physically and spiritually. We suffer needlessly because we forget the spirit in what we actually do, as individuals, and as a kind.”

“So, tell me more about *Travelling*. I understand a little from what you said, but I would like to know more.”

“Well, each of us travels differently, but for all of us, *being here, now*, seems so crucial; no matter where the soul takes flight to. Travelling’s still a bit of a mystery even to me, but it’s really about the soul being still, while soaring, and it’s more about cycles of meaning and learning. It has its own laws and framework that you get used to, and it’s definitely affected by bonds of love, and even *about* love itself. Places of pure selfless love were the highest state that I’ve travelled to; places immersed in His Love were overwhelming.”

Bianca got a somewhat better feel of things as Jack shared more. She then asked, “But why do *we* travel? I mean normal people don’t.”

“We all travel in a way, and we *all* really only have now. This mighty physical-spiritual construct, you know, life here, produces a framework for learning too. This life is a place of action, a place from which to reflect on past action, and a place to seek vision of future action. A place to seek knowledge and have experiences. The soul sees beyond the physical construct; seeing its past learning, so it may create a better future. It sees its cycles and meaning, as it sits within its womb *deeper* within the nature of things.”

“Wow. That’s true. So even though I travel the rules are the same.”

“Yes. The reason is the same, and the purpose the same. It is about learning and meaning. While our mind looks at things and how implement things within time and space, the soul has eyes and ears that are deeper. It is connected to, but not within, the physical creature that it learns and acts through, here, in this place. It is to struggle, and grow, as it seeks to elevate itself over the animal, the physical; to raise the energetic beauty of this

physical place, therefore allowing greater elevation of those who are here now and for those who follow us over time. The human creature, all humans, of past, present, and future are in service and co-creators of their own development. We are on a collective journey. We must ever evolve.”

“The intellect is powerful though,” posited Bianca, a little surprised at the growing power of her own intellect as she interacted with Jack.

“The intellect is a great power of the soul, no doubt. We would be idiots not to use and develop it. Its power depends on where we focus it, in this process, in any situation. It is best focused toward spiritual answers, in physical and scientific exploration, but somehow the intellect is only a part of the soul and its awareness. It’s hard to demarcate it in language.”

“I sort of feel it. But it’s a bit mysterious. I like to understand things and ask questions, and I know my mind can gather things. This traveling is sure challenging my intellectual sense of things.”

“To challenge what you know is an intelligent act, and even more so...is to be able to *seek truth, itself*. Truth to humans is more essential than intellectual knowledge. It’s more about meaning at its core, and to me, it’s a duty to seek the truth no matter where it resides, spiritual, physical, scientific, or situational. Seeking truth is prescribed by the fact that we *can think and see*. It’s an *obligation*, and one that intellect seems to be able to circumvent as well as fulfill, so maybe, the search for truth is a higher human calling of the intellect that depends on the purity of our heart. It may be an uncomfortable process, but worth it, and needs be ongoing as we can always learn and see more.”

Bianca did not really see Jack until today. She had seen the traveller, but to her, the sad old man on this disused road was no longer just a sad old man.

WALTER RAN FOR HIS LIFE. He had picked his moment and shot off the stage so fast that his body was having trouble catching up with his feet.

Bianca had woken in a real laughing fit from her dream. She had been talking in the phone box again with Vodni when Walter had happened by. He had tried hard to open the doors, but it was not long before he had given up and gone into one of his little meltdowns.

When he had finally come out of his tantrum, he suddenly realised that he had a captive audience, so he raced off to gather his roadies. They got back soon enough to set up the stage in the square, and for him to do the 'One, two...one TWO...One toooo,' sound check. Walter was very professional, of course. The girls had to be able to hear his magnificent voice, and his face was very professionally oriented when he did his sound check. It was his very professional face.

He had been just about to start when Volje had turned up. He thought she was another fan, so he immediately gave her those lightning eyes of his. But she just rose to full height and boomed, "I am your intentions, your will; your will to bring what is good here. I am the requisite force for action..."

He had literally been blown off his feet by her power, and Volje being Volje, she had gone on for some time, with Walter cowering on the stage. He had no chance to able to...sneak away, or anything!

"...I am Will. I need be well informed. I need be measured to each time and place; to each soul, and situation. I am the motive force, and I must be informed by true love, and high knowledge. I need be informed by spirit before mind, love before knowledge."

“She is a serious dude! Very serious!” Walter had expressed at one point, into the microphone so the girls could hear, while still cowering under the power of this creature’s attention.

The girls laughed at the entertainment, while gathering any wisdom they could between their laughter. They could not help Walter today; the great Altar Ego just had to sit there and cop a good talking to, by the mighty Volition, herself. Well...until he made his own mighty run for safety that was.

GARRAN SAT IN THE WAITING ROOM. Bianca’s mother was going to bring her today, but another family problem came up that she needed to attend to. He had happily volunteered to bring her today, as he was sure it would be good news. Bianca had been quite happy over the last two weeks and had said nothing about dreams or the man building the house.

The young lady had not shared anything with her father since her first consultation with Cas, as Jack had advised her that she would just burden her parents with all this. He had also told her to be very careful what she said to the psychologist as she was only young, and that anything could happen. The idea of being forced to take mind numbing drugs, or even being sent away somewhere, had been good motivation for Bianca not to share anything.

She did not like it at all that she had to withhold things from her parents, but the new adult now just beginning its formation within her saw that things need to be seen through a wider lens. Through the lens of honesty alone she should have been open about her experiences, but it was still not wise. She had now learned clearly to see things through a wider light, a prescriptive light; one that took in the good of others, guidance, and the lens of *many* virtues; not just one. The particular wisdom required in each situation, was somewhat

unique to it, and the lens of one virtue never enough, even though honesty was a mighty friend.

Garran was sitting there; very thankful that Cas's husband was not here today. He just didn't get how she could be with him. He was obviously loopy, and she was so stable and caring. He then thought of his little girl and thought that it would *never matter* how *she* was, he would love her and sacrifice for her until his last breath. He thought maybe that's how it was for Cas with her husband, but he just couldn't see him as a wise choice. "*Maybe his madness came on after they were married,*" he thought.

His mind then drifted back to his daughter as he looked at the closed door of the consultation room. He had felt so helpless in this situation and thought about what more he could do to help her. A thought of Cas's training, and her experience with her husband, helping his daughter, then brought a *seed* to his mind. It was now that Garran Gardiner first thought that he might like to study psychology, just as Change walked in the door, with a huge smile on his face. He was in his 1960's hippie gear, and big groovy sunglasses, and he said to Garran, with a *knowing* face, "Yeah. *Cool. Psychedelic man!*"

Garran just nodded to Cas's husband, and looked down, trying not to laugh.

"So, my dear, you are seemingly all well," stated Cas, after listening to Bianca tell her how good things were now.

"Yes," said Bianca coyly, but driven with the surety that she would not burden her parents.

"It is an honourable thing you are doing young lady."

"I don't understand?"

“Protecting those you love, having the courage to face things alone. Sometimes it is very wise as you begin to become more your own person. Sometimes though, it is a *big* mistake.”

“I...”

“I won’t make you lie to me again, Bianca. You see, I am Time. Even though Travellers like you hide from me, and disregard me, I am not a fool, and I should not be treated lightly. I am the gift of every day, where memories are made, where joy is found, where learning is done, and I ever flow in service to you.”

“Oh, that’s so lovely,” said Bianca, feeling extremely relieved and quite taken, that her psychologist was Time. “I am sorry I lied to you.”

“I think it is best that you did in this case. It was an adult choice.”

Cas went over and sat beside her, and held her, as emotions overwhelmed the young lady, and said, “You have been very brave.”

Bianca then realised that she had. She had been very strong in a very crazy situation, but thankfully one that was becoming more normal every day now. She was very thankful for her Dad, and to Cas, as then she thought of Jack.

“Well, actually, it was Jack who helped me most.”

“Jack?” asked Cas, almost knowing what was coming next.

“The man building the house; I have seen him again.”

“He is *Jack Johnston*,” stated Cas, shaking her head.

“Yes. Is he okay?” asked the girl, worried about Cas’s strong reaction. “He says he’s a Traveller. He helped me understand so much, and steady myself.”

“Jack is okay...and *not* okay. My husband thinks he’s *really something*, but the man can be problematic.”

“Your husband knows him too.”

“Yes. You see, my husband is *Change*. He is always with Jack, and Travellers are such a joy to him. He calls them the new adventurers.”

“So, your husband *isn’t* crazy, and he *did* know that we had talked about him.”

“He is there in every change, in every creature, on every plane; and as things change *so often* with humans...well, *he was there.*”

Bianca sat back then. Realising, that while she was in wonder at these revelations, she was at overload and all she wanted to do right now was just sit there. It was fortunate that Cas had all the time in the world and far beyond it. As did Bianca’s father; as do all, who really love us. Time or trouble is not an issue where love *truly* resides. Love is the *water of life*.

Choices

“You just don’t know how to take a step back,” said Walter, with all the bravado he could muster.

He was scared of Volje. He felt threatened every time she opened her mouth. She had pursued him, as he needed a proper talking to. He had run but he could not shake her, and after a time had come full circle back to the old town square where the phone boxes were.

“Well, you are all front. There is no will in you.”

“I beg your pardon? You’ve got no right to say that to me!”

“Do you want to live with no real purpose, and to constantly put on these shows for some emotional payoff that can’t last?” she asked.

“I love entertaining. It’s who I am.”

Volje regarded him, and wondered at the shallow pool he seemed to swim in. It even seemed to be filled with fizzy drink, rather than water.

“Isn’t this constant seeking of adulation and attention a lot of hard work?”

“It’s my work,” said Walter, not even for a moment catching any smidgeon of the drift of that question, or even a nuance of what Volje was attempting to share.

She turned to the phone box and gave the two girls a look.

The girls were now here again, and the phone boxes had changed to a bright green. Time was different for Bianca, for Vodni it had been some days, and for Walter, one terrifying hour.

“Altar, Altar, Altar! It’s Altar, not Walter! I have been listening, you know. How many times do I have to tell you. I’ll dump you if you can’t get it right, Writer man?!”

The two young ladies had come back here often over the last month.

“Don’t you ignore me!”

It had turned out that Vodni was a Communicator.

“Oh...we’re playing it like that are we!”

She had told Bianca of the many times she came here to talk to other beings from many other worlds. She said that she had found herself in all kinds of historical communication modules, always in pairs, on these worlds. Well, within the dreams of these creatures really.

Volje too, was now there every time Bianca and Vodni found themselves in the old phone boxes. It was all much to the distaste of the elastic, the fantastic...Alter Ego.

“That’s better, bro!”

He was losing his rep’, and he was not happy.

“Damn!”

They seemed to want to listen to Will more than him even though he was waaay more entertaining.

“Got that right!”

When they had given him some attention, he would throw out all the magic he could. But the girls would lose attention after shorter and shorter periods. He just had to get rid of that nuisance woman, or maybe, he could even make her part of his show. You see, Walter was very sneaky.

“Steady on the judgement there, big guy!”

He was a great actor and could almost become anything or anyone he wanted to.

“Thanks, dude.”

Actually, on one of these visits here, Walter...

“I give up.”

...had hobbled up, all broken, and gained the girls’ attention for some time; until he couldn’t help himself of course, and bowed profusely, while seeking adulation for his wonderful acting ability. He can appear in all forms and nuances, and only the great glass of humility can see him clearly, or indeed honesty dissipate the fog he may hide in, or wherever he may pop up.

He had seen another guy hanging around lately too, and even though Walter did not like competition, this other guy seemed to be very shy of Volje too. Maybe they could come to an arrangement to keep that overbearing woman out of the picture. The look of self-

congratulation on Walter's face at this idea was not fun like his other faces; it was quite ugly in fact.

"Some choices are hard to carry through," now shared Vodni, with Bianca. "The idea of going through more study after school is daunting. But 'be scared and do it anyway', was something my father told me. He said everybody gets scared with new and hard things when challenges first turn up,"

Their conversation had now taken them away from Volition's attention on Walter.

"Thankfully," said Walter.

"I'll get back to you," stated Volition. Then saying, "Bianca, you just have to work it out and have the will to have a go at it. Process will be there, right with you; and I will help you see it through."

"But what if it was a wrong choice?" asked Bianca, trying to find answers for her own future in the conversation.

"Give it time to make sure. Trust your gut, reflect, and if you have to, reset again, and go in the new direction you then see. I am not a force behind just one choice. Sometimes I am a chain of choices. Life is exploring, not knowing everything ahead of time. Better to act and see, and even fall, rather than hide away thinking and thinking and thinking."

"I get that," agreed Vodni. "We tend to go to our elders, to the Writings of The Spirit of The Age, and reflect on the situation. There is no great rush, and people in our community are very supportive."

Bianca looked down, thinking that her parents were very supportive, but the culture was not so much yet. Hard decisions would have to be made on things like work or study, and it made her feel a bit sick.

Just then Volje rose to full height, and somehow Bianca found the will to fight past her fear. She decided that she would just do all she needed to do, seek guidance, and actively explore the possibilities, just like any other person. It was a relief, as in deciding to act there was less to fear. Fear resides in the indecision before acting, while also in impatience. But she had seen where her pain resided. It was always good to get a run up, and consider things, before jumping, but dithering just before the door, feeling powerless and alone, was far worse. It was now very clear to her, that this place just before acting, would only wear a person down and erode their will to act.

Volje added these words as Bianca faded from that place...

Life is vast. Change; continual. Do not seek a preview of your fate; live your life.

There is your nature, soul powers, and all that is learned and experienced,

but also, there is what you may write with these or upon your soul.

Life unfolds, make your choices, take your lessons. There is truly nothing to fear.

Build your life within His Guidance; allow it to empower you,

as it will empower the highest will within you.

Allow for the mystery of life, and the designs of His Will for you and others,

but remember that your soul's fate lies in your own hands.

To end...Love, people, and service, are life.

IT WAS GREAT TO BE BACK ON VODNI'S WORLD. Bianca had really wanted to go back, and had now, finally returned. Not that it seemed that she had a choice in her travelling, but she *had* found herself, for a time at least, a little fearful of travelling. She *was* comfortable the last time but had recently been concerned about her ability to get there and back again for some reason. It was all new, and while it was magical, it was still a bit scary. Her recent experience with Will had thankfully made her more confident, and now keener to go through any doorway she may need to or seek to.

The breeze off the water was wonderful, as was the sea air. The boat they travelled on was propelled by two long torpedo-like cylinders that sat on both sides of the boat. Inside them were chambers with fans in them, each fan pushing the air into the next smaller chamber; each one boosting the air faster until it shot out the back, like a jet. Under the boat and along the side of the hull there were propeller blades, almost flush, but not quite, with the smooth surface. They did not propel the boat though; they sent power to the battery of the electrical engine that ran the boat's motor fans and electronics. It gave these boats a great reach, but they still needed to be recharged from time to time with the solar and kinetic ocean collectors around the planet.

They had had a good run, as the weather, and the sea, had been kind to them. Vodni's mother had wanted to see her husband and the boys, as they worked away quite a lot, and this sudden visit by Bianca had provided a good chance to see them while showing their young visitor more of their world. She had decided to take Bianca to Otoka; to show her this great ocean city of her world. The girls were sitting in the front of the boat, and as the city's high white spires appeared over the horizon Bianca turned to her friend with excited eyes.

“The main structures all reach up from the bedrock under the ocean floor and can withstand the highest seas. My boys all work there, except one,” explained Vodni’s mother, Logija, as she now joined them up front.

“She calls Dada and my brothers, *her boys*,” added Vodni.

“Do they work *under*, or *above*, the water?” asked Bianca, but still looking at times to the ocean city slowly growing in size.

“Under, mainly. On the foundations mostly. There is a lot of maintenance required, but they also build underwater homes and work on the huge ocean current collectors,” answered Vodni.

“Power sources?”

“Yes, we gather from the ocean currents and movement, from the sun, and from thermal vents under the water.”

“*Cool*. So, they build underwater homes too?”

“Yes; many. Especially for the gilled peoples. We are more surface creatures, but many gilled families live on this part of the planet now.”

“Many gilled people made the choice to live here after we united as a planet,” explained Logija. “One of their great cities was destroyed by the comet’s strike, and others with the deep tremors, so like the waves they were scattered far and wide by its impact on their home. We have learned a great deal from each other, and I feel almost ridiculous saying *them* now. The time of *us and them* passed a long time ago. The waves from the meteor washed many things away and cast up many treasures that were beyond our notice.”

The city grew more as they glided towards it, and it was a glorious sight to behold when they eventually entered the Southern Sea Gate. The city towered over them like the great skyscrapers of the central district of most modern cities. Its outer wall rose high and curved out strongly at the top; the waves now just licking low on it. But Bianca could imagine the size of wave it would take to breach it, and how the kinetic energy of the waves of strong heavy weather would be easily dissipated by the shape of these ramparts. Its walls were thick, strong, and yet yielded enough to the weather by its shape, so that the ocean's force had less effect on it.

“WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS, *BIG FELLA*,” said Walter, in his best *'bloke, man's man'* style.

He could feel this man's heavy power now; now that he was up close. He spoke a little nervously underneath, and almost thought of changing his mind about palling up to this guy, but fear of the hidden creature within, now got the best of him. He wanted this fellow on his side in any case, and now certainly did not want to make an enemy of him. He was also worried that this handsome man might take attention away from him too, but he had to take the chance, as that annoying woman had to go, or the girls would never fall for his obvious charms.

Walter just kept nervously talking while the creature just stared at him with little or no response.

“...to get close to the girls and have Volje out of the way,” he finished. But fearful and prideful people were less likely to ever be finished. “People like me don't aspire to greatness; they just have it thrust upon them,” he continued, with some great facial wisdom, and even a

visionary look that showed he was a visionary. “The kind of wisdom I am talking about does not come around very often. The idea is not to be weak, *but to be strong*,” he said with even more wisdom and swagger. But all this was obviously something too deep for his new comrade to gather, so he went on.

The creature just wanted to tear his throat out. Not that it was concerned with Walter’s words, as all words were just noises to it, or things used to draw in its prey.

“My understanding of these things goes back a *long* way,” explained Walter. “I have *struggled*, more than most, and my fame is something I owed myself; because *I’m worth it*.” Now appearing behind him were some of his roadies and various hangers-on nodding away, making his words all the more powerful, *in his own mind*.

“It’s all about the *interlocution* of it all,” explained Walter, now looking very intellectual as well. “The *paramostogy* of the situaionalism simply *requires* it,” he added, now *with all his word guns blazing* as he began to reach a *true* tough ‘*man’s man*’ crescendo. He turned into a General, sitting back on his chair, behind a big oak desk, “Its, *man’s* work; men who aren’t afraid of *anything*. *Generally* speaking.”

He was very impressed with himself adding a little humour in there as well, as he took a draw on the cigar, but just then a large bug landed on him very close to his face. He flicked it off in a crazy fit and jumped up on the desk screaming.

The wolf’s nostrils flared, as it wanted to pounce. Walter’s movement had switched on its hunting impulses, but it held itself back. It knew what it wanted, and it would get them soon enough. Walter, ever so sadly, went on about *killer* bugs, as he tried to regather the man’s respect, and after about thirty more minutes of magnificent oration he believed *he had done just that*.

THE CITY WAS CENTRED AROUND A GREAT TOWER, made up five towers that joined lower down; four spires rose up at each main compass point, and one taller one in the centre rose to its own larger spire. There were no roads here it seemed, just canals and some narrow connecting walkways. There were squares and eating places along these canals, as well as other tall buildings and houses. The canals radiated out from the centre, becoming smaller and more irregular rings, as they went out. There were small connecting canals at various places between each ring to link them up. There were also large bodies of water here and there and seemed to be leisure and sporting facilities of some kind.

The great steel sea gates that rose up from under the water, north, south, east, and west, kept the waters inside the city calm when the sea was wild. Curved, like the outer wall, they would rise up and set in place flush with it. When these gates were open, in flatter seas, a large lock on the inner side of each of them contained these lesser swells. There were no tides here, as there was no moon in the night sky, and these locks could deal with a reasonable sized ocean swell.

There was also a tube train line, which wandered quite randomly to Bianca's sense of things; well, in comparison to the great order of this city. It was a good distance above them, and there were smaller tubes that linked stops on the walkways and canals below, shooting passengers up to it and lowering them down from it. The passenger elevator tubes were hydraulic, with water under two sealed and structurally connected disks that slid like a piston. The trains had steel wheels encircled with rubber to propel them. These fit into tracks on the three steel ribs that supported the plexiglass tubing. Steel supports, at various intervals, founded to the ground and to buildings, supported train tube's weight.

Bianca looked up and around in wonder. The high buildings were all blue and white. White buildings with what seemed to be blue glass. The central tower though, was white with large deep green glass windows. Other tall buildings took on shapes from sails to one that was like two wings enfolded and together. Out from these were smaller buildings, then others graduating out and down, all the way to family dwellings of many colours tucked in below the great sea wall. There was greenery mingled in everywhere, flowing down from rooftops, across the open spaces, up rock walls, and on the water's edge, but not so much that it took away from the clean white lines of the architecture.

The city was a circle, and all was set within its great concave ramparts. The young lady from Earth could feel its strength, its beauty, and integrity. It was a place of beauty, and for a large city, did not seem at all unnatural.

“That is the seat of The Council,” explained Logija, pointing to the central spire. “It is also the city's main place of worship.”

“Is that the Council for the city?”

“No, for the whole local area. We will visit it if you like.”

Bianca's mind went to the form of her Faith's institutions, and what they may yet become now seeing this city.

“What is that beside the main tower?”

“It is one of the many societal wellbeing buildings that form a circle around it. These are places of learning, and others of health remediation and healing. That one over there is a library, and that one, an art gallery. That one there, is my favourite place; the main building for the sciences.”

Around these buildings were larger lakes, and some green parks, with trees. They were open public spaces amidst the great buildings. Vodni now had control of the boat, as they had swapped to a smaller craft at the edge of the lock they had entered through. It was really something for this young girl from Earth to see one her own age driving a vehicle through the traffic, on the wider canal they now traversed the city on.

“I am sure Vodni can teach you, when we have to part later,” suggested Logija, seeing Bianca’s interest in piloting the boat, and wanting to encourage her.

“Will we be okay out on our own? It’s a big place,” asked Bianca.

“Why would you *not*?”

“Well...We are still young...and, you know, bad people.”

The lady tilted her head and looked at the Earth girl, seemingly sad for her, and said, “You are safe here. There are very few bad people, and we try to help them, or keep others safely away from them. They are rare here, as this society nurtures each other, cares for, and protects each other. We do not let children fall, as we see no child as incorrigible, and we help them find their gift as well as their inner powers. We are one. Our lives, our cities, our people, rise from the foundation within spiritual nobility.”

Bianca cried. She just couldn’t help it.

“That doesn’t mean we can’t get adventurous,” said Vodni, as her mother gave her a very small and gentle look. But one that made very clear her love as well as her concern. She did no more, and simply returned to giving Bianca the tour of places that they passed by.

“The Great Tower’s foundations go all the way out to the seawall. My husband has told me there are huge flexible joints just in case of quakes, but they have been nearly unheard of over the last two hundred years.”

“*Our* world still shakes sometimes,” said Bianca. “The great continental plates will just keep bumping and rubbing it seems. They are worse sometimes and better at other times. There was a wave from one of the big bumps many years ago that took hundreds of thousands of lives. The world moved together in help and support, but we went to sleep again. It seems that only disaster can unify us as yet.”

“These things will come in time. All evolves in its time,” offered Logija.

Bianca smiled and looked around at the great city. She saw in this tangible place that life *was* all about spiritual nobility, and the fostering of it; that great and beautiful things could rise off its exquisite foundations if they were strong and flexible enough. She then became very clear that spiritual nobility was the foundation of any true friendship, any loving relationship, and the health of any family too. The choice was clear to her now, that if she married and had children, this would be the foundation of her relationship, and the guard of her family’s wellbeing. A clear will then rose in her that she would not settle for anything less, as she could see that it would be even stronger than even the foundations of this magnificent city.

THE GIRLS COMMUNICATED AGAIN TONIGHT. They had talked now for five nights running after the visit to Otoka; the great ocean city. The phone boxes were now a light purple and they seemed to pulse with a gentle energy. Almost a glow, but yet, not. Such things in places deeper and dreams are hard to explain in words.

They were now keenly in discussion on the subject of Vodni's decision to study in a scientific college in Otoka. One of her brothers was giving up his construction work to study engineering, and they would live together in the great city. She had decided on physics and mathematics, yet was feeling a little silly that it wasn't as purposeful as what Bianca had decided to do, but Bianca did not understand why. She would never have done physics if it was not for her seeking answers to her Travelling, and it would only be in small part, now telling Vodni something that Jack had said to her about physics and mathematics. "Don't wag the dog?"

Vodni was just confused, so Bianca explained the main idea behind it. The young lady laughed and closed her eyes as she did. Closing one's eyes in laughter denoted a huge laugh from a sahona. They did not get louder, as humans generally do; they just closed their eyes more, and harder. It was the first time Bianca had seen any sign of a wrinkle on their beautiful skin. It was right beside the eyes, just like human laugh lines, but also between them.

Bianca then finished explaining what Jack had meant by it, as her friend was not getting it, at least to her, right now, it seemed that way. "He said that physics was physics, and that while maths was an integral part of it, its function may not always mean it was portraying a reality, or a law. It does prove things and has even pointed to things, but we should not try to wag the dog. He said it was tricky, but important," finished Bianca.

"Well, maybe. Maybe it is good to do the maths anyway. Nothing is lost, and with all due respect to that man, maths has found much and will find much," explained Vodni, more inspired by its power than most.

These peoples were greatly advanced in such things, and Bianca felt a little strange now sharing Jack's explanations when she had no real knowledge of these things. She now even wondered if old Jack really did. People talk sometimes, thinking they are helping when they aren't. Whether Jack was right about this or not, Bianca would work this out for herself if life took her to such things. But she thought that the phrase 'Wagging the dog', an old Earth saying, may definitely have utility in seeing other aspects of life.

Suddenly Walter's voice boomed out over the microphone, and Volition, who was attending the girl's conversation, gave him a dirty look. Walter being so at home on stage, and now little less daunted by Volje, went on with the show on the stage he had left standing in the Parisian square, by introducing a new singer. The changeling walked on stage, and he got the girls attention as he knew he might. He began to sing in such melodious tones that it took them away. Fortunately, it took Volje nowhere, and even more fortunately, the phone boxes had never been breached. Not even the girls could open them. Unfortunately for the Wolf, it did not know that, and after many songs it could not understand why the girls had not come out to dance, to be drawn out to him.

He would sing another song and walk over to the phone booths and back to the stage, trying to draw them away from Volje and the safety of their small fortresses. The changeling got angrier and angrier, and it began to show it as it now walked back and forth singing loudly in front of the booths. The girls began to hear and feel his anger, but his song was still beautiful. Such is the nature of predators, as when the feel of a soul is different to their words, or even their song, it is a sure sign of trouble. The anger in him continued to rise until the girls felt very threatened.

"Your singer is hurting the girls. He is very angry," stated Volje.

“It’s just anger. He isn’t actually hurting them,” answered Walter, but very worried about the bad energy this guy was giving out to his audience.

“He is hurting them. Women are very threatened by what men call anger. They are not as physically strong, so it hurts them,” charged Volje, looking for Walter to wake up, and man up.

“Really? I never knew that,” he answered, genuinely confused. He then added after a little thought, “Women have their own weapons you know.”

“Yes, I know. But he is the one hurting these two right now. So, what are you going to do about it!?” demanded Volje, hands clenched in fists on her hips, and threatening action.

Walter just gulped. He could now clearly see the wolf in his new ally, and that his plan was falling apart very quickly. It was a shame, because he had used so much mental energy getting the creature on side for all this. He was a bit lost as he now worked on a way out of this, or a new way forward to his goal. The trouble with ego is that it has to think about things; virtues of the spirit are instant to action when they are called for. The spirit knows no delay, it knows what is right, and moves. It is informed, and it does not seek construction; even though it does consider.

The beast was now thumping on the glass. It then dropped the microphone and bared its teeth at the girls; even hurling itself at Vodni’s booth. It did it a number of times before trying to dig at the bottom of each door with its now long claws extended. It was making headway through the wood, and the girls were screaming. Just then it was hit from the side by Will. She dropped him like a ton of bricks. It hit the pavement, slid along with its skin tearing, and it yelped like a dog. The changeling immediately got up and ran, as it was a coward before something stronger than itself, as are all predators.

Volition got up and dusted off her hands. She was one strong woman, and she now glared back at Walter, and strangely, the girls too. As she walked back toward them all, they all got ready for a good talking to. She wasn't mad, not even at Walter, she just knew she could use this moment well to address The Dream.

"So, you have seen the wolf. What about your part in it?"

"We didn't have any part," responded Bianca.

"You fell to the dream!"

"Ohh," said Vodni and Bianca together, now seeing more clearly in their actions, and from this experience a deeper understanding.

"We did," admitted Bianca.

Volje then told them that the dream can take a hold on them; holding them in the wolf's tortures for long periods. "Some poor souls are even held there for a lifetime. Don't let the dream deceive you, and most especially don't meet up with your own vanity in dark places. Be modest, have dreams, but beware the dream. Those who are worthwhile will seek your virtue, and your heart, not to impress you. You will appeal less to The Wolf by growing in depth and treating yourself with respect. We are delivered to what we have sought and bought. Your intentions gather a harvest, so take care what they are."

"Women have their own ways and games," commented Walter again, just not being able to help himself, but also readying himself for a violent crash tackle.

"The wolf can be in all of us; as can the dream. These are not singularly of man or woman alone; the will of manipulation comes from what is of lower nature in all of us. We must understand our own darkness, and what clouds our vision."

“But if you love someone it always clouds your vision,” said Walter, still standing very defensively.

“The clouds of attraction are not love. Authentic love requires respect and honesty to bloom. It is about our growing care for the other, not ourselves.”

Walter giggled, “Then you have never been in love.”

“Sadly, you have not known love,” retorted Volje.

“Oh, plenty love me!” stated Walter, very confidently now.

“Do they Walter?” she asked, quite caringly. Then sharing that love is a selfless outward projecting force.

While Walter stared at the ground, a little lost for a while in his reflection on that question, Volition went on. “Acts of love, and caring honest communication, create a place of nurture and trust. These are the foundations on which to build life; and family.”

“So, we create the foundation,” offered Vodni.

“The union of man and woman under God is not only the foundation stone of family; it is the key unit in the strength of a society’s foundation. It is a great responsibility; one which goes far beyond any one relationship.”

“I KNOW WHAT I’M GOING TO DO, DAD,” said Bianca, happily.

Garran turned and smiled, so very happy that his daughter was thinking about such things at this age. He hoped that it was something from deep in her, and that she knew herself enough, as it had taken him many years to finally move into the study of psychology. Not that

anything was lost, as he had learned so much through his life's endeavours, and his varied experience would only help him in his new pathway. His previous work had also helped supply an income for his family, but this *was* him. Psychology was closer to his being, as he could feel the joy, and a deep will, a curiosity, to learn all he could.

The thing, with such things, is that we only see *now*, generally, and the choice is clear to us, so we make it. What is ahead, and where it may lead, we do not know, but we should trust the flow; especially if it feels right. Garran was pushing out another mighty branch of the tree he was becoming; life had taken him on his course and had great things in store for him. It does not matter though, whether we do great, or simpler, things. It matters that we are true to ourselves and not to that which is not us. We all have gifts to give, and best our tree grows out of our true being and produces the fruits its potential may provide for others.

It is in others, in giving, that these become *alive*, as this is where our learning and passions may be expressed meaningfully. If something rises from a will to serve first, then it has a greater foundation, but, yet again, it is still in being the tree that *we are*, that we grow strongest.

“So, *tell me*,” he requested, encouraging her, with a bigger smile.

“I am going to be an environmental scientist, or a hydrologist, and I am going to learn about how to stop all the plastics entering the ocean. I may even just work on plant-based alternatives to it. My purpose is very clear in me; I just have to work it all out.”

“And work it through.”

“Work it through?” asked Bianca.

“Do the process. Let it unfold.”

“Yes, find it, by doing it.”

“Great! So few start with a *purpose*. So many try to seek just a subject, or a profession, when it needs to *start* from a purpose. I am *very* happy yours is a purpose.”

“I *am* worried that I got too confused inside when I explained it. But it will just take time to sort out how I will do it.”

“Yes. Let it unfold, even if you can’t fully explain it yet,” offered Garran, as he gave his daughter a congratulatory hug. “So, tell me more. Tell me why, and what you see ahead?”

She shared the various ideas with her father, she felt so buoyed, but then confused, and then upset.

“I’m sorry, darling. They were too big, my questions. It may be like this at stages. Confusion is natural in building something new. It will follow its path through many ideas, but keep focus on *why* you are doing it, and *allow it* rather than chase it. Give your being time to wander in it, here and there, especially when you get stuck, as you go along.”

“Sure. It just started to confuse me, and I got frustrated. It won’t take away my enthusiasm.”

“*Good*. I let things wander around in the back of my head sometimes. I let it form for a while before I start on it. But, anyway, there’s a quote I love, and one that may help guide you in what you seek to do, and in how you seek to do it..

“In this Day whatsoever serveth to reduce blindness and to increase vision is worthy of consideration. This vision acteth as the agent and guide for true knowledge. Indeed in the estimation of men of wisdom keenness of understanding is due to keenness of vision.”¹

She smiled at her father as he then gave her a hug and got up and left her to her thoughts. She had been so sure in front of the council on Otoka. “*So clear,*” she thought, as she now went back to that day in the great ocean city.

Vodni’s mother had done more than take them to the capital of their local zone. She had arranged a meeting with The Council for her zone. She wanted them to talk a little with Vodni and decided that they would also gain something from knowing of the existence of Travellers. She too hoped that Bianca may gain from the good counsel of this body, this Institution.

Bianca had been very excited about meeting The Council, as she had experienced a spiritual power when she had gone with her father once to meet with what they called, The Local Spiritual Assembly, at home. There was an energy in the institution itself; one beyond each member, or the sum of their individual abilities and spiritual character.

She had never felt so much love in one room as she sat there while Vodni’s mother and Vodni consulted with them about various things. It was not that they had to; it was just that Vodni’s mother saw it as valuable, and after a while they came around to talking with Bianca. They talked about the fact that she and Vodni *communicated*, and that she *travelled*. She even talked a little about Volje and Cas, and they were certainly taken aback. But there she was, in front of them, so it was accepted as it presented to them.

One of The Council members then asked Bianca about her planet and the current stage of its development; its victories, struggles, and any notable exigencies. Much of what she shared was hard for them to hear, as the energetic level of these people and their society was far removed from the base and mostly negative energies now existent on Earth. There was much to celebrate too though in what she shared, making it clear that there *were* large changes, and quite *profound movements* forward in the awareness of humans. She talked about Australia mostly, but also her impressions of the world generally, as she then told them of the drier parts of her planet.

“If your land is dry then it is even more important that you look after the freshwater places. *What we would do for such* land masses, *and* the fresh water of all those creeks and rivers! We are of the fresh water, you see. We require it. Even the gilled peoples. We have become part of the sea over eons of evolution as the land here gave way to the sea.”

“We have made the sea our home, but gather fresh water from the rains,” explained another member.

“Water pollution from our cities is bad, and our seas have become dumps for plastic,” Bianca had said.

“Plastic?” asked another of the members.

“A petrochemical by-product that we use it for most things, but it takes so long to break down that it causes damage. It’s especially dangerous for birdlife and sea creatures. The micro-plastics are now even entering *our* food chain, so who knows what sicknesses will grow from them.”

“So, you are unable to digest it?”

“Yes, and if it finds its way into deeper tissues, we can’t know what will happen, my mother said. Some of the waste plastic strangles birds, and fish, and other birds think floating and submerged plastic is food. Their guts get full of it because it doesn’t break down. They die because it blocks their digestive canals.”

The disgust and sadness in the room now matched the love she first felt here. It was only a hint in their eyes, but somehow, any small amount of discomfort was magnified due to the state of these souls. She was embarrassed about her kind, something she had never known so strongly before. Strangely, along with this feeling, she also felt more deeply her oneness with her kind; as if she just only now realised it. It was in this strange and beautiful place, and in the pain of her embarrassment, that Bianca found, or really chose, what she would do with her life. She would learn all she could about the water of her world; commit to saving and invigorating the freshwater systems and removing the plastic from the sea. She had found a deep purpose, and was so buoyant and excited by it, that she told the members about her choice right there and then.

They were so happy that she should gain clarity from speaking with them. They then made it very clear that they were humbled, and very clear that they considered it an honour to have been with her on such a day.

Character

As Walter had now realised that the girls were more spiritually interested, he thought that he would try the whole spiritual thing. “I can do, spiritual,” he had thought, at the time. “I can do that,” he had said, out loud.

He had thought that meditation and prayer was a bit too boring though, so decided to jazz up spiritual. You know, give it some real energy; give it some Altar Ego pizzazz. The thought got him very enthused, and his creative juices eventually worked their way to a really huge idea. “That’s it,” he had thought, and he went to get some things together. It would take a lot of preparation, and time for working out any glitches, so it was a few days before he had succeeded. He was quite chuffed with where it went. He had this, and he knew it.

Today was the big day, as the phone boxes were glowing again. It always happened when Vodni called Bianca. This place was the link between them, and they were regularly here, so Walter had kept the stage here ready for them. Vodni now appeared in one of the old phone booths and dialled Bianca. The telephone rang in the other booth, as their outer skins rolled through various colours, until settling on white. It was strange to Walter, but they now

seemed far more beautiful, and glowed brighter, even though they were just white. Anyway, he readied himself, as Bianca finally appeared in the other booth.

He started moving on his stage straight away, with some orange 1980's like leotards on, a white t-shirt with rolled up sleeves, and a red bandana to bring more notice to his face. "Hey ladies," he puffed, as he went through his high energy workout. "Total...spiritual...workout! Check my...determination!"

The girls just laughed, as Walter then upped the ante by grabbing a large pie from a tall stand on the stage; then putting it back down and picking it up, and putting it back down again, and again, each time in between, doing a 'no-no' finger wave' along with some great hand on one hip action. "Tone your detachment in this X-Treme workout. Spirituality has never been so intense!" he called out.

The girls were in fits, which saw Walter eventually slow down and stop; finally sitting on the edge of the stage with a lost look on his face. The girls felt compassion for him, while Volition, looking on from beyond, just shook her head and made flabbergasted eyes.

Walter was indeed determined, even though this great power of the human soul was certainly not enough in itself, and hardly used for the right reasons. He decided that he was not giving up though, and that he would definitely find another way. He was sure he could work it out; after all, spirituality was new to him. He then started looking very serious as he began some real thinking. Fortunately, the young ladies were now deep in conversation, as the look of concentration, and pure unadulterated mind-power on his face was quite priceless; and more laughter would not have aided his herculean facial effort.

JACK STRUGGLED WITH TOO MANY FLOORBOARDS. He was lifting too many at once. Their weight was a challenge, but with sheer force of will he made another effort, heaving them up on top of the others that he had already nailed to the joists. He had finished the bearers and joists for the floor yesterday and was on a mission to finish the floor today, even though the day was extremely hot again. He had been getting quite fit doing the work and learning a lot of new skills as he went.

There was a good deal of trial and error, but not so much that it was off-putting. He had enough skills to work things out, and thankfully, the tools were all there waiting for him when he had started to build. He knew that he had earned them with some heavy work over the many cycles and journeys he had experienced, and was glad for his effort, as well as not feeling quite so tired or sad anymore. When he saw Bianca walking down the old road, he knew that being here for this young traveller was very much part of his duty in this place; in this latest cycle of learning. He then remembered back to an Islander man, who had said, that *“All children, are our children,”* and he smiled.

“Hello, the house,” called Bianca, as it had become their way.

“Hello, the road,” he called back, as she came over to chat again with the older Traveller.

Bianca shared the stories of her travels and the wolf, and all about what she wanted to do in life, while Jack just kept boarding up the floor and cutting the angled edges at the right lengths for the floorboards. The house was not a simple build in a way, but in another it was very simple. At one stage he stood back and envisaged what the finished building might look like. The high centre pole and the eight shorter outer poles now clearly showed the building’s nature.

“You’ve done a great job,” said Bianca, after finishing her stories, and seeing Jack’s attention on the house. She saw the symmetry and the straight lines, but not really knowing anything about building.

“Yes, it’s coming together. It’s quite simple really. Let me show you. Look under here,” he said, as he showed Bianca the bones of the building and explained how each part was done. He shared with her that *actually* building something was the only way to really learn, and also explained that the measurements had to be correct, or the building might end up wonky; the foundation being very important, the basic structure strong and well in place, so that what was built on it would be solid and fit together.

After a time of learning some of these basics and seeing them in light of other things in life, Bianca opened up the question of how to pick a partner. Jack had said that she should ask her parents and her grandparents; even Cass, as they had had a good long conversation about Change and Mother Time; those two lovebirds of the essential world.

“I will ask them. But what has it been like for *you*? You’ve travelled so many places, and even lived seeming lifetimes. I’m sure you’d be the best person to ask. The people I know have only lived in *one* world too.”

“Mmm, well, okay...but gather widely, okay.”

“Sure.”

“For me, it seems that no matter where I go, or what place I find myself, and for how long I stay, it is only ever one lady.”

“*Really.*”

“Yep. We’ve crossed paths here and there. We have married sometimes, and lived quite a few, *almost* full, lives together. We’ve had many smaller adventures, and for a long time we even travelled together on carpets. That was the best time. We went together between worlds and places deeper, and we learnt together; we relied on each other, and helped each other in our struggles. Especially helping each other not go loopy from the constant change. She is *really* something.”

“What’s her name?”

“It’s Jennifer.”

“I like that name. I like the name Jenny. How did you know she was for you?” asked Bianca, smiling as a girl her age would about such things.

Jack just looked embarrassed, thinking about the nature of the question and the age of this young soul before he answered.

“Please. I have to know,” pleaded Bianca gently, as she could see some resistance in his facial expression. “I am growing up, and my mother says it is not far away, and that I should gather all I can.”

“Yep, these next few years are a great window of opportunity, in life, in the evolution of your life; a *crucial time*. *So much* is built in these years ahead of you, *so much* discovered, and *so much*, set in place. Choose *wisely* from amongst what you hear and see as you explore life over this short time.”

“Sure...So, what did you see in Jennifer? Why was she the right one? And, how do you know she was?” asked Bianca, pushing past what he had said, still looking for the answers she craved.

“*Well*, she was the *right* person and in the *right* situation; crazy as it was. You know, you may meet the right person, but age difference, differences in deeply held beliefs, or even a particular life purpose that you have to attend to, may stop you being with someone who is *right*; if that is the right word. I loved an older lady once, before I met Jennifer. I loved her, and I still do, and will always, but the situation wasn’t right. Maybe I didn’t love her enough, or try,” considered Jack, now staring off in his memories. “But we *can* even love someone, and *still* not end up with them. It seems to me, and I may just be talking of my own experience, but the *right person* and the *right situation* seems to hold water for me.”

“You would have to explain that a little,” said Bianca.

“Well, you need life experience really, but just remember, right person and right situation, as life unfolds.”

“Okay.”

“Maybe something timelier, and more solid for you to chew on, right now...Just like these foundations, you need to know yourself first. There’s a saying...

“...man should know his own self and recognise that which leadeth unto loftiness or lowliness, glory or abasement, wealth or poverty.”²

To me, it talks about the fact that I am a spiritual creature first, that I have to *honestly* see myself, and know from what part of me my intentions rise.”

“Where your volition is coming from?” offered Bianca.

“Yep; and knowing yourself is important in seeking the right job or career, as well as finding the right soul to create a union with. When you know who you are, what you’ve been given; and know what you believe, and what is good, the world and its noise less easily distract or sway you. These are a real foundation; one that needs be flexible, and allows change, but stays strong.”

“Okay. But what was it actually like? When you first met Jennifer?” she asked, appreciative of the understanding, but not being held back from what she wanted to know.

“It was...*hell yeah*.”

Bianca laughed, as hearing this from a grown man was entertaining for her.

Jack was a little embarrassed as the words had just shot out of him and were not suitable for present company. He gathered himself, and went on, “The trouble with an immediate ‘*hell yeah*’ though, is that it’s usually just physical attraction or infatuation, and they are *no* foundation. Sometimes *this* falling in love feeling comes immediately and sometimes after time spent together, but I know now that these things are physical-emotional bonding, and while they *are* lovely, we are *much more* than that. We need to *like* the soul in there, truly respect who they are and their motives, beyond all that. It’s best to connect with our deeper selves; take time to see if your prospective partner seeks to live and grow, if they can love, and whether they know they are more than flesh and bone.”

“So ‘*hell yeah*’ is physical,” stated Bianca, now quite comfortable in the conversation, but Jack still wasn’t so much. She was not his daughter, and even though he would make great strains to send her to talk with her older family members on these things, he had to see this conversation through to a decent conclusion.

“It can also be an infatuation. Seeing only a view of your own dreams and wants reflecting back at you from another person; a soul you *cannot* know after one meeting, or just a few. This kind of bubble will burst as you get to know each other.”

“What about, *hell no?*” asked Bianca, coyly. She seemed to be able to sense Jack’s growing resistance to this subject; or this part of it at least.

“*Trust it,*” said Jack, in immediate response. “What isn’t, *isn’t*; no matter *how much* you think about it, *shake it, review it* and or seek to *reform it*. You can keep trying to see it in a good light to make things happen between you and another, but if it isn’t, it just isn’t, to me. *Trust the feeling, know yourself, be patient*. Know that your mind may take you away from that *hell no* with its wanderings too. *Know* what you’re feeling, in all these things, and especially know *where* the particular thoughts and feelings are rising from within you; what part of you is talking. Like the quote says, know yourself; and know what leads to a healthy union, and a fulfilling life.”

“What about...”

“Listen, I *do* want to help you explore, but talk with your family about this stuff now. From what you’ve told me about them they seem like really great people to talk to.”

“Sure, but...”

“Listen, your parents will be important in your decisions, as your eventual choice of a partner affects the whole family too. It’s the responsibility of your family, as well as you, in who you marry.”

“I want to marry for love,” said Bianca.

“I know that it doesn’t fit the current society’s thinking, but family harmony is falling apart because so much is seen through the lens of *‘what I want’*. Life is about harmony, and sometimes it takes extra effort and sometimes sacrifice of what we want,” explained the old man.

“I just could not marry just to suit my family. It has to suit me,” stated Bianca, very sure.

“Sure, you should marry someone you care about. Your parents will want that too, but trust what they see in anyone that you love; use their experience, and their eyes, to help you make the right choice. But don’t do it *for them* though; *never* do that.”

“I won’t.”

“The big one is, know yourself enough to be true to yourself, and be patient in choosing a good partner.”

“Good for me, or just good?”

“Both, of course. Their character, and you actually *liking them*, are *huge*. Character’s a big one. You know, your parents will have to see some character in him to be okay with him; if they care about you. A good character, a good heart, these are non-negotiable really,” put in Jack, more in consulting attitude, just as these words slowly came out of even deeper places and sat in the air above them...

“Baha’i marriage is the commitment of the two parties one to the other, and their mutual attachment of mind and heart. Each must, however, exercise the utmost care to become

thoroughly acquainted with the character of the other, that the binding covenant between them may be a tie that will endure forever.”³

Jack felt a twinge of grief as he saw the words floating there. The last time he had seen words in the air like this was when he first married Jennifer. Turning to Bianca, he said very seriously, “*Seek their character*; especially in how they treat others. You have to be discerning beyond *all* the goings on; not foolishly allowing yourself to be blind to things to suit your dream. Detachment is your best friend if you want vision, and your best friend in *all* this.”

Bianca was busy filing things to remember, as Jack then remembered that getting *her* to think would be most important in empowering her.

“What do *you* think is the most important thing?” he asked.

“The most important thing is that I know they really love me; well, besides knowing I really love them.”

“Love...*Of course*. Someone capable of love, eh,” responded Jack, knowing its depth in his own experience, and bit embarrassed at the lesson on things more essential that he was now receiving from this tender soul, but adding, “But a love that will continue to flow from you both when times get hard.”

“Yes. My friend Vodni reckons it’s not about getting what you want, as much as it is about giving to another soul; serving them, and your children. Unconditional love.”

“Family *is* unconditional love. At least it *should* be,” added Jack.

“She said it’s not about ‘the dream’, it’s the hard work of making a real dream. She also reckons that it’s about the rest of the family and community in a way. That her union needs to serve the wider connections of life, that good bonds at each point build a stronger web.”

“Wow, that’s *noble thinking*; she is a *smart* young lady.”

“I wonder what it would be like to marry someone from another race,” said Bianca, thinking about someone.

“We’re *all* human,” said Jack, in the deep belief of one single human family, yet strangely a little unsure after he said it.

“Vodni’s brother’s lovely. He’s not human.”

Jack smiled, and said, “I don’t know how that would go, with you travelling and all, and the differences.”

“In my Faith we’re encouraged to marry across races.”

“I am sure you are, but I don’t know if a...”

“Sahona?”

“Yep, I don’t know if a sahona and a human would be physically compatible,” said Jack, now gathering why he was unsure after his recent comment on people all being human.

“But listen; and please understand that I say this with no judgement, also knowing that it can be a good thing to intermarry...”

Jack stopped, wondering whether he should continue.

“What?” she asked, wondering why he had stopped.

He looked to her, and said, “*Just know* that it *may* be *quite difficult*, and that there will be far extra work there.”

“Hardship is welcomed too. We need it to grow,” said Bianca, just now, suddenly feeling a little more like an adult.

“Most *surely*, we do, young lady. But you needn’t concern yourself about not getting enough hardship in any relationship; challenge is a part of life, all the way through. I just wanted to put this understanding there for you; so, you are aware of what *may* be *crucial* differences in values, and so you are under no misapprehension of the *humility* that *may* be required to forge these differences into one steel successfully. If you’ve both taken the *true inner* journey to *one humanity*, beyond all else, then it will be far less of a struggle. But *it will* have its own realities to deal with, no matter.”

“Sure, thanks. Maybe if I do, we can work on them before we marry.”

“Yep, if you *truly* have shared values, in any case. *Even better*, same culture or different, that you know the deeper *unfailing love*. Only deep union with what is higher than us can guarantee a union.”

“I understand what you mean,” she responded.

“Sure, anyway, I had better get crackin’. This house won’t build itself, and I have a feeling that the sooner I build it, the sooner I am out’a here.”

“Thanks, again, Jack. Can I call you *Grandpa Jack*?”

“You most *certainly can*,” responded Jack, with a tear, as he turned back to his lonely work.

BIANCA HAD A LONG CHAT WITH HER MOTHER, and later with both her mother and father. They were quite impressed with what came out of this young soul, and the clarity she seemed to hold. They did not know about Jack, Volje, Vodni, or Cas; but just as this young traveller had been given a harder reality to traverse, she had also been given a lot of help, as The Loving One always provides for us in other ways when times are hardest.

They consulted together on this time in her life, and on her future, and it felt so exciting to her. It had started as just talking, but it had turned into solid consultation, as there seemed to be a difference, and she had clearly noticed its boundary when they crossed it. She was reaching out of childhood, and it was now as she talked with her parents that she realised this fully. She had her own mind more and she saw the *people* in her parents a little more. With all this came more responsibility, but she was more than up for it, and even keen.

It was wonderful to feel the current of change, and its fresh eddies stirring the river of her being. She could feel it begin to stir up the mud on the bottom; and right now, it felt cleansing.

THAT NIGHT BIANCA TRAVELLED ONCE MORE TO WAI NOVA, arriving in the morning again, there. This time she and her novost friend took this family's small boat to the island nearby Vodni's home, and they slowly walked its full shoreline. They talked as they wandered along, picking up beautiful shells and smooth stones as they went, and only stopping to eat some fruits and take water here and there. They would sit sometimes and look out to the sea, exploring new insights and talking about how their life might be.

Both of them had felt the change come through in their being, and now in their outer life. It was good to have a friend to compare notes with, and learn with, right now. They had become deep and trusting friends. The honesty with each other was different to the honesty they shared with others. This was *their* time; their time to explore, and Bianca had been happy to have such a water spirit as Vodni to talk to. She had gathered a lot of clarity from the advanced wisdom of this world, and the more she did, the more she saw the deeper reality of her own being.

They talked about all manner of things, from physical changes to spiritual ones. They talked about how they felt very uneasy at times, and other times very confident. It was a strange and wonderful time, and thankfully Vodni had already taught her *mindfulness*. Bianca had begun to meditate and reflect as a natural part of her day. These helped her to relax, and surf the seas of change, as well the mood changing hormonal flows, with more poise.

Bianca found that it was mostly her mind that seemed confused and choppy though. *Its* waves mostly, seemed to threaten to engulf her at times, as the great flow of a new wider intellectual vision and wider choices flowed in. Vodni had shared with her understanding of how her people saw this awakening time, and its nature, which had helped no end, and they had often talked about the power of regular reflection because so much was happening to them right now.

These insights, and tools, steadied Bianca, and she knew that while it was a bubbling time that it was also a rich time. She learned to be accepting of unease mostly, to find her place in the world and wait out the unease, knowing that her mind or her body needed to bring the changes. She enjoyed the newness pouring out of life suddenly and trusted that any confusion would bring more clarity eventually. The struggle would also grow her character as she began her journey to adulthood.

“Calmly, but excitedly,” Vodni had said, about all that, and it oddly resonated with Bianca.

IT WAS STRANGE BEING OUTSIDE THE PHONE BOXES. Vodni was not with her this time, and she felt a little vulnerable. She walked around them while wondering about their nature. They were red again, and *suddenly* there *he* was...*The great, the incomparable, the inexplicable...*

“Inexplicable! I don’t know that word! Are you playing with me!?”

...well...let’s start again. How about...umm...*Mister...Everything amazing!?*

“That’s better. Who employed this guy? He can’t write! *Sooo unprofessional,*” finished Walter, and he finally jumped out onto the stage, sporting his new apparel.

It was a power suit; a *spiritual power* suit. Well...the words *were* clearly emblazoned on the back of it, at least. It had all kinds of zips, and pockets, and things hanging from small chains. It had a utility belt that sported some fairly impressive gismos, and they all sat perfectly still as he now moved like a ninja, with expert balance and precision, through his *moves*.

Bianca was very impressed with his poise. She didn’t know he had it in him. As he noticed her approval though, Walter lost his balance, and went splat on his face, then rolled off the stage, falling on his head...

“Steady up *writer man*. I am obviously a *fallen hero*...but my head *and my face* hurts now! What kind of writer *are you*? Do you like visiting pain of your characters?”

...Walter felt his character grow as he took the pain and stood up. He was magnificent at that moment. He had grown immensely; far more than any other mere person could even imagine in their wildest dreams. It seemed like too much pain for any mortal to handle, but this mighty creature had dealt with it. It was a triumph of spirit. It was mind blowing...

“*They get it, okay!*” complained Walter, shaking his head, and holding his shoulder.
“But it *is* true.”

Just then, a good-looking young man walked past on the footpath, and turned to see what was happening. He saw Walter climbing back on the stage, and Bianca smiling lightly at his antics and wondering what was coming next. She looked around, and seeing the young man, she smiled. Walter was now busy getting his *power suit* back online, as the fall had created some kind of glitch with the tech’. It was a very intricate invention, so there was more to go wrong. So much complexity can be problematic in mechanical and technical things, *and* in other things.

“Hi, I am Khi Trost.”

“I’m Bianca Gardiner.”

“Pleased to meet you, Bianca. What is happening with that man?”

Bianca laughed, and Khi Trost smiled, but not at Walter’s antics. He had smiled because his prey was here, and very open to be slowly devoured. The predator had gathered a new form and had bided his time.

“Oh, Walter’s always carrying on,” explained Bianca, unaware of who she was speaking with.

“Do you come here often?” asked The Wolf.

“Yes, I do. Usually with a friend, and an older lady named Volje,” said Bianca, wondering again why her two friends were not here today.

It felt different today. Not a dream at all this time. At this thought she felt a small, but very noticeable feeling in her torso. It was like the feeling when she looked down from great heights.

“Okay, maybe we can hang out for a while,” offered The Wolf.

“Sure,” said Bianca, but now clearly feeling the difference between how she felt inside and what she was hearing from Khi.

Something wasn't quite right, but she put it down to being a little nervous, as this young man was very kind from the way he spoke. He seemed very confident and relaxed too. She liked that. The Wolf though was gauging his prey and starting to think that it could feed on this one for quite a while, because these malevolent creatures see kindness as weakness, and always seem confident. Kindness could no doubt change the world, but one may also need to be a little measured; at least until one knows oneself better and takes time to gather the state of the character of those they interact with.

She didn't realise where her discomfort was coming from. Sometimes it is intuition, sometimes it is naturally picking up on body language and scent that is contrary to what someone is saying. Just like a *loud humility* in some souls tell of the fact that it may be feigned, and indeed hiding arrogance or fear. Sometimes, of course, it is just some immaturity in a soul, but with others it may be the wolf.

While suspicion is an enemy of connection and unity, discernment is not, and right then, the beast showed her a glimpse of itself in a micro expression as it looked away from her. She had just told him about her passion for water places, after he had asked her about

what she was into. The small look mocked her as a fool, as this creature only wanted to gain more purchase on her mind and emotions by finding out more about her.

She looked across at Walter, who had just powered up his suit again, and he noticed what her face was saying to him; Walter *knew faces*. He then looked to the young man and just knew it was the wolf in a new guise. Even though fear gripped him, he just smiled as the changeling looked his way. He felt weak deep in his solar plexus right then, and he *despised* it. He despised it so much that it drove him to jump from the stage and walk up between Bianca and the wolf. He had pushed the courage button on his spiritual suit and faced up to the wolf with eyes of steel, and strangely for Walter, *actually spiritual steel*.

It bared its teeth, but Walter still stood his ground. The creature could see the resolve in his eyes, and behind him in Bianca's, and it took just a hint of a pace back. It was then that Volition appeared behind Bianca and Walter. She loomed large and the creature looked up at her. It did not look angry, at least not for long. It just looked beaten, cowering as it turned and walked away. It looked back a couple of times to check for any weakness, as these creatures can sense any back-down; also checking that Volje was not on its tail as it retreated.

As Volje glared the beast out of sight, she explained, "The wolf cannot eat what, or who, *sees* it, or those who unblinkingly *stand* against it. Honesty *too* is the light that finds the wolf in anyone. It can find this creature, and other creatures, which hide in those who are not *so* completely lost but needing to grow a little. The wolf is there to some measure in all of us and has different forms."

"I see them *all the time*," said Walter, now shuddering. "They're everywhere."

"Seeing the wolf, or only the wolf, in too many people *may* also be a sign of one's own fears," ventured Volje, as she faded from sight.

A great flood of fans, one that Walter had strangely been unaware of gathering during his good act, then washed through the scene, picking him up, and hailing him as a hero; the one who had withstood the wolf, and saved the girl. He smiled at Bianca as he felt all the attention. He knew he had been strong, and it meant the world to him; his offering of sacrifice feeding him deeper than anything he had ever experienced or could have imagined. But this new attending attention was too wonderful, and he let them carry him off. He looked back only once, with eyes of thanks, and then a shrug of his shoulders and a smile, as they bore him away.

Walter needed to be fed his usual fare of adulation, far more so, than he needed to grow. It is strange how we, all of us, often trade what is lesser for what is more. But Bianca smiled anyway, feeling happy, and a little bit sad, for Walter. She had loved his simple nature and his wild imagination. She then faded from sight, and from Walter's life.

She was not delivered home this time. She had awoken in the air, flying unaided, and somehow unafraid, above a walled city below. The city was in a desert, in the middle of a great dry riverbed that split into two as it passed around it; then re-joining itself to the south. A great dry rocky mountain range stood beside it and seemed to be sheltering it somehow. She flew around it fifty-eight times, each time coming closer to the ground; finally landing at the Western gate.

There to meet her was a lady, who introduced herself as Etera. She would not allow Bianca to enter The Disappearing City, or what some called The Appearing City. Etera had received a service in both worlds, the material and the spiritual, and she had taken her place here. Bianca could feel the powerful energy of learning pulsing beyond its walls and was very disappointed that she could not enter.

“You will return here one day; a long time from today, to embark on service to a foundation planet. Grow well. We will need your life wisdom, Mother.”

“I’m not a mother,” said Bianca, knowing that she was not a mother, and certainly not worthy of such a name at her age.

“I will see you again, Mother,” finished Etera, as the scene fell away into the darkness of closed eyes.

Bianca woke at home, with questions flying thick and fast from her mind.

IT WAS NOW A WEEK LATER. Vodni had not communicated with Bianca for a few weeks, and Bianca had not travelled. She felt like she had lost something, but in a way was glad for the time to just do normal things; like school, and home, and visiting friends...*by car*. She laughed a little as she thought about that. Travelling, learning, and visiting had very different meanings now.

She had not seen Jack either, even though she had gone walking every morning hoping he would be there. It was now, as she walked the old road again, that she only heard his voice. She strained to hear it as she walked closer to its seeming source.

“Grandpa, Jack?”

She found herself on another dirt road; one she had never seen before. It was the last days of summer still, but it was a cool, cloudy, and windy morning. There was a cyclone way out to sea, and it was still affecting the weather well inland here. The wind was lovely and alive though, and she watched the treetops dancing against the sky and the birds flying here and there. The birds were having trouble making headway against the wind, but they strove,

and balanced themselves masterfully when they landed in the swaying trees. She felt relieved somehow, here in this place. Like the work had been done, the new doors had been opened, and she was now walking a new place in her life.

Jack's words then came fully to her attention. It was as though they had been left there for her. She felt like she was walking through his thoughts; thoughts that he had deposited there for her as he had walked this way.

"There are people who are right off the target; missing the essence of what counts in things, in people, in situations; in life. There are people with no vision or have a glass on the world that cannot see things properly. Don't judge them, but don't sit down with these in hard and confusing times. Go to those who have shown clarity, and width of vision, even if you did not like what they had shown you, or indeed show you.

The Creative Word, too, has never let me down, where guidance and wisdom was required. Take self-counsel with them in this time of growing and exploring; meditate on them. There is far more vision, depth, and practical wisdom in them than anything I have seen, or read, or heard of, in this place. Read widely though and trust your view of things generally. Stand there, to seek more; stand there and seek more sight of yourself and life.

And finally, think for yourself. Trust your experience, and the experience of the trusted. Don't be a lemming and be of service to your friends by showing them too that they can think for themselves; that they don't have to fall to low motives or believe that they need to frequent dark places. Help them realise their nobility...and take it from someone who has lived a long and varied life; there is no life in lower places. None. It only seems that way."

There was a sudden gust of strong wind, and the words and that place were blown away with it. They were suddenly gone, but it was okay. She was again walking her old road,

and that was *always* good. She thought of her parents; her love for them, and their good counsel, but it was also clear to her now that she had to explore life for herself too.

The water shone like glass over the deep reef lagoon. It sat in the sheltered embrace of the island near Vodni's home. Reflecting the sky perfectly, until a single bubble rose up. Deep below a massive dark form was stirring.

Bonds and Dragons

Walls

Bianca wandered down the old road. She was now twenty-one years old and had come home to take some time away from study and her usual surrounds. There had been some heavy challenges in her life recently and she just needed to be at home with her family for a while. There were also questions in her head about one person in particular; questions she could not seem to answer.

But today she was just wandering free as she walked down the old road. Her mind now going back to what seemed *so long* ago, when she had travelled; or had she? It was such a short, crazy, but wonderful time. She still treasured it, even though she could not be sure if she had been just a little lost for that short time earlier in her life. She now came up over the small rise almost hoping to see Jack. "*His house would be more than completed by now,*" she thought, as disappointment came over her face. "Of course, it's not there," she said out loud, but still imagining him working on the floorboards, and calling to her as she came down the road.

She wondered what she would have said to him, and then tears filled her eyes. She would have loved to talk with him about her current struggles. She missed him. She now

couldn't help but follow her imagination as her emotions needed her to, and she called out, "Grandpa Jack. Are you here?"

There was no answer, and she only felt more alone as she continued walking past the spot. She did have some very nurturing conversations with her parents on a few other things since recently returning home, but still had to work on her main life challenge herself. She would have loved Jack's input. Bianca was becoming close to someone, but was not sure about him, and had not wanted to bias her parents against him if she decided to agree to marriage. Truth be known, the fact that it may have created a protective response in them should have made it very clear to her that there *was* a problem with him.

"Hello, the road!" came a call from behind her, and she froze. Her eyes tearing up, she turned around, and there was the house; and there was Grandpa Jack. She burst out crying, feeling all the joy of this lovely surprise, and feeling the full weight of all the struggles that she had recently been through.

"Hello, the house," she called, as she sobbed a little more, then hunched over and cried.

Jack came out to her when he saw her distress, and he held her for a while as she allowed her pain out a little.

After a short time, she released herself from the embrace, and said, "It is *really* good to see you; for a lot of reasons."

"I wasn't sure it was you at first. When you appeared, your back was to me. Then, I thought it had to be you, so I called out."

“It has been a long time. I was beginning to doubt that I really experienced those things when I was younger,” said Bianca, but now feeling a bit worried that her recent struggles may have just unhinged her again.

Jack laughed, as he saw the realisation on her face. “I know that look. I’ve had it so many times, and I have seen it on the faces of many people I’ve crossed paths with.”

“It’s normal?” she asked, mainly for comfort.

“It’s *very* normal for people like us,” he assured her.

Bianca became a little more present and looked at Jack. “You haven’t changed at all,” she posited, as she was still not at ease as her mind’s questions continued to assail her about all this.

Jack saw the questions still on her face, and said, “Time and space are not the reality for a traveller; only meaning. Do *you* think you’re mad; *seriously?*”

“No.”

“Then let’s just get on with enjoying each other’s company again. You have grown into a beautiful young lady.”

“Thanks, Jack. You haven’t gotten very far with building your house.”

“Well, it might look like that to you, but to me, well, I only saw you a week ago. I’ve just started on the frame for the walls.”

“Walls...they are good, and they are bad,” stated Bianca, looking off through the one section of wall framing that he had completed.

“Problems, eh?”

“Yep, part of life I suppose. I could do with someone *like you* to talk to.”

“*Like me?*” said Jack, with a cheeky smile on his face.

“You know, *old*,” she said, with a bigger smile on hers.

Jack was just someone she saw as a mentor, or really, a grandfather. Her grandfathers had died when she was very young, and she knew that she needed someone like that today. The old man smiled, and asked her to go ahead, as he turned and went on with his work.

After about an hour of listening and asking a few questions Jack had finished off the small section of wall frame he was working on. Bianca waited there for some wisdom hopefully; from someone who had lived longer than her and seen more of life. She was no fool, and very accomplished, but for some reason she had struggled with relationships. She genuinely liked people and got on with most of them well. She looked to the beauty in them and had attended to healthy boundaries.

“Well. What do *you* think?” Jack asked.

Bianca laughed out loud. It was exactly what she needed to hear.

“Be honest; *cold hard honest*,” he added.

“I *care* about him, but he gets *very* angry, and I am concerned that it won’t change.”

“Well. What do you *really* see?” asked Jack, with a gentle smile.

“I think he is angry, and he will keep being angry, and I don’t want that. My family is just not that way. It’s a hard energy and it wears me down. A life of it would be *too much*.”

“You’re answering your own question there?”

“Yes, I suppose I am. It is clear really, but what do *you* think?”

“I have been around angry men, and all of them had one deep flaw. Angry people are generally not flexible and have a stronger than normal need to control; not all for bad reasons, but control is control and flexibility so very important in life. One angry bloke I knew once had a great sense of justice, and another fellow was simply still a bit of an emotional child, but they both had strong needs to control things around them. Life then obviously puts up many challenges to these souls, as it is endlessly changeable and people are very funny cattle, so, they naturally went off quite a bit, and there was a continual rumble or promise of explosion under the surface of one chap.”

“He has a great sense of justice too. I admire that, and his honesty.”

“Sure, but that’s not the issue, is it? There’s a big difference between being friends and being married to someone like that. You know, we have to deal with our partners issues and help them heal, but this one; this is one to sort out before even *contemplating* moving into a deeper bond. Being married to an angry man, or to an unreasonably demanding woman for that matter, is no picnic.”

“Sure.”

“And one thing I learnt many times over in my travels is that when you’re choosing someone as a life partner, you need to remember that you are also choosing the *father* of your *children*.”

“Oh! *Of course*,” responded Bianca, thoughtfully.

“Caring, strong and encouraging souls make good fathers, and loving mothers need to be sought by young men. But, in saying that, there are strengths in all souls, and a mix sometimes helps children see different ways and allows them to gather different strengths.”

“I’ve considered those things within other things, but it’s good to be reminded and to gather more focus on important aspects of the situation; the one’s which *are* causing the hesitancy in me.”

“You haven’t had children, and you haven’t had my many years of life experience. Another head is always useful, and us oldies are somewhat valuable in these things.”

“So, it would not just be my struggle with him. I would visit him on my children too,” mused Bianca, as much to herself, as to Jack.

“Yes, Bianca. Continually angry, selfish, or immature partners can do harm, or at least stunt a child’s development. Sometimes they can do life-long harm.”

“It’s that simple isn’t it,” said Bianca, with a lot of clarity now.

“Things of the heart are not simple. They are things of the emotions too and so we need caution in attending to them. You care, and as you explained before you have spent time working on projects together. You see good in him, and we all need focus on that, but that does not necessarily make him good husband material.”

“I know I can’t live with the anger. I mean, some, yes, because life can throw some crazy situations at all of us, but not a pattern of it; and *now*, what it might do to my children.”

“So, what do you think?” asked Jack, once more helping her to seek her own centre of knowledge again.

“I think that I’m glad I came for a walk, and now I can talk with my parents about this. Then, I suppose I will have to grieve a little. Thanks Grandpa.”

Jack’s eyes began to water, and said, “Thanks, young lady, for making my time here more meaningful. I have lived a *long* time it seems, and I need *all I can get* of meaningful to continue on.”

“You aren’t *that* old.”

“I feel almost endlessly old, and connection and purpose are like air and water to me right now. I *have* lived *beyond* time...but for a *very long time*. Deep and purposed connections are the only things that can give me life now. There is nothing new, in a way, for me, there is only love.”

“But the house?”

“I have to build it, and even though I always wanted to, I would trade it for a normal life in an instant. It’s simply where I am now. I have learned to live where I find myself and appreciate and enjoy what’s good there. I have to trust and be as purposed as I can wherever I am, but you are definitely a grace to me. And, you know, our journeys are not necessarily just about us. Maybe I am simply here to be of service to you.”

“Maybe we are here to be of service to each other,” responded Bianca.

THE DRAGON RAGED OUT OF THE WATER. Vodni and Iogair were thrown off the pontoon as it took flight in an ungainly way at first. Being amphibian, this young couple were in no immediate danger, but Iogair swam for shore as fast as he could. The lagoon had been

glassy and quiet until he and Vodni had begun to argue about what she saw as his lack of courage to do further study.

He made it to the shore and turned to see where Vodni was. She was pulling herself back up onto the pontoon, and the dragon had disappeared. He waved to her to come onto the beach, but she turned away; quite indignantly. The look on her face before turning was clear. It spoke of her distaste for his further cowardice, and it just gutted him. What was he to do? How could he come back from such disrespect? But to her it was a challenge for him to be more right now, and to show his love.

Iogair was just waiting for some love and understanding to be shown; for some calm from her to win the day for them, but it did not come. He stayed on the beach where he was, as he did not have the heart to grovel. His pride would not take it, and neither would Vodni's accept anything but some proof of his love.

He had been taken by her beauty and her intelligence when they had studied at the Academy of Sciences together. They had enjoyed each other's company and remained friends, as was the custom, and within the wisdom of this evolved culture. It was now after their years of study that he had travelled with her to meet her family and spend some time away from the places of the mind; a vacation from the intensity of learning. But it had not gone well, as Vodni seemed to have suddenly changed. Iogair simply did not know how to deal with these things he was seeing in her.

It was then that Bianca appeared on the pontoon, and Vodni grabbed her almost violently, then hugging her for comfort. She immediately knew who it was, although they were now both very much older. The young sahona lady could not believe that her old friend had returned to her; and especially right now. She had continued communicating with many

other beings throughout the universe since the connection was broken with Bianca all those years ago. But she had always missed her *first caller*, and it took her back to the simpler times of youth. There is something about seeing old friends again that really warms the heart.

“Are you okay?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Him!” pronounced Vodni, moving her eyes and head to indicate the lone figure on the beach.

Bianca looked to the shore, seeing the sad figure of a young man and a face mixed between wonder and indecision. She could see that they had had a fight, and that it was just an emotional tiff, as the man portrayed none of the signs of strong anger. Signs she now clearly and cognitively realised that she knew *too* well. It was a confirmation of her decision not to marry the young man she was close too, and she was thankful for it.

Bianca had fallen into a deep sleep after talking with her parents about the young man who had asked her to marry him. It was over a hot home cooked meal and was a loving and clarifying conversation; all like a big warm hug, being home again. The stress had fallen away from her with her final decision that night, and the emotional and mental relief had dropped her into a deep and healing sleep.

“Have you had a fight?”

“Yes. He has no courage, and he doesn’t love me, or he would have come back to see if I was okay.”

“He seems a bit lost over there.”

“I know I seem hard, and maybe I am. *But...*”

Another dragon then exploded from the lagoon, and it bellowed loud. It turned its head, and seeing the girls, it came around and straight at them. Sadly, Iogair froze, but the girls dove in the water and swam for the beach. It came over them fast and fired a deep red flame as the two girls ducked under the water. The dragon’s body then splashed down hard on the water. Vodni reached for Bianca’s hand, but she was gone. The dragon *had her*. As Vodni came to the surface she saw the tail of the creature disappearing over the treetops of the island.

BIANCA WAS TERRIFIED. The creature had stopped bellowing at least, but that was no comfort; not at all. She was almost certainly going to be a meal for this gigantic predator, and even worse, the creature was taking her to its mate on the far side of the island.

They were there in a flash, as it was a small island, and the dragon was fast. When she saw the other creature there her terror grew, and she passed out. The creature swooped down low and dropped her on the sand in front of its mate; Bianca woke again while rolling along the sand and then hitting up against the forefeet of the other dragon.

She looked up, and it looked down, and through her fear she could see that the creature had curious eyes.

“What *is this?!*” screeched the female dragon.

“I found it, when I was disturbed from my sleep,” answered the male, in a deeper, but somehow weaker, voice.

“I was disturbed from mine too...What *are you* and why did you disturb us?” she asked, as she looked down at Bianca again.

“I was just talking to my friend, when I was taken,” answered Bianca, in her defence. A strange courage then rose in her, “And I *sure don't* appreciate being taken off like this.”

“Yes! *It's* right! Why did you take it?”

“I thought you would like it. I care about you,” answered the male.

“Ohh. Not *that* again,” she sighed, with a disgusted intellectual look in her eyes, as she turned away.

“I love you,” the mighty creature then said, but in an almost desperate fashion.

It even had Bianca turning up her nose, as the energy that this creature was exuding was not one of love. Its emotions showing clearly.

“I am sickened by *your pleasing*. I know I am not loveable.”

“You *are* loveable! I love you.”

“I know we are the last to pass over to the Veld, but it won't happen if we pretend. *Dragon up* a bit!”

“Must you make fun of my love, and my kindness, forever?!”

“It's not love. *Oh, my goodness*. Go and get something to eat for us.”

“Oh, I'm *good for that* aren't I, *Your Highness!*”

“We're awake now. We have to eat, *don't we?*”

“You mock me and abuse me, and you want me to feed you. I don't think so!”

“You said that you love me.”

“I do.”

“Then woo me. Get me some food. We were sleeping for a long time.”

“Yes, I will. I *will* woo you. I will *show* you how good I am,” said the male dragon as he took off and sped out to sea.

“He has got it bad for you,” said Bianca, now feeling a bit sorry for the male.

“He has got it bad for himself, and what he wants. He preens continually and lies to me constantly because he is *no one*. He is just trying to impress me, and not be who he *really* is.”

“You don’t give him any respect.”

“*Well...for a little...it, you are very opinionated,*” she stated, and for a strange reason they both had a chuckle; one that made it clear that they understood each other and could indeed be friends.

“He is really trying hard,” offered Bianca, with a shrug.

“That’s what is so sickening. He is still showing off like a baby. I don’t want a baby. I can’t pass to the Veld with a child.”

“But why be so mean?”

“I might be a *bit* hard, but I need a *real* dragon.”

“You are more than a *bit* hard.”

“I can’t stand liars and I can’t stand weakness!” screeched the creature, as it took off in a huff and sprayed sand all over Bianca as it flew away; its mighty wings creating strong gusts and sudden eddies. *“Can’t stand them!”* it cried even louder, as it raced off to the south; the other dragon now turning to follow it.

These two were the last two dragons on this world. The others had faced themselves; their egos, and their fears. They had ascended to the Veld. It was a beautiful place; one that they needed to be paired to reach. The two dragons of this lagoon had been here many eons, as they seemed to continually cycle in their own issues, and around each other, never *really* communicating at all. They would be damned to this repetitive hell until they could find their way out of the continual cycles of dysfunction. Mostly though, they had slept beneath the glass surface of the lagoon.

“Bianca,” called out Vodni, as she and Iogair burst out of the trees and onto the beach.

“Are you okay?” asked Iogair.

“Yes, I’m okay. *Boy!* That was an experience. *Dragons with issues,*” she said, smiling and shrugging her shoulders.

Vodni and Iogair looked bemused at that, and then Iogair looked up and around, checking the sky for any sign of them returning.

“We have stories of water dragons, but no one has ever seen one. I am sure of that. I didn’t know they were red; and yellow breasted like that. In the story books they were always green with light blue throats,” explained Vodni.

“Issues?” now asked Iogair, smiling just a little.

“They’re like a couple who can’t get their life on track. The communication is atrocious.”

The sahona couple then both looked down at the sand, and Bianca realised she had hit a nerve. It was now *very* uncomfortable for all on that beach.

SHE HAD BEEN ON WAI NOVA FOR A WEEK NOW. Bianca, although concerned about the time she was spending here, had really enjoyed catching up with Vodni. Vodni was too, and her intended was also very relieved. It also had him wondering why Vodni could not be more like Bianca, or more like she was around Bianca, with him. The young sahona woman though, was just relieved at not being so focused on him for a while.

They were now on their way to visit his family. His were deep water people. They lived and worked there mostly. Life was harder there, and the people strong and simpler; well, all except for Iogair, as far as Vodni was concerned. She had thought that being a person from the underwater peoples, he would be strong. She loved that he could relate to her intellectually and emotionally, and he seemed spiritual and kind, but not confident in himself. He seemed to try too hard and compliment her when she was not at her best, and not argue with her when she was obviously wrong. He only argued when she called him weak. It *was* shameful to her, the way she acted with him. She felt cruel, but she wanted honesty more than anything else and he could not seem to provide it. She didn’t want some facade; she wanted *him*, warts and all.

“My expectation of our union being of service to others is impossible if he can’t even be honest with me. I don’t want a pleaser,” she explained to Bianca.

They were in a large underwater passenger vehicle. It was a long tube, with a nose like a plane, which was somewhat flexible at three points along its hull and driven by a large propeller at the back. There were small tubes; sets of three small high-power impellers that were positioned around the body; all at certain intervals along the vehicle. These tubes pivoted as the computer worked out where they needed to point, to steer the train-like vehicle. The vehicle drove itself mostly; the pilot making just an odd correction and overseeing the journey.

Fortunately, Iogair was not in earshot, and asleep in his seat, when Vodni had commented on him. She would not have said such a thing if she knew he could hear her though. The girls were in the dining section, as the windows were wider, and Bianca did not want to miss a thing. The depth of their conversation was quite unsatisfying to both of them, and thankfully Bianca then went a little deeper.

“My mother has always said to me that our expectations, our wounds, and our lower nature make us unreasonable. It takes love and communication to see them off; trust and effort.”

“He won’t communicate honestly, and we are evolved. We are past such lower things.”

“No, you aren’t. You *know* you aren’t, and he isn’t either. Your expectations and his immaturity are stopping you. You have to address both of these as a couple. You have to see the good in him, and you both have to be honest.”

“He *won’t* be honest with me. He keeps talking me up, as if that is love.”

“Then maybe he’s not ready.”

“But I have invested *so much time*...”

“Oh, *don't* say that. It's not about *time*. It's about effort and communication. Maybe he'll never grow, but you will never know unless you address things with him without the judgement.”

“My mother says my expectations are too high, that I try to control my life, and therefore others too much. But that *is me*. I have certain expectations.”

“Then *live with them*, Vodni,” stated Bianca, like her old friend Volje would have and in hopes of increasing her friend's vision.

Vodni looked down, going into deeper thought about that. It shocked her a little, even though she was not afraid to see herself. She was not totally sure what *was actually* her, and what was maybe an unhealthy expression of her. So, although Vodni could see things, she could not see things, as all of us have been, but Bianca had given her plenty to dive deeper with. Thankfully, it was in this deeper look that she saw her expectations clearly, and her hardness, and although she began to soften, she was absolutely certain that she was not the *only* person who needed to do some work.

She looked up after a while, feeling released and slowly becoming very clear about how to move forward. She looked out the window as she sought to gather it, and then noticed her friend's reflection. She was glad that Bianca had come. She thanked The Great Spirit for her visit, and her honesty. Talking with Bianca had reiterated what her mother had seen in her. She then shook her head; as she had *communicated* with many varied creatures, and learned *so much* of so many things, yet still did not know herself enough. Let alone how to communicate, it now seemed. She even *knew* of the nature of humility yet had not *used* it.

She decided that she would seek answers to his ways with his family and see how he was with them and his friends, and she committed herself to talk with him more kindly and help him face his demons. She would do the work and see what came. Vodni then came out of her thoughts and Bianca was gone. She smiled, so happy for her special friend; The Traveller, from Earth.

Volje looked on from a deeper place, very glad to see Vodni using the power of will to take her forward. She really liked this one, as she had plenty of will to spare. She was also glad that this sahona was reorienting this power more in alignment with wisdom and the higher soul. As will, or volition, can be both powerful and destructive depending, where its winds arise from within us, and how we use it.

BIANCA WOKE AND LOOKED AT THE DATE ON HER PHONE. It was still the night she left. She was happy about that, but sad that she did not get to see the underwater villages of Iogair's people. Bianca had not seen any underwater communities and knew that the culture would be different and magical in its own way. Iogair had told her that his sub-marine village was attached to rocky sea floor, beside a great expanse that fell away into darkness. The expanse was so deep that no one had reached its floor even though they were very adept at sub-marine exploration.

There was a lot of wonder and spirit in him as he talked of these things, and he was a very different creature when he wasn't around Vodni. She wondered at that, as she now too, imagined the great waving air pipes he had told her of; flexible pipes, that like tendrils, reached up from his coral-like city to the water's surface. She had been surprised that they piped air down there, but as they were amphibian, they had to have air. In the times of the

deep past, before unification, it was the job of some to float day and night above the city on these great air lines; to make sure they floated above the swell, and to drive them back down when any strangers happened their way. It was only a few hundred years now that these peoples were even known to exist to most on the planet, and only fifty years ago that the last of their cities came to notice.

Bianca drank in all the sights and sounds and smells of what she had experienced as she reflected back over her visit. She laughed a little as she now recalled the dragons, not knowing of the eons of frustration that held them in their own particular hell. They were funny, and they struggled like Vodni and Iogair. She hoped that she would see these creatures again, even though they both had walls up. Even the male dragon had his walls up. They were less-mean walls, and she could see that maybe all four of these creatures of Wai Nova were protecting themselves, as we can all do in our various ways.

The thought of walls reminded her of Grandpa Jack, and she got up out of bed to see if her old friend was still there. She hoped so, as she really wanted to talk with someone about her small trip to the water world of Wai Nova. She was leaving her parents be, this time around, as it was hard enough on them last time. She got up, ready, and out the door in no time, with a good morning to Garran on her way.

Her father was glad to see her so energised, as parents do worry, and as some say, “You can only be as happy as your unhappiest child.” But he also knew detachment and reliance, and thankfully drew from the wisdom and power available to him from enduring his own life’s hardships; as well as having a patient and abiding parent’s love, that is.

It was early morning, and the air was fresh and bracing; very different to the smells of the water planet. She loved the smell of the Australian bush. It had a tang to it, and it was the

smell of home; always good. It was like she was that child again and bounded along with the energy of a younger soul, so it was not long before she was talking again with Jack and telling him stories of dragons and underwater trains. He listened with great joy, as he had not been to such a place in all his travels, and anything new was like a cool drink of water in an endless desert for him. Bianca went on, not missing a detail, and then coming to the business of her friend's struggle.

It was not that it was a gossip thing for her, she wanted to learn more about relationships, and was curious to explore things with old Jack.

Jack laughed out loud, and said, "Poor guy. He's just protecting himself."

"Yes, that's what I saw."

"She just has to *love him* out of there."

Bianca laughed, "I don't know if she will, but we talked quite deeply about things."

"He could be tucked away *real* deep. Some people like your friend just need to humble up and put love before expectation, and some people like the lad hide because they have learned to survive that way."

"His *whole culture* was once based on hiding, so that'll be in the gene pool very strongly. Vodni said that they are *way* past all that, but it's in the mix."

"Yep. For sure. Genes play a role in our nature, and cultural conditioning. I believe spiritual effort can bring them all to better expressions, but they're still there. You know, there is also a saying that *you will bleed all over people until you heal from what cut you*. He may have had very controlling parents."

“Mum says that it’s our *old wounds*, our issues, or expectations, that hold us back and make us crazy, and Dad says humility, honesty, and courage are the only way out.”

“Only unconditional love can break some things down, and some fears and insecurities are huge and may take many years to beat, or even never really go away.”

“That would be hard.”

“If you love them, it wouldn’t be. Anyway, I suppose relationships really make you search out what holds back connection, what blocks our hearts, *especially* these *close* life connections. They help you find and slay your own dragons too, eh.”

“Dragons...sure...like the old stories, not the dragons I told you about,” said Bianca.

“Yep, to me, the one’s in the stories were mainly about greed, oppression, and fear, but the damsel one is probably about fighting through the monsters within us to reach each other’s hearts. I suppose they represent any negative thought form, and some people aren’t just damaged, they choose to be less, or their pride is too strong. These are all dragons.”

“Pride. *Sure*, I see that in how they are both acting. Well...in their own way.”

“Fear and superiority can even manifest in the exact same action; they are kin, but it still takes time to find out what lies right down deep.”

“I’m feeling bad about Bob now. Maybe I should have worked with him on this stuff,” admitted Bianca, thinking she might have not loved him enough to help free him.

“That’s a hard one, girl. Who knows what his response would be, and where his anger really comes from. We have to free *ourselves* in the end, even if it *is* the tying of our lives together that forces them to the surface.”

“I think I will be his friend, if he lets me, and still do some real talking with him. Maybe I can help as a straight-talking friend.”

“Sure, but he might need some time to let you go first. Some people can let go and be friends, but these kinds of bonds need to be cut clean sometimes for the sake of one or both. It’s just in the nature of them,” offered Jack, then allowing Bianca her thoughts as she reflected.

Bianca was there a short while, and as she came out of her short reflection, she said, “I feel sorrier for the male dragon than anybody though. He doesn’t have a clue.”

“Women can test men. They have to be able to feel accepted at their worst and know that men will stay the course with them through challenges. Having children makes this very much part of the terrain. Men too in a way need to be accepted at their worst, no one likes to be judged. Only time, love, and trust can quell the fear.”

“I don’t need all that, and I’m responsible for my own emotions.”

“You came from a loving accepting family. You seem to move by the soul’s pathways, but men still need to know a woman is generally more in need of emotional support than they are. Women are just as strong, but have more intricate physiology and emotional machinery, so men need to accept their affects and be compassionate.”

“Women have a different emotional language.”

“Yep, and they should know men’s language too, be respectful, and work with it. But all these things and ways vary with individuals too. I’ve known men who were naturally attuned to women’s emotional understanding.”

“To me, we all have to grow and live more in our spiritual nature though; that’s a lot simpler,” offered Bianca.

“Simpler yes, but that’s not necessarily people, or life in reality. We *should* aspire to help each other to climb that personal spiritual ladder in our relationships. Yet, and not making excuses here, people are many things, have two natures, and life is a continuing challenge.”

“Not so clear cut,” agreed Bianca.

“No, and our walls are tricky.”

“I like what you said about helping each other climb the spiritual ladder.”

“Dealing with demons, and climbing the spiritual ladder, are the same thing in a way, and both come down to the will do it. There *needs* to be a strong will to make the effort in these things, and *both* partners have to have it,” said Jack

“Sure...”

Bianca suddenly found herself in a wide grassy green field. It was not mown, and the knee-high grass waved easily in the gentle wind. She turned around to see a ladder. It stood at a slight angle, and impossibly balanced on top of it was a wide irregular piece of cement floor. It had two rough partial walls of the same material projecting up on two sides, like the whole structure was the bottom corner of a room, and mostly just floor. It looked like an old building that had been bombed during a war, even down to the broken cement rendering over the bricks here and there, and the pock marks or bullet holes. The ladder though, went up to an open, and ornate, doorway cast in the middle of the wide floor.

She couldn't help but move toward this impossible sight, and then climb the ladder. Joy filled her as she climbed, as well as some trepidation, and as she reached the top of the ladder a hand reached out of the doorway above her and helped her in. Through the doorway was a great ballroom, with high white walls, ornate ceiling, and gold trimmings. Great art pieces also filled the walls.

"Do you think you can build a great room like this on top of a ladder?"

"Yes."

"You would be mistaken."

"But this is a spiritual place. Surely it can."

"Surely it can," said the handsome man in light blue suit and white shirt, as he took her hand again, and a waltz began to play.

They danced one dance, with freedom and ease, and he then said, "Come with me."

*They walked past the musicians who now played the sweetest music she had ever heard. It was so sublime it made her cry, and she came to know more deeply in that same moment a powerful love rising through her being. It was the Creator's love. She had known it at highly charged spiritual moments in her life, when in reflection at other times, and sometimes in prayer or when reading *The Writings of her Faith*, but not with this intensity.*

They now walked through a door out of the great room, and she found herself on a parapet. It was situated on what seemed to be a high tower of stone that sat alone amidst the sea; in every direction only water, except for three long stone jetties that seemed to reach the horizon. As she looked out, many ships began to dock there. They used very large strong ropes, looped through golden rings on squat posts all along the length of the jetties, to tie

down. Endless people swarmed into the tower as the flood of ships grew. There was no way the tower could hold them all, but they kept coming and she came to understand the limitless nature of the tower. When the sun was finally setting, and the last souls came in with lanterns, the scene fell to night.

She looked out over the sea, and to the stars, and things were made known to her as she allowed herself to be there. Her mind quiet, and her soul open. These words then rose up from amongst the flow of understanding...

“...true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love.”⁴

The man in the light blue suit then took her hand again and led her back into the doorway they had entered by. They then walked out another doorway onto a different parapet, and below them were green rolling hills and pathways of all kinds running over them, with a city in the far distance. This wall they now looked out from was long and stretched from east to west, and near to them, there was a tree in the well mown foreground with an eagle's nest in it. Children played here and beyond it, and couples walked about the pathways in evening promenade.

“All you see is peace about you, but you will require me and the ladder to attain such a place.”

“You?”

“I am Consultation and its spirit. I am more than communication as...”

"...No man can attain his true station except through his justice. No power can exist except through unity. No welfare and no well-being can be attained except through consultation."⁵

"I don't understand. I do, but I don't."

"Communication is a tool by which meaning may pass from one to another, yet..."

"...consultation must have for its object the investigation of truth."⁶

I am far more than, sharing meaning, far more than, give and take, far more than being balanced of view, far more than cooperation. I am more than listening, and more than speaking. If you have not only communication, but consultation; you will only need the ladder."

"So, it's a spiritual foundation we need build on?"

"Truth will hold up what the greatest earthly foundation can never hold. If you use the Guidance, the Creative Word, within the power of the search for the truth, you may find this place. The ladder is prayer and reliance; it is humility; it is ascent to a higher place."

"The investigation of truth. I suppose you have to want the truth."

"It needs be the goal, yes. All stands on its gift of clarity."

There was sudden shift, and she was back with old man Jack. He was talking like she had not left.

“There is a power in waiting to get to know each other; taking time to build a *real* relationship. Issues will come, fears and expectations too, and miscommunication a plenty. They will all cause upset. But if you care about each other, these will also call forth some humour, and if you’ve built a foundation of love and trust, then you can trundle through blockages and hurts. We *can’t* fear the hurt that almost *must come* in the process, and we have to know that at the end of any honest communication the outcome *will* be beneficial. *Don’t stop* being honest, kind, or talking when you need to.”

Bianca was a bit lost for a moment with this quick shift back to Jack. “Hold on, *I just went somewhere.*”

“Where?”

“A great tower in the middle of the ocean.”

“Ahh. That’s a very special place. You are *really* travelling *now*, kid.”

“The man said we don’t need all this stuff, that consultation, the Creative Word and searching for the truth together, can be a foundation. It cuts through everything, don’t you see.”

“It does, no doubt, if both partners hold these ideals above themselves and all else; if love is first and an unconditional gift to each other. The spiritual pathway is far superior, and so wonderfully simple. But life is messy, and people struggle with lesser forces inside and out, so it’s good to have knowledge of *all* these things. It’s *all* important, kid. It all works together. *Just sayin’*,” offered Jack.

“Isn’t it all just detachment and seeking answers together in the end,” offered Bianca, deep in thought.

“For sure, but people are people, and there is a winding pathway there for most folk. People have different natures and ways of being that have to be *respected* by their partners for things to work too. An *appreciation* of different modes of being is huge, let alone *trusting* in the other’s abilities and *accepting* our own blindness, as well as the *humility* that comes in seeing our own failings,” added Jack, only now realising that Bianca was off in her mind, or was it in inspiration.

He smiled as he went back to working on his supporting walls, leaving the now older, but still wide eyed, explorer to her reflection.

Diving

She dove down through the roof of the old stone building. She had seen its dark form under the water's surface, and as she now swam down through to the ceiling, she suddenly fell out of the water. She fell into air, and down into a treetop. Bianca was certainly glad that the tree had grown there under the opening in the roof.

She gathered her bearings and took hold of a branch as she turned her body to climb down. As she did, she looked all about. It was a double story library, or at least, one floor and a full circle mezzanine floor, both with bookshelves. It was large room and overgrown with vines that climbed the bookshelves and railings of the upper floor. There was only the one tree and some tufts of dry grass growing out of an ornately tiled floor, with leaf litter scattered about.

When Bianca reached the floor and looked up, she thought it would be tricky jumping up to the water again. But she wasn't afraid to give it a go. The library room looked a lot larger from the floor, and she loved the feel of the place. "What is it about libraries and books?" she thought. Then, looking around, she began to explore the bookshelves in the nearest section. She wondered how long it would take to read all these books and thought that a lifetime would not even be enough.

“It is exactly a lifetime’s worth,” came a frail elderly voice, from a chair that was facing away from her and set towards an old fireplace to her right.

An old hand and forearm could be seen then indicating the old lady’s presence more clearly. The fireplace was not lit, and from the leaf litter in it and the weeds growing in the hearth, it had not been afire for a long time.

Bianca walked over to talk with the older soul, and as they locked eyes, she asked, “Exactly a lifetime’s worth?”

“There is a lot to learn in a lifetime, and these are the books I have read and the things I have learned. It is good to be widely read,” offered the lady in a simple off-white dress, and sporting wise and gentle eyes.

“Who are you?”

“Well, that may surprise you a little too much, and it would not be good that you knew,” responded the old soul, as she bade Bianca to sit in a chair beside her, both facing the fireplace.

“So, you don’t represent anything, like the man in my last trip?”

“No, I am simply me. Essences like Consultation are very special. You should feel honoured, but very much more so, use well his tools.”

“I didn’t tell you who he was.”

“No. You didn’t,” answered the woman, with a small smile. “So, how do your journey’s go, young one?”

“I am not that young.”

“You don’t know it, but you most certainly are, and will be for many more years. I am old.”

“Yes, you are,” responded Bianca, and they both laughed almost the same laugh, and with the humour came a bond.

“So, how do your journey’s go?”

“I am travelling again, but to be honest I am more concerned with relationships. I have struggled, and my friend Vodni is struggling too.”

“Ahh, Vodni,” said the old lady, as if drinking deep from the past.

The nature of the reaction was very clear to Bianca, and she said, “You’re me.”

“Yes dear, I am you.”

Bianca looked at her facial features more intently now, and she began to tear up a little as she felt a deep strong feeling rise inside her. It was her, but this older lady was far more. The old lady just sat there doing the same; looking at Bianca’s face more deeply, but to see what lay under it, with some tears, and reminiscing of the great journey in the years between this young traveller and her now.

“This is really wonderful; a little strange, but an honour,” said Bianca, wondering if it was not humble to say so.

“A gift,” agreed the old lady, which allowed Bianca to just feel what she felt.

“I suppose you can’t answer any questions about my life?”

“No, it would only create confusion and mind loops that would tie themselves in knots, and without the unseen challenges ahead of me I would not have grown, and become

what I am. We all need to...not...see the future, as this is part of what creates the reality, the conditions, for our souls to grow. Constructs of life are providence.”

“Sure, I suppose,” accepted Bianca, as her gaze drifted down to her right, and off into questions that seemed to call her name.

“What is it child?”

“There is so much I would want to ask you, but I feel I can’t ask you anything.”

“Mmm, well, we are here, and none is done without the Will of God. Maybe we can talk about life, just not about people and things that will happen.”

Bianca smiled, and said, “That’s great,” launching immediately into her first question. “Why are our feelings toward people that we like different to what we actually see in them through our soul’s eyes sometimes?”

“We are dual; animal and spiritual beings. Sometimes we can hear the words of angels pouring out of someone’s mouth and yet even have the feeling of oppression, pride, or fear. This is a spiritual feeling, or an animal instinct, or both; and should be heeded. To feel the intent, not just the words, is an awareness well worth developing. Words are easy, and there are always two intentions driving us, or at least a measure of each, but even then, we need be sure that it is not our own thoughts and fears that may be misreading someone’s intent,” shared the old lady, and knowing why her younger self had asked this question, she added, “It takes time to really know someone, but seeing a person in struggle and disappointment will give indication of their growth and intent.”

“Sure,” answered Bianca, appreciating the insight, and allowing a little time to consider this little gem.

On reflection, on certain people in her life, she could now see intent, both high and low; some of the mind only, and definitely of the emotions, in various situations. She could see now that even the animal drives and emotions were not blameworthy in themselves, but that maybe a lack of spiritual understanding and oversight had lessened them or let them loose. She could even strangely see that the honesty of such emotional drives put the mind to shame and could even be valuable in finding problems that needed to be remedied.

It was a mix of high and low that she saw mostly, and people learning within these interactions of intent, within a soul, and between souls. In just a small number of the situations that her reflection had found, she saw pure spiritual intent, a truly humble stream of words, and in a few of these, even pure inspiration. There was also so much of the mind alone though, and people not helping but have some pride in what they shared, even in their sharing of the spirit. But there was a particular Persian scholar who wrote of her Faith and recorded various talks on the soul among other things, who poured out a pure humble stream of beauty as he presented highly intellectual understandings of its history and intent. “It wasn’t intellectual. It was spiritual,” she then thought. It was certainly not great oration or prideful in intent. It was simply beautiful.

“Beauty,” she mused. Now seeing spiritual intent simply in a person’s bearing, and even in silence. It was strange for her to now realise that spirit did not draw attention to itself, but to answers, to understanding, or inspiration. She was a little disappointed at the lack of spiritual intent, this beauty, in people generally, seeing pride and the mind in so much of the interactions she recalled, even her own. The mind seemed to get lost in ideas of spirituality on its way to understanding and to true spiritual intent. It was easier to see the lower nature robbing the soul of its growth, compared to the mind lost in its ascendancy or

the main driver of people's behaviour, doing the same. The mind seemed a far greater minefield for the soul to her than the lower nature, right now.

In time, her reflection turned back to relationships, and she looked up, and said, "In another aspect, I've found that if I am attracted physically, and even when someone has a good deal of money, that I would feel a strong attraction, and feel very safe. They are very appealing feelings."

"As they are designed to be, as children have to come into the world and be reared, but you know they are not good reasons to marry."

"Yes, I do."

"Knowing what you are feeling, and from where it rises within your dual nature, is the trick. You seem to know."

"When you have strong feelings of trepidation about being with someone...well, you shouldn't be feeling that if it's right, should you?"

"Strong trepidation, sure, I would say so. But there is always a measure of fear, or at least some anxiety, early on in a new relationship. Take your time, find where the feelings rise, and be very honest with yourself; most especially in considering the great bond of marriage."

"It's about taking the time, then?"

"Most certainly. Considering getting seriously connected too early brings natural fear and some anxiety. Maybe you don't know them well enough yet. Take the time, be friends, seek out the feelings, emotional and spiritual, and listen to what they say, but seek wisdom from The Creative Word and your own valid life experience."

“And from old women, who have lived a little.”

“Mmm...yes and no. Some reach old age with little life experience, little growth, women and men, but certainly the odds are better the longer a person has lived. It is all about what you see. You need to consider things, take in what is valuable, and cast away what is not. In many things I have found that we do not trust ourselves enough.”

“With one man, as you know, I was ready to overlook his problems because I loved him.”

“That is good, as love is something given, not expectations of receiving. All these feelings are good, and our paths are always in service to the growth of others too, especially life partners. But real love, human to human, is to see the attributes of God in them, and to love is to give. We are made in His image and likeness, and kindness, courage, honesty, and good humour, are beautiful. They are some of the things we respect. We don't respect anger, and ego, or dishonesty and selfishness. As an aside though, overemphasis on people's flaws is not useful in relationships of any degree. Love needs overcome all infirmity, and rise above it, as we all have flaws.”

“And ‘seek the truth’ like Consultation told us.”

“Yes. It is the great goal. Lives, marriages, and communities begin to degenerate without this wonderful unfolding quest.”

“Yes. I know I even didn't seek more with one guy because I felt I wasn't enough for him.”

*“I can't say, to this day, about that one,” she said smiling, and Bianca returned it.
“But maybe this particular mirage could only have been tested in walking towards it.”*

“Ughhh! Of course. I suppose I was scared too, at the time. But I have learned since then, that no one is generally more than anyone else.”

“Mostly, and don’t worry for what’s past, dear. It’s all learning; all of it. It is almost, to me now, like the people and situations of our lives are simply tests and learning, through endless cycles of growth. Some long, some short, some within others, some overlapping. Taking part is all you can do. Reflect and act, seek knowledge and reflect again. It is a beautiful process, a human life. A truly wonderful, gift saturated, spiritual experience.”

“And life on the ground can be sweet too.”

“It can. There is balance, and a tension between these that create miracles. The gifts of the material life are sweet, and within moderation and wisdom they can be enjoyed, yet to move with a spiritual intent, and strive to fulfil our high destiny, is a far more worthy goal.”

“Higher volition.”

“Yes, volition, in what you do, for who you love, and in seeking seek to be more; in seeking the truth too.”

“Of course,” said Bianca, just now realising a little more how important it was.

“Spiritual volition rises from higher knowledge, as can be clearly seen in the actions of the ignorant, so if you are wise, seek volition that rises naturally from the knowledge enshrined in The Creative Word; for your elevation, and for those about you.”

A great noise then rose suddenly and terribly as the two, who were one creature, held their hands to their ears.

Bianca woke with huge relief from her dream, as the noise was extremely painful, and also very confusing for some reason. It was greatly disappointing that she was cast out of such a rich and special experience by it, and she was concerned for her older self. She hoped that she was okay, as she now reflected back on the nature of the noise.

She tried to hear it again, and what it felt like, and she became very clear of its nature, but wondered why it had risen so suddenly at that time. It was then that clarity came. The Noise was the antithesis higher volition; it was not humble, it did not seek to learn; its essence did not seek the truth, but to chatter, denigrate, and win. She felt it also had a need to be admired or sought sympathy as an end in itself. It somehow did not seek to make effort, but only to express itself. She could see how the myriad and endless voices, ways, and opinions, within it muddied the mind and confused it, and that the will to act fell to apathy under its weight; apathy, confusion, and even a rising anger.

The Noise had grown on Earth with the coming of televisions and computers, digital phones, and cameras, and while all these things were miraculous manifestations of the human mind, they had created The Noise; that, along with the cultural change, from a culture of character...to one of personality. It had now even grown beyond that lesser place, to a culture of 'me'. These things had created this beast, and it had helped other destructive beasts grow. But strangely, or as all things have the potential of light and darkness, these inventions had also grown a more inter-connected world, providing the tools and communication for more human unity.

A great human conversation had begun, and with it the one human civilisation had come. Creativity and connections across the world between cultures had also grown by these transforming inventions. But the endless self-absorbed chatter had kept many hearts separate, or left them confused, within its endless distraction. It seemed to help raise voices more

angrily in the world, as there seemed no clear and present consequence to such voices within this *construct*, this mind place; while many, so many, sat alone and lonely in front of their screens, all too, adding to The Noise.

“ARE WE TO BE BONDED?” asked Iogair.

“Are you *really asking that question?*” asked Vodni, very disappointed, and then, again, the downward spiral began.

Both were again locked mortally together as they dove deeper into the dark underwater abyss. It always happened. It seemed almost inevitable that, their ways, or was it their lack of growth, their issues and expectations, took these two people where *these things* in them willed them to go.

Iogair just assumed it would all die down here, one day. That they would dive too deep, while seeking solutions and symbiosis, and their bond would die from a lack of oxygen. To him, he had just given into the fact that one day they would never reach the surface together from that far down. What they had together, had not grown gills, and could not stay under for long, and so it was painful to be locked down there for too long. In the end, one of them or the other, would have to seek release and make for the surface alone.

It was then that Bianca returned to where her friend was. It seemed that was nature of Bianca’s travels. It was more linked to people than places.

“Bianca! Thank goodness you are here. I am suffocating here. Let’s go.”

Iogair just smiled hello, followed by a face that showed loss and shame, and was intending to go to his room. But Bianca stayed there looking out at the many lights of his

small underwater city, so he thought to stay for her sake. She watched the white flexible air hoses sway; more so, close to the surface, then ripple down to the underwater pod houses; the lights from the city below illuminating them. The pods were like corals perched on top of, and around, a great undersea stone ridge. They were of many colours, some varied shapes, and configurations, not like the almost singular white dwellings of Vodni's clan.

Her mouth was open, as she moved closer to the large oval window and sat down on what was a window seat to her. There were small craft flying here and there...well...powering through the water that is. They had lights too, and they seemed to follow each other in streams. She smiled, as it seemed like a weekend night in this place.

"It is lovely, isn't it," commented Iogair, seeing his home anew again through Bianca's eyes.

"Yes, it is beautiful," she agreed, not moving her gaze from the vista before her.

"It *is* beautiful," commented Vodni, "but I can't live here."

"*Oh, I could,*" responded Bianca, still in awe of this place.

Vodni was slowly regaining her poise, due to her respect for Bianca, as was Iogair. Vodni now saw clearly the comparison between her demeanour before her friend had appeared and now. There was shame, as these people were spiritually advanced, and Vodni knew she was more than this. Was it Iogair, was it her, or was it that they just did not fit together.

What had kept her in this relationship was that part of her knew she was not growing, and it was a challenge she had to see through. She did care deeply for Iogair too, and could see his gentleness, and honesty, and much more that was good in him. She wanted to succeed,

or at least part amicably, but both these seemed so far away from what was possible right now.

Bianca turned, to see her friend's confused face, and she smiled. Vodni was not happy about that, but it made Iogair lighten a little; not too much of course, as the wrath of Vodni would reach him; if not tonight, sometime in the future. It seemed that she could not let anything go. She seemed to need to control so much, and it always had him scrambling. He was a bit lost in himself too and seemed to have no answer. He could see that they were very different in personality so it would take more effort and spiritual poise, and a lot of love, to create a good union. He always felt that he fell short of her expectations, but how could he *not* be who *he was*.

“Are you two fighting again?”

“No,” said Vodni. “We haven't *stopped*. It is becoming like our baseline position.”

“Yes, it is, and maybe that is telling us something, Vodni,” ventured Iogair.

“Oh, just give up, why don't you! You have no *will* in you. You just want to walk away.”

“I don't, Vodni. I just think this thing is sinking to the bottom and taking us down with it, and maybe we should make for the surface each alone. So, we can breathe, and rest.”

“What then?” challenged Vodni, not letting go.

“I don't know, but if we don't let go, we'll both drown.”

Vodni looked down, and Bianca's heart went out to these two souls. She put her hand on her friend's upper back, and gave Iogair a respectful glance, with a strong feeling of sadness for them both. It was then she thought of something.

“What about all the people that you communicate with, Vodni? Maybe one of them has a solution. Surely one of them has had a good idea.”

“I communicate with many people, but my personal life is my own. They are not like you. You are my friend. We go back all the way to when it all began for me, and we shared far more deeply.”

Bianca was now thinking just how much she had made her own personal life everybody's business on her travels, and she laughed a bit. Vodni was not happy with the laugh, but the Traveller explained, and both sahona grew a wide smile...well their eyes did...and thankfully relaxed a little.

“Well, maybe you should open up to people,” offered Bianca. “I have had no end of good advice when I did; even from myself!”

“Yourself?” said Iogair.

“It seems that I found my older self in my recent travels.”

“Geog! How was that?” asked Vodni, seemingly impossibly wide eyed.

“Geog!” added Iogair, straightening up a little.

“It was amazing, but it didn't last long.”

“Still, who would not like that, even for a short time,” commented Iogair. “Who else have you met?”

It was then that Bianca twigged to an answer that might be of value to these two. It was strange that they did not know about consultation in such an evolved world.

“I met a man called Consultation. He seemed to think that any foundation could be built on his spirit.”

“Consultation?”

“Seeking the truth together...in spiritual conference.”

“We have such ways, but we can’t seem to get there. I don’t know, Bianca. I think that I want to be friends again with Vodni, and just have done with all this pain for us both. Sometimes it’s just about incompatibility.”

“Have you tried consultation? Like, *really* tried it? Maybe you have just lost track of what you have gained in your people’s evolution; what has brought your people here. Maybe like anyone, you are sinking back into old and lesser ways.”

“Maybe,” said Vodni, looking at Iogair, in a loving and hopeful way. “Maybe, *I* have been the one mostly,” she then admitted, because of his honesty about how he was feeling.

He looked at her and straightened up a little more, and she liked him more for it. He felt better too, being more forthright. In her simple act of humility, she had been clearly reminded of the power of searching for the truth and looking to her own failings. They both strongly felt the power of these, and the small inner changes in them both, to help them dive deeper; to not strain so much and suffer so much trying to breathe down there. They had gone under a little again with this, but their lungs seemed to be fully replenished. Maybe consultation was like gills for them, and maybe they could finally dive deeper.

Both of them started to relax and breathe, and their hearts began to open. They smiled at each other, knowing that they had a way forward.

“Geog!” said Vodni, smiling and with some renewed gusto.

“Geog!” agreed Iogair.

“*Geeog!*” called out Bianca, reasonably sure it was a very positive word, and they all had a good laugh.

THEY FELL TOWARDS THE OCEAN AT AN INSANE SPEED. The two dragons had hold of each other and they spun as they fell. They were falling, just as they always fell when they tried to fly together. The only way to the Veld was being able to fly as one. The union had to be complete, or they would never break through to the High Veld. The female dragon screamed, and the other dragon let go, but steadying her flight for her balance as he did. She flapped her wings to escape before the surface and tipped his wing, sending him spiralling into the ocean. Fortunately, he allowed the spin to continue, cutting through the water as he splashed down, not hitting it, like a wall.

She did not turn to see what his fate was. She just turned and flew to the lagoon. She had had *enough* this time. She was going to sleep again, deep beneath the glassy surface of the lagoon. She loved it there. It calmed her, and she could always sleep soundly there. Only when her being woke her again each time did she remember the pain of their last attempt, and all the many ones before that. She was now growing old and had often hoped each time that maybe this time the lagoon would no longer wake her. But it always did.

The pain in her was just too heavy to stay aloft, and she decided today to just not bother with him anymore. The relief of her decision, along with a different pain that now coursed through her, brought her into a melancholy. She then landed on the sand beside the coral lagoon, lying flat on her belly with her wings out and her head pointed along the beach, contemplating her confusion and surrender. The creature closed its eyes to rest a little, and when it opened them, He was there.

“Who are you?” she commanded. “I am in the mood to toast people, so I would just go off somewhere else if I was you.”

“I am here to help. It seems those of the High Veld wish to see you there. They have called on my services.”

“I am heading back to sleep forever under the crystal surface,” pronounced the dragon, as she indicated the lagoon with her eyes. She could not be bothered sitting up, and even the movement of her eyes seemed a strain for her right now.

“Well, I can...”

She blew him down the beach with a great sigh of abject resignation; and she closed her eyes again. The man rolled quite a few times before he gathered his feet, and smiled a little, as he made his way back.

“Just leave me be. I am done.”

“You have surrendered, and it is no quirk of chance that I am here right now. In surrender I may share more easily with you. In humility you may yet succeed.”

“Oh, for God’s sake!”

“Not for His, for He can well dispense with you, but for *your* sake, and that of your mate. It is in the will to try, and for the *sake* of your mate that you will succeed; not in the will to make your own lot better, or that your expectations be fulfilled.”

The dragon responded with another sigh, which again sent the man rolling down the beach. In that great sigh was even more resignation to her unhappy fate. He brushed himself off and came again to her. For Consultation, it was not about the hardship, or about him. It was about his care for her. The creature looked up at him again from her defeated place with eyes that now said that she would at least listen.

“Within your love for your intended mate, is the answer; in your care for him, and in his for you. A union is not a place of self, it is a place of service, as it is in all things that build, grow, and nurture.”

The dragon heard his words and was not at all well pleased to hear them. She knew her failure, but she knew her mate’s too. But this time, a deep pain struck her heart at this judgement of her intended, as she became aware that *her pain* was of self. It was all of self, and she wept at it, knowing that she may be reason she had failed to reach the veld...the reason *they* had failed to reach the veld.

“Is he not also responsible?” she asked, still knowing it was not just her.

“Yes and no. Your shared dynamic has not been something that can evolve, as it is built around judgement and negative emotions. I can help though, or at least, I can provide the construct for you to help yourselves, but *your* love and humility are also required.”

As he finished the male dragon lightly touched down. He was drenched, and his skin glistened in the light of the sun. Humility was clear in his face, and she strangely saw no

weakness there for the first time since their shared journey began; or was it the second time. It had started that way, she now remembered, and she wondered how it had come to this.

“Who are you?” asked the male dragon.

The man in the light blue suit answered, “I am Consultation.”

The defeated female dragon now sat up and faced her mate eye to eye. “I do not know if I can wipe the darkness away, and part of me still fights to return to deep within myself, but I will try.”

He was shocked with her words, and bowed in a way of nobility, and respect to her. “I may have been too weak to aid you and tried too hard to please you. Maybe I have also let this darkness between us grow because I did not have the courage to stand true to what I felt, and just tell you so. I have been weak.”

“You have been kind.”

“Yes, but kindness was not what you required more of. You required honesty, and I failed to give it. I gave in to judging you, and feeling sorry for myself, as much as anything else. You required my confidence, and to engage; to *be part* of this.”

“I always felt deep down that you were not present.”

“Yes, as I moved away from *myself*, from my *true* words, to be kind to you, I can see that I moved away from *you*. I was here, but I was not.”

“Do you care for me?”

“I do not know. There has been so much darkness between us,” admitted the male dragon, honestly, and with a feeling of strength growing, “but I am willing to make an effort, now that our honesty has brought us to a closer proximity.”

“Yes, I have been distant in my own way. My anger at you for not being what I needed kept me from you. But if I fight, you must *fight*, and be *honest* with me.”

“I wish you would be *kinder*, and talk to me with some *respect*, as while I am powerful, such words as I have endured from you smash my heart and send me away, even though I may still be here with you outwardly.”

“If I may add to your consultation?”

“Please,” they said in unison, and they smiled at each other.

It had been so long since these two had smiled that it was like their faces had struggled to remember it, but it certainly felt good to use these muscles again.

Consultation saw all this, and then said gently, “It feels good to be of service to those who are close to us, and it lifts the soul and life energies within us. It is lovely to feel the light of our bonds growing, but see it is a new seed that you must fertilize and nurture together. You need to water it and tend to it, to each other, in times of drought and struggle. There is no good thing...that just...*is*. The *work* builds the bond, and *self* will erode it. Remember each other first.”

“I feel it,” said one.

“Yes,” agreed the other.

“You must seek the truth, as you have done today. It takes humility and love, and frank honesty. It may be difficult for your lower being to go through, but rest assured with spiritual effort, courage, humility, and compassion, you will always come to a new freedom within you and a deeper bond.”

“So, even the hard things strengthen the bond,” commented the male dragon, as if surprised.

“Seek the truth first. It needs be your goal. Be kind, as love is kind. Make love your goal, *not* your lower nature’s bleatings. Look to overcome old wounds and unrealistic expectations, together. Find the will. Seek *the truth*, together.”

With that Consultation was gone; or was he. The two dragons looked to each other and smiled. They were relieved, but still understood that they had a good deal of work to do.

“It may take some time, and some failures, but we *will* fly together,” said the male with confidence, and for the sake of his intended.

Though both dragons still held to the sand for now, an *upward* spiral had begun.

Noise

Bianca could not hear Jack through the noise. She felt anger rising to a prominence within it, and there was also a heat that came with it like in the build-up before the monsoon season. It was hot, hard, and stultifying, and it felt as if her mind was being torn apart by the opposition, and cries to battle, within it.

Jack came over and shouted in her ear. It was a shock to her system, but the Noise dissipated.

“Are you okay? There was something in your ear.”

“Angry noise.”

“A sign of the times. I heard it in many places that I travelled to. The chatter seems all pervasive and begins to become a thing within itself, as people slowly buy into the reality of their own chatter; so, the drama, anger, and division, just heats up. Demons are seen everywhere as division and self-interest grow. It *will* affect your world, and may even incinerate it, if it doesn't abate.”

“I feel its heat rising more and more quickly.”

These words then graced the air above them, and they read them as they floated there.

“...the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century.”⁷

After a short while Jack continued talking about his experiences with the Noise. “It’s the mind, driven by lower drives and lower consciousness; chattering away, and not guided by the spirit. The new technologies are like a loud hailer amplifying these lower thoughts within us.”

“Sure, I feel that. It’s overwhelming.”

“Fortunately, an integrating unifying power grows alongside it at such a time. Better to embrace the new technology, and put it, your focus, and your energies behind this evolving positive energy, rather than just listening to the negative talk, or adding to the Noise.”

“Yep, it’s not the new implements that grow out of the wells of good science. It’s people’s lower natures being amplified, and it comes between us.”

“Yes, the darkness is coming out to be seen clearly, so it can be cast away.”

“I’ve seen families broken up over the divisions and polarities that are growing out there. People’s minds are getting busier and busier too, and no one seems to reflect much. They just continue to react. They don’t seek the truth of a matter, or reach out; they just take a side, and get angrier.”

“It’s a fever of the mind, and one to keep out of our homes, and definitely put healthy boundaries on within ourselves and in our families. It will break like any fever, though.”

“Yes, I see that. I can now *really feel* how an excess of speech can devour our energy and destroy our bonds.”

“It seems...”

Jack had not finished, but Bianca was gone, and he smiled, knowing how that was. He turned to finish working on the walls. The house was taking more shape now, and he took some real joy from it. He had been very worn down when he came here, and deep in him he just wanted his journeys to be over. He was so *done* with the travelling, but Bianca, and building this place, was beginning to spark more life in him again. He was glad to be here for her mostly.

THE COUPLE WERE WAITING TO DISEMBARK. They were visiting Vodni’s brother. He was working with the crews on a new undersea construction; the first of its kind. They were building a great glass dome, a huge bubble of glass and steel on the seabed. It was not a deep seabed, as it was a new form of construction, and the engineers were taking care with the forces that it needed to withstand. It was now sealed onto the foundations and had been filled with air. A city would soon be built on the base that sat on the sea floor, and people who settled here would not need to take tubes or submarine vehicles from home to home, or to public buildings.

Vodni did not know it, but her brother had invited her father too. He was working on building a new current generator some distance away that would mostly power this new city. Her older brother had been concerned about her and Iogair for a long time, and really wanted

to help them to bond, or to part, for both their sakes. He had not told his father about this, he had just invited him, and would see how things panned out. Maybe they could help. He was not sure; he just cared enough to make an effort by getting them all together.

It was Vodni's mother, Logija, who had been somewhat the instigator, as she had been quite concerned on their recent visit and had discussed it with her son. She had hoped that the deep bond between these two siblings might help, and she knew her son was very spiritually mature. He would only be a good influence. She knew he would not get in the middle, but see what was, and hopefully aid this young couple. He had a good marriage, and two children of his own. He loved them more than life and adored his wife. She was strong and supportive, and they had grown a deep bond and built a solid home. His wife and he had built their love on strong foundations; true foundations of love and spirit, not of just words that pertain to these things.

The young couple walked hand in hand out through the pressure hatch that the submarine bus had docked with. It mainly ferried workers back and forth each day from Eljanon; Iogair's home city. But some, like Trean, Vodni's brother, lived on site, and would travel home after a week's work to be with his family. Great care was taken in this world that family be supported. They knew that the bonds of marriage, which held together the bonds of families, were one of the great foundations of society. Yet, because of the maturity of these people they also knew the importance of work, and that sacrifices were required in life, and in building a continually evolving civilisation.

Trean was very happy to see the hand holding. He could not remember that ever happening, and from his sister's reports to date it had seemed even more unlikely. His heart warmed to see his sister and Iogair's smiling faces as he waved to them through the small crowd. He liked Iogair, and he knew they cared for each other. There was also an ease in his

sister's face that he had not seen since she was young. That carefree child had seemed to have returned. This had been her way as a youth; that, and endless curiosity, had kept her out and wandering, often well past sundown.

She was a joy, and her joy was obvious as she raced up to hug him. He smiled at Iogair, and Iogair nodded and smiled in a way that showed he was stronger now somehow. These were good portends.

“Well, you two look well.”

They both smiled wide, and then so did Treaan, as he turned and proffered them the way out of the large airlock.

“This is magnificent, Treaan. It's so much larger from the inside,” commented Iogair as they walked along a construction walkway towards the quarters. “How long since it's been sealed?”

“We just pumped out the last water yesterday. It was a great day. All the air fan units are online now, and it's good to be out of pods and vehicles. I think I've been under here too long.”

“I don't know how you do it. You were always out in the sun, on the beach, and building houses in the trees,” said Vodni, so happy to be with her brother.

“Well, we all have to make sacrifices. Maybe one day I will have had enough of this work, and I'll work on construction above the water. This work gets in your gills though.”

“You don't have gills,” commented Vodni, as she realised just how huge the dome was.

“Most of my crew do. Just part of the language down here. Let’s go get a bite to eat. There’s a canteen across there,” he finished, pointing to some temporary shops.

They chatted about the structure and height of the great bubble as they walked; Trean experiencing the natural flow now between these two. His sister even held herself back from saying something that might offend. Iogair noticed too, and told her to speak out, as he knew it was just for fun. While the difference between a bit of fun and a personal barb is a gulf, and may be misconstrued, it was worth the risk if the intent is good. Low intentions *can* use humour to attack and demean without repercussions, but humour sneaks up on us with gifts of surprise, and who could live without such a joy in life.

As they sat down Trean commented on her composure, and the couple talked a little excitedly about how consultation and Iogair’s near surrendering of the relationship had changed things.

“We don’t let the noise of our lower selves win. We listen to it, but then we explore it and communicate. We don’t get angry, we *get curious*. Well, we *do* get angry, and upset, sometimes, but we know we can sort it out, so it doesn’t last long. We take the time; and we give our bond time. We often sit in the quiet now and just talk with each other,” explained Vodni.

“Yes, no more going for long periods in pain. We *talk* now, and we watch out for each other more,” added Iogair.

“And *he speaks up*.”

“After I’ve worked out what is making me frustrated or concerned. Otherwise, I just get lost trying to explain it. I take my own counsel for a while first.”

“But sometimes it takes us both talking to really find the truth of things. We’re just more *together* in it. It’s not about him or me now. It’s about *us*, and it’s *really* good.”

“Healthy,” added Iogair.

Trean said, “That’s great. Let’s get up and order,” knowing that what needed to be said was now said. He had learned that it was always better to just get on with life and live *it*, not talk *it*, or our enthusiasm, to a standstill. Better to use the energy of these things to live and do. He also knew that words within words, on other words, produced little, after a certain point.

BIANCA WAS HALFWAY THROUGH HER TIME OFF. She had been travelling here and there between time with Jack and Vodni, learning all measure of things. She was going at any time it seemed now, and it was confusing when she suddenly left; or returned in the same moment that she had left. She had gathered greater poise as it happened to her more, and was happy to fit more time, or was that be more *outside* time, to travel. It was so exciting, even though at times confusing.

She now sat in her family’s living room, and her mother, Joanne, came in and plonked down beside her, saying, “I love sitting down. I could sit down *forever*, and I could read forever.”

“And watch movies.”

“And listen to music. And play games on my smart pad.”

Bianca smiled, then her gaze went off somewhere, and her mother saw her drifting.

“Where are you wandering?”

“I wish I could tell you.”

“You can tell me anything, Beautiful. You know that.”

“I do,” said Bianca knowing that this was for later, if at all, after the trouble caused the last time she had been travelling. It was then she remembered back and recalled that Time was a local psychologist and Change was her husband. She began to laugh, remembering him sitting in the waiting room in his space suit, and saying, “Not crazy!” to her father as they had walked by.

“What’s so funny? Let *me in*,” said Joanne, with pokes to the ribs like she did when Bianca was small. Joanne was very emotionally out there and liked a bit of fun. This was not strange behaviour at all for her.

“Cas’s husband, in the space suit,” she said smiling. They both laughed out loud, and had a good on and off, slowly waning giggle together.

“I still don’t *get that*,” commented Joanne, after having met Cas those years ago.

“Are they still here?”

“I don’t know. I suppose they aren’t. He is *hard* to miss,” commented Joanne, and they both giggled at that.

As the laughter settled though, Joanne came to the realisation of a link between Bianca’s old troubles and today.

“Have you been having experiences again? Is that the *real* reason you came home?”

“No. I needed to come home to search my feelings; get some distance between me and my life to see better, and get some rest too, Mum. Home’s like a big warm hug that holds you up for a while when you’re low. It’s a place to rest easy, for me.”

“Oh, Dear, I’m *so* glad it is like that for you, and you can have *that hug*, any time, and for as long as you want.”

“I know, Mum. Thanks. I’ve been learning a lot about relationships lately. Ours has *always* been good. You and Dad are really good people.”

“Yes, life gets more difficult when we grow up; many challenges...people and connections, not the least of them.”

“It is a constant challenge...”

“And a *great* joy,” chimed in Joanne, pouring positive energy into her girl. “You will never be fully free. No one is *ever* at ease *always*, and you will *never* know enough. It’s how you meet things, and how you learn, that counts. It’s how you affect what’s around you; situations, projects, and people.”

“Sure,” agreed, Bianca.

“The constant challenge of life *makes* life. We have to be adventurous, strive forward when we’re scared, and get into the rough and tumble. Do as much of life as we can with good humour too; there is plenty of great stand-up comedy material in life.”

They regarded each other with smiles as she said these words. These were not just words. They were not just noises to make her child feel better. Her mother actually lived like that. She was so much fun and would often laugh at the most heart-rending stories that people told her. They knew that she knew their pain, and saw their predicament, but it somehow

helped them see the craziness of life in their story. Her laughter helped them stand back, and she was sure that it helped them make light of things somehow, or she would have learned not to do it. Bianca's mother had reached emotional honesty quicker than most. She was very compassionate, could feel the pain of others, and always sought to relieve it.

“So, beautiful girl, what is *really* going on in there?” she asked, as she knew her daughter, and still wanted her to let her in.

Bianca sat there, so much not wanting to lie to her mother, but wanting to protect her, and herself, from complications of opening up fully with her.

“To be honest, mum. I think one day I will share some things with you, but really, I am exploring relationships. I suppose choosing not to marry has brought it all on. They are sure not simple.”

“Relationships; the really close ones like marriage and children bring challenges, and they make us vulnerable.”

“But love, what is it really? People are so intent on it, yet it seems to be a struggle for us.”

“For me, love is being able to be yourself, at ease, open, vulnerable, and honest; or at least I don't think it is available any other way. We need to be ourselves or what is the point? Be real and find the real person in who you care for. Take your time, and don't use the glass of fear, *or* rose-coloured glasses. The magic is in the seemingly ordinary, in hardships, in time, and a real bond is magic.”

“I have seen a few friends and acquaintances struggle with relationships lately.”

“The hard things can make your bond grow deeper you know, and *understanding* is so important to work your way through things. You grow deeper and your relationship grows deeper. It, like all things, takes will, and for your father and I, working things out is informed by our belief in the Messenger. We believe we are spiritual beings, and the Knowledge of God informs our actions.”

“So, you have the will to make things good because you believe in God?”

“That, and what rises from the wisdom the Physician has brought; the *true understanding* of our deeper reality, an understanding of the spiritual tools available to us, and *our high spiritual destiny*. It gives us the will to fight for each other; to see to each other’s needs over our own. These things are about honesty, continued growth, in unconditional love for each other.”

“So, keep it real, be vulnerable, and make the effort.”

“Yes, otherwise you are *not* really together.”

“I met a man who taught me a lot about consultation. He said we have to seek the truth, with frankness and compassion, in all situations. I’ve seen it in the community, but I never saw it as something to use in relationships.”

“*Sure*. It helps couples, and families, focus on the solution, and not get so caught up in the noise around us; as well as the noise within ourselves. Prayer’s really important before you start too. It helps orient us in our higher being, a higher reality, for the process, and with practise it eventually just becomes a natural way of being.”

“Like I said, I had never thought to use it in my relationships, but it fits anywhere. I’m even going to use it with my lecturers and at work when I get out there.”

“That’s great. Consultation unites people, in all things, marriage, family and community. It is a *glorious* thing, yet seemingly so ordinary.”

“There *is* magic in the ordinary,” said Bianca, repeating her mother’s words from earlier in the conversation.

“Yes, and the will, the volition that rises from *true knowledge* is powerful,” smiling back to her girl who she loved beyond all things. “And...

“Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble and there is always time.”⁸

IT WAS NOW SOME DAYS LATER, AND BIANCA FELT AT EASE. She wandered down the old road hoping to see that old man. She was now realising that ease or hardship, as well as, confusion or clarity, were becoming of less concern to her. It was strange to feel that way, but she had been through so much lately that she knew that they...*just were*. They were all part of life and all important. She *hoped* that this new strength would stay with her, even though almost deeply *sure* in herself that it would.

It was like something had now changed within her. She seemed to have reached a spiritual plateau, and now walked easily along its flat surface, even though knowing that the climb would begin again sometime; as it must.

She smiled at all that, as she walked along. She had not travelled since talking with her mother and was glad of it. She wanted to see Grandpa Jack, but she also didn’t in a way. She was enjoying the plateau and the rest from strain. There is a time for all things, and all has its value. She knew deeply that she would want to climb again, but for now, it was enough that she wandered down the old road.

She could feel that she was spiritually stronger. But it was not from her recent journeys alone. Since she had stopped travelling again, she had spent more time in meditation on the Creative Word, and reflection on its light in her life. Her strength rose, not only from her experiences, from the power of her returning to the spiritual knowledge enshrined in her Faith, rather than the knowledge of the world. So much of the world seemed irrelevant and even almost ludicrous right now, as she had had the time to wander deeply within the Stirrings of the Spirit, and with little distraction.

She laughed right then at how we humans carry on, herself included. She knew she would always face new tests and maybe be a little lost again. Her reflections were definitely not being judgmental of herself or anyone else, or feeling superior, she was just seeing things humorously. For her right now, humility or superiority did not even seem to be poles she needed to swing to. She just *was* today. Her mind was quiet, and she awaited the breezes of inspiration as she wandered on. The day was beautiful, and she looked around with little thought. She just wandered, and soon a writing she had read this morning came to her.

It was not long before the flow of inner vision began to pour down. Like the Writing she recalled, *its meaning*, had opened the gates to more understanding; there was so much, as new insights, one after the other, cascaded down past her mind and into her soul. She wanted to capture some of it with her mind, but was afraid that the flow would cease and separate her from the deep connection she now felt in her heart. She felt love and knowledge flow down together as she connected with the divine; as the quote gave forth its children.

Eventually, she fell out of that place, and as she came out of her thoughts, she heard the sounds of nature, finding herself moving with very slow and reverent steps upon the Earth; each one precious in itself. She then found in this calm state, a good view of the manic

nature of The Noise in comparison. The rabid noise of humanity saddened her, but she also began to slowly gather a tiny aspect of what she had drawn down.

The small insight, or aspect, was an implication the quote had provided; how she and other people saw *ease* as happiness. How that ease and receiving constant gratification could be a void, an unhappy and unfulfilling place. Most still seemed intent on gaining happiness in perpetuating this state, but she saw now very clearly the opposite; that challenge, or real service to others which strains us is enlivening, bringing energy to us, and to those around us. The manic chase after elongated ease, or having our focus just on our own gain, or even copiously airing our opinions, depleted our energies and took energy from others; just leaving us fighting for the *crumbs of the world* to power us up.

Going back through the flow of insights in her memory, she saw that the soul, like the body, needs its exercise through life and effort. Also, that everything in life requires *constant energy input*, chemical, biological, mechanical, economic, spiritual, emotional, and even love; that there are sources and the Ultimate Source. Every environment or part of us required input of these energies to remain alive and vital. She now clearly understood that spiritual energy flowed through The Messengers. That it gave the required inspiration for the volition to act in the progressive nurturing of the human system. Their Message was at once, the love energy required, and the understanding of how to bring more of it to the human kingdom; to aid humanity's evolution, and hopefully flow out to the biological and the material aspects of life.

She saw that marriage could be a dynamo for bringing actions of this spiritual love energy into the world. That these bonds too were energised by this higher love that flowed endlessly and copiously, when souls were free from the ego and fear of the lower animal reality. That *every human soul* was actually a portal of love to this place, and that if we step

aside from *ourselves* this energy could flow through us, into our unions, our families, and communities. It was always there, and she saw clearly how each heart was the gate that regulated the flow of this essential energy into the world.

She looked at the world through this new glass, and saw the focused intent on money, and its gain, alone; all driven from both greed and fear, and in some souls, to seem greater in the eyes of their fellows, or to gain influence. She saw coffee, alcohol, and drugs being used to fill the void of lovelessness in the world; spiritual inspiration cast aside. People seemed lost in the soma, so they could ease the pain, to face again and again, the bullets and barbed wire of a loveless world; the noise of battle and cries of pain, rising daily.

She then saw Volje standing ahead of her. It had been so long since she had seen this essence of life. It was nice to see her again. They now regarded each other with respect, and the essence of volition gave her these words.

“The world is lost in its separation from God. The Noise will grow, and its anger will grow as the intensity of its fight with itself grows. You must deafen yourself to it and rise higher. *See it*, yet do not be distracted by it, and turn your gaze to His Face. Stand there and do not turn.”

Bianca looked to The Creator, feeling freedom from the noise of the world and her own mind. She liked very much this turning her face to His.

“First is Knowledge,” Volition then added, as she quoted these words...

“Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared.

God’s purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.”⁹

Bianca took a little time to see some of the implications of these words, and of what Volition had shared with her. They were endless, but as her soul had interacted with these words, it more so presented thoughts of children, thoughts of young families, and the nature of the noise. She did not know why these aspects were so strong in her reflection, but she would no doubt come to see why, as the future unfolded for her.

This morning, and these insights, had now made her keen to get out into life again, and she was very much over the noise of her own mind, even though the insights were deep. There had been other ways that the noise had grown *within* her; times when she had locked herself busily into the outer noise of the world; even times when her life had become too small, or in other periods of too much ease and predictability. She had found herself overconcerned of endless small things when her life was that small. There was no real ease there, and definitely not when she was engrossed in the dramas of the world. It was always an *anxious* noise, not one of the minds seeking understanding, but one of fear.

“Better to have a bigger life than a small one racked with fear though,” she thought. It was time for her to engage again and take some chances. She was quite clear now on so

many things; and one definitely being that life would not stop happening, so she should get out there and take it on.

There is a time to reflect, a time to wait, a time to manage things, and a time to act on things; times to be active, times to rest, times to go hard, and times to just live. But none of these times *are* life, or fulfilling, alone. Just like the ocean is perfect in its constant change of mood, the sky surprises and thrills us with the beauty of a sunset, or nature brings to our senses the magnificence and power of the storm then lets it pass to the peace beyond it. Change is life.

Bianca could now feel that her travelling had ceased again, and that she was to connect with new purpose and new people now. Much of our life is written and its cycles set. The wisdom of what must unfold for us needs be trusted, but the responsibility of our effort needs be taken on *our own* beings; certainly too, not anyone else's. One cycle of life was ending and a new one was on the near horizon for her. *All* moves through *cycles* in existence; the great spiral galaxies turn, the sun with its solar maximums and minimums, the moon as it regulates the tides, the cycle of the seasons and fruiting; just as our lives cycle through childhood, to adulthood, to parenthood, to old age. Too many are the cycles of life, to mention here.

She took a deep breath in, and then turned to walk home, to take part in the story of her life again. She walked a little faster now, was purposed in her stride, and she felt strong. She could hardly wait to get home, and pack, and get back into things. She would knock on the door of life again, and just walk on through. But, as fate unfolded for her, and as it tends to come from behind and a little to the side of what we imagine, life was to call at *her* door right now.

As she came around a corner, she saw a man standing on the old road. He was looking to the empty place where Old Jack had been building his home; maybe sometime in the future, maybe in a *deeper place*, she didn't know.

The man seemed quite reflective as he stood there, then turned to Bianca as he noticed her movement.

She knew this man, at least he seemed familiar, and as she came closer, she called out, "Able Jones?"

"Hello," he replied, unsure who this woman was, yet taken by her, and by the fact that she was here; this place where his grandfather, or really his *great great* grandfather, had called him to, in a dream.

"He *has* been here," said Bianca plainly, as she reached the spot.

"What do you mean?"

"Aren't you looking for Grandpa Jack?"

"Who *are* you?"

"I'm Bianca. I was in your community. I always *loved* your stories."

"Bianca. *Wow*, you *sure* have grown up," he commented, smiling; then blushing, just as she did.

Connections

There was nine years between these two souls; between the individualization of their souls, and the association of them to their physical being. It had also been nine years since Able's return to planet Earth. He had struggled since then to keep his feet on the ground, as he and his family had been told in no uncertain terms that they could no longer Travel. An Agent had returned Able Jones home, many years after his disappearance to another world in a far galaxy. After being lost to his family from the age of twelve, and only returning in his twenties, his mother had been very much on board with them all staying on terra firma.

Able had wanted to become an Agent, and was invited to, but he could not stand to break his mother's heart again. Some say we cannot do things to suit the hearts, or live for the aims, of others. Maybe this so. Maybe it is sometimes not. But fate, and Able's heart had called on him to stay with his family. He believed that in time it would be right to venture out, so he studied all he could about Travelling with his grandpa and learned the technology of vortex travel with his mother. She had wanted him to know this science because she never wanted him to be cast away again without hope of return.

He had even created his own wristwatch to allow such travel but had never used it. He knew that eventually a time would come for its use, yet recently his doubts about that had grown. He was beginning to believe that he would never leave, and so just needed to get on with a real life here instead of dreaming of travelling anymore. But right now, he could strangely sense that both of these were now near in his future.

Bianca too, could feel the tide of change growing stronger due to this meeting, as they both relaxed a little from the attraction and its tension. They sat back from it, respecting each other, and really wanting to know whose company they now stood in.

“How was he here? He called me here in a dream, and he was sitting on a veranda, but the house had no roof.”

Bianca smiled. “I don’t know how he was here,” while thinking whether she should open up to Able. “*Maybe all those stories Able told were true; stories of Sandwalkers and airships,*” she thought, remembering the magic of his telling them. “*Maybe he’s a Traveller. His Grandpa was...is?*” she thought.

Able looked at her gentle face, and thankfully took the plunge for her, “Are you a Traveller?”

“Yes,” she almost cried, experiencing a strong emotional release in admitting it. Someone real, in the real world, now knew. She was not sure what the feeling’s full nature was, but she definitely felt less alone right now.

“Well. Welcome to the crew.”

“You too?”

“I have travelled some. You know...the stories I told.”

“Yes, they were wonderful. They *were* real?”

“Yes. They were, mostly.”

“Thanks, Able. They helped me so much when I travelled as a young girl. They had the spirit and flavour of travelling in them, and I suppose I didn’t feel so alone when I heard them. Now I know why.”

“So, do you travel with a device?”

“No, I just get taken.”

“*Well, a true-blood.*”

“A true-blood?”

“That’s the word Grandpa Jack used. It doesn’t mean anything. Well, at least I don’t think so. He always gave the rest of us a hard time because we needed devices to travel. But you don’t, eh.”

“No. But I have little choice of where I wander...well...I do think my intent to be somewhere, or to learn some things, seems to take me places.”

“That sounds like what Grandpa said, but he always added that he was never quite sure.”

“What can you be sure of?” asked, or commented, Bianca.

“*Some things, maybe,*” he said, with a charming smile, and Bianca smiled back.

“*Maybe,*” she said, as they both broke into laughter.

“It is lovely to meet you again, Bianca.”

“Same, Able.”

“So, where’s Jack?”

“He’s building a house here at some time in the future, I imagine. He’s a younger Jack, but a Jack after *your* Grandpa Jack, *somehow*,” she said, but it was more of a strange inner feeling that made her say that. “He is here sometimes, and not at others. He even lets me call him Grandpa Jack,” she added, now realising that they never talked of Able, his family, or their community. She had just never said anything to him about Able or his family on her visits. She supposed that she was more focused on the confusion and adventure of all the Travelling. Old Jack never asked of them either for some reason. She did not know the why of that.

“It seems you are part of the family now,” said Able, a little teary from being reminded of his missing the old man.

Able’s comment left Bianca a little self-conscious, a little warmed, and a little more supported.

“If I see him again, I will pass on anything you need to pass on,” offered Bianca, while knowing her intent and life now lay very much here, on Earth, and with the deep feeling that she would not be travelling; at least for a good while. But we say some things at times just to comfort another.

“I believe his intent in bringing me here was that I meet *you*.”

“*Really*,” responded Bianca, blushing a little again. “I could sure do with a friend; someone I can share my experiences with openly. It is so wonderful; like an anchor in the changing sea.”

“You’ve been alone, but not anymore. Mum and Dad are travellers too. So, like I said, you are family now,” said Able, smiling in his gentle way.

This young man always had a gentle way about him, but he was strong from his experiences, and had even done Agency style work on some worlds on his way home. He and Agent Deveroux had found themselves here and there as they jumped around the universe working their way home, and they had done any duty required of them as they had travelled.

“Thank you, Able,” she said, and then called out, “Thank you, Grandpa Jack.”

Able smiled, his heart going out to this lady who had travelled alone...all this time. She had not of course, as her family was her rock, and Jack and Vodni and others had graced her journeys. But even so, she had been alone and very courageous. Thankfully things were changing.

“Would you like to come with me and have a chat with my parents?” asked Bianca.

“I was always told that it’s better not to tell others of our Travelling, as it is too hard for them to bear; even if there are two of us telling them.”

“I actually didn’t ask you to meet them for that reason. I don’t want to burden them with that. I actually just wanted to make sure that *you’re* real,” she said, now a little vulnerable.

“For sure, it would be lovely to see them. Your mum is real hoot.”

Bianca smiled, as they headed off down her old road together, both of them not believing what they had found.

THE DRAGONS FLEW HIGH. They were now purple in colour, with eyes and breasts of green, and they spiralled around each other as they ducked and dove along a particular flight path. It was because they looked to each other as they flew, that they flew so well together, as that was the main reason they had failed before now.

He seemed so much stronger now, and she realized that she had gaoled him in her expectations, like he could somehow be what he was not created to be. She was so much more loving and was interested in whom he really was now. He felt strong, and loved, and so *loved* to do things for her now. He no longer felt weak as he did before, kowtowing to her when she was angry. He despised how weak he had been, and she felt shame for how judgmental and disrespectful she had been. He now saw that she could not have respected him as he was, and she saw how she drove him to lesser ways when she had acted so badly.

They saw how all these things had actually created each other, and now free of them, these two dragons only helped each other grow. Attention on what is lacking in us brings out less of what is strong within us. What we concentrate on, we get. Vodni and Iogair too had come to know this now, and they had found that if there is pain it usually means there needs to be growth; that something needs to be learned, and in a committed union that learning may need to be a shared exercise.

The dragons now landed gently on the beach, necks touching, and heads bowing. Not to each other, but to the Keeper of the High Veld, and it was in this light embrace that the dragons became humanoid. They looked at each other, not amazed at the transformation, but finally remembering who they really were. They cried, and they held each other, and they remembered. It was then that they were gone, and the lagoon's mirror surface changed. It was now windswept like all natural bodies of water; having movement, like all things that are alive.

“MY GOODNESS; ABLE JONES. How are you? This *is* a surprise,” said Joanne, giving a very obvious signal of her approval of Bianca’s guest, and a little smile that said ‘*Well, well*’.

Bianca gave her mother her own look, one of ‘*Ohh, mum*’, as Able tried not to notice, by way of respect. But Joanne gave him an ever so gentle dig in the ribs with her elbow as they walked down the hall behind Bianca and had a wide smile on her face for him to see. He looked down and smiled. He and Grandpa Jack had had many a lark, and regular humorous conversations, with Joanne over the years. Ones that she and Able had carried on at community meetings after Jack’s death.

She was happy that her daughter was at least friends with Able. Her experience with this young man was all good; one’s of an open, kind, and thoughtful lad. Never proud or trying to be wise; he simply went about things, and sometimes as he sat in the back of the meetings she would get a glance of a look in his eye, and his bearing; one of a noble elder who listened and spoke very little. Garran too, had always said that there was something special about the boy.

“Tea or coffee?” asked Joanne.

“Water thanks,” said Able.

“Oh God Able, lighten up. You’re always having water.”

“*I love water.*”

“Yes,” said Bianca. “The Sandwalkers of Temelj would die for just a little,” recalling Able’s stories of a planet far away.

“*They would,*” agreed Able, feeling strong emotion suddenly course through his being, yet only outwardly manifesting in glassy eyes.

Joanne was no fool. She saw the depth of emotion under his gentle exterior. There was a deep loss of some kind there, and in his eyes was the same noble creature she saw in the meetings. She looked straight at him and said, “*Spill it, Jones.*”

Bianca took a breath in, but Able just smiled, and sat down.

“Now, I *really* need to know,” said Joanne. “You don’t leave here until you open up, Able Jones.”

“I could not begin to tell you, Joanne.”

“You’d better, or you won’t be friends with my daughter for very long.”

Able’s features changed. He sat there in an open state of the elder, and he considered what he should do. He looked to Bianca, and with eyes that asked her a question. She nodded in response.

“If I do, spill the beans, I am going to open up...what will be not a *small* hole in your perception of reality, Joanne. It will change how you see things. It is a shift that I have been told challenges most who have not experienced these things, and *far* too greatly.”

“Oh, God, Able, just *tell me.*”

Able looked to Bianca once more, and she nodded again. Still not sure of the wisdom of all this, he hesitated again. But it was now like an itch that Joanne had to scratch, and Able knew that this mystery could not be sustained in the connection he, and his family, needed to

have with Bianca; for *her* sake. There was something about honesty and respect involved here too.

Joanne could see Able reflecting, and after looking at her daughter's face she knew whatever he had to say was important to her too. Seeing the importance both were putting on this, she said, "Whatever it is Able, I know you. I know my daughter too. I can see this is not a simple thing, but trust me, and trust Garran."

"*Garran...* Yes, of course," he commented.

"*Of course, Bianca's father would have to know,*" thought Joanne, misunderstanding the meaning behind Able's comment.

Able was now realising that this was all barrelling out of control. He knew that Garran did not know who he would become, and that this amazing but troublesome information could come out too if he was not more careful. Honest connections were good, but everything needed boundaries, and people's existence needed to unfold naturally, especially in Garran's case. He decided then that his knowledge of the special nature of Garran would definitely stay locked away in the vault of the secrets that Old Jack had shared with him.

In any case, he was *totally* sure of *this* decision, but he still hesitated in opening up about Travelling generally; still seeing the clear wisdom in his grandfather's warnings about sharing Travelling with those who did not. He had failed in his duty of silence? He could see once more, Dossd shaking his head and laughing as he walked away from a bemused young boy on the desert sands; a boy who was still learning.

"Able, if I may," said Joanne. "This is *too* big an invisible elephant in the room. This needs clearing now."

Able then felt strongly that it was not an error, that it was simply the time for some things to be opened up in this family. The *situation* had yielded it up, the time was now. He had come to trust what came mostly, and he flowed with life easily. A clear vision of Dossd, his Sandwalker mentor, or more so Father, now nodding that it was to be done, came to him. It was the nod he received at times from the Walker at success in attaining some skill, or after gathering a particular wisdom, and Able opened his mouth.

“I *have* wandered the deserts of Temelj. Grandpa Jack was what we call *a Traveller*, and he went to many places. We are Travellers.”

“Just like *me*, mum,” added Bianca. “I travelled when I was younger, and now again, since I’ve been home.”

“It is much larger than an elephant, Joanne,” commented Able.

“*Do ya’ think!* Is that what you didn’t want to talk about yesterday?” Joanne asked Bianca.

“How could I, Mum?”

“I could feel it was connected with that strange time in your life. I *knew* it. I will need proof, or it’s off to the psychologist for both of you.”

“I still don’t have any proof, Mum. Just Able,” said Bianca, feeling her mother’s confusion and now maybe her own lack of wisdom.

“Fortunately, *I have proof*,” said Able. “I would not have opened this door, if that were not the case.”

“Well, thank goodness for a little forward thinking from one of you. So how do you propose to *help me* with all this *make believe*.”

“Well, we have to get up enough momentum to enter the vortex, so that is our immediate concern.”

“A vortex? What do you mean enough momentum?” asked Bianca, not knowing how some travelled differently to her.

“We have to reach a certain velocity for the device to kick in.”

“What device?” asked Joanne.

Able pointed to his strange looking watch, and said, “This one.”

“Oh *God!* A space cadet toy,” commented Joanne, a little lost and getting exasperated.

“There has to be an element of faith involved, and we have to be unencumbered; just bodies in motion, I believe.”

“What about the ute?” asked Bianca. “You could ride in the back.”

“The back of the ute?!” responded Joanne, not at all keen with such a risk in amongst all this craziness. “How fast?”

“Not too fast, I haven’t done calculations for a car. We used to simply just jump from very high places.”

“This is getting *too much*,” commented Joanne.

“It’s the only way, Joanne,” said Able, in the way of a Walker. It was so plain and his way so entrancing she broke through her fear, but not her doubts.

Joanne asked Bianca one last time if she was sure about all this. Bianca did not know how it would work, but she trusted Able. She nodded, and then Joanne nodded with her chin up to Able, trying not to think too much about his last comment about jumping off high places.

“I am *sure* Mum. I don’t travel like him. It seems only Grandpa Jack travels like I do.”

“There *was* another, at least, but my parents have travelled other ways.”

“Your parents too!”

“They’re not originally from these outer realities,” offered Able, as if it would help.

“Not from...*where?*”

“They are from a deeper reality.”

“Well, this is getting too much for me. Let’s get to the ute, and get this done, before I lose it,” she pronounced, as she got up and started walking out. “Are we going to your sand world?” she asked Able, as Bianca grabbed the keys, and trailed them out to the utility.

“We have to stay on planet earth. We’ll get in trouble if we go off-world. The Agency wouldn’t like that, and we’ve made promises.”

“*Off-world! An Agency!* I won’t ask, *just show me*, and let me out of this *nightmare*.”

It was some minutes later when Bianca was driving the utility and smiling. The two passengers were standing up in the back holding on to the thick roll bar behind the cabin. Bianca was smiling at the impossibility of her mother on the back of the ute, in the wind, ready to jump into a whole new reality. Her mother *was* adventurous, but for Bianca, it was a

bit humorous; the smile also brought on by excitement and hope that her mother could join her in her strange reality.

Joanne was just a little scared being up there but had been told that it would only be about forty-five kilometres an hour at the most to activate the light ribbon; with some rough calculation. She didn't believe any of it really, though there was something hopeful in her too. Truth be told, not even the creator of this instrument knew that it was not actually the speed, but the *faith* within those who risked all to jump. The original device had been used now many times where speeds of even forty-five miles an hour were not even nearly reached.

She knew Able was more than he once seemed; or was he just lost like Bianca? She wanted to do this for the sake of her girl. She had faith *in her*. Even proving it to be a delusion would be beneficial to this beautiful girl of hers. These are some of the lengths a mother will go to protect her child, but she was a little sad and a little scared about her darling girl having a relapse. She was also sad that Able was falling so quickly in her estimation, and yet not somehow. She had real respect for this family, and especially Old Jack.

As the ute reached thirty-five kilometres an hour, Able asked her to let go the roll bar that hugged the back of the roof of the car for when they reached the required speed. She let go, knowing this could be her last breath, as she was in the back tray of this vehicle with someone who was ninety nine percent plus chance of being crazy. But again, a good mother will make any sacrifice to protect her child or do anything to free them from what she sees as destructive.

The coloured ribbons of light began to form around them, and Joanne's eyes went wide with wonder as she looked at them now forming a skin around her. She cried, and sobbed deeply, as the ribbon of light bore them away. Able rubbed her upper back from

behind as they now sat like two people going through a tubular, twisting, turning, multi coloured water slide. Her daughter *was* okay, and that was such a *huge* relief. That was why she sobbed, as well as all the years of unknowing, and she now let herself go to wonder as they travelled to New York.

Able deposited them on a high-rise rooftop, and she immediately hugged him, to say sorry for not believing him, as well as definitely needing a hug herself right now. She did not like such heights but then let hm go and looked around at the city below. She turned back to Able, and said, "I'm sorry, Able."

"How could you have been any other way? You were *very* brave."

"I am so happy for my girl, and thankfully my respect for you has been returned, and even become *greater*. Where are we?"

"New York City, The City of the Covenant," he answered, like a far older man.

She turned to him, and said, "So, you will look after her."

"We *all* will, and *she* will. She is strong to have travelled *so young*, and to have been so alone in things. You built her strong."

Joanne broke down crying as she remembered back, now imagining the confusion and aloneness her girl must have felt at such a tender age. Fortunately, it is not so tender an age, as real courage and adventurousness is born at this time; the soul waking from childhood, seeking with greater eyes, and with enhanced intellectual powers, new possibilities, and the future.

JOANNE WAS STILL SCREAMING IN FEAR FROM THE JUMP. They had jumped from that high tower in New York, and even though she knew it would be safe, it was all she could do to not pass out before the ribbon took them in its embrace. Able now steadied her as they landed and naturally tried to hug the shock out of her.

Bianca had watched them return in front of the family home and was a bit worried about her mother's obvious distress. Joanne collapsed down onto the soft deep green lawn; needing *its* sure embrace, and after a short while of just hugging the Earth, face down, she rolled over, and lay there on her back.

"Aaaaaghhh!" she exploded out, while lying there looking up at the sky, and then twice more, trying to clear the shock.

Bianca sat down beside her and intuitively massaged her shoulder; still smiling wide though. Then, beginning to cry, she said. "Thanks, Mum. I know how hard that must have been. Thanks for taking the chance to find me."

"*Oh, God!*" called out Joanne as she began to cry. "I am *so sorry* I left you alone."

"It's okay. You couldn't know. Even *I* didn't really. I had friends where I travelled, and Old Jack saw to my wellbeing."

"So, it was Old Jack? *He* was the man building a house down there? Is he *still* there? I would *love* to thank him," she requested, and still sobbing.

"He seems to have gone. He called Able to me, so he may be gone for good. You might not be able to see him anyway. I'm kind of special."

Joanne's sobbing grew, as she said, "I *know* you are, beautiful girl; no matter if you're a...

“A Traveller.”

“Yes...*Traveller*, or not.”

“I will leave you both to it,” offered Able. “Maybe, Bianca can visit my family when your family has done what it needs to do. Maybe after that, we can *all* get together.”

“That *will be* interesting,” laughed Joanne, releasing a little more of her physical shock, as much as responding to the humour of the situation.

Able turned to go, and Bianca turned, calling after him.

“Thank you, Able.”

“It was the will of The All,” he replied, as he just kept walking on.

“You had better lay hold on that boy, and not let go,” said Joanne quietly, but in all seriousness.

“*Mum!*” said Bianca, hoping Able had not heard her.

He did not turn, out of respect, but he smiled to himself as he continued walking off toward the old road.

“WELL, OLD JACK, EH; building a house up the road. No wonder he drove Deveroux nuts. You just never know where and when he might turn up,” mused Able’s father, Jeremy Jones, smiling. “And we have *another one*.”

“A *true-blood*,” added Able.

“Like Jack and Jennifer,” added Suwna; Able’s mother.

“Yep, seems so,” commented Able, wondering where his grandfather was now. The Jack that was building the house was many journeys after his life had ended in this place and was finally close to his *true* awakening in the grass of his back paddock.

“I haven’t seen that girl in such a long time. She loved your stories, Able,” commented Suwna.

“So, how did they take it all?” asked Jeremy.

Able laughed out loud, suddenly, with one lone note, just like Dossd had done so many times when his young charge had been bewildered about something. He explained that Garran did not yet know, but then told the full story of the jumps with Joanne.

“I am so glad we now have others to talk with; another family we can be closer to,” expressed Suwna, after the laughter had died from the storytelling. “I haven’t seen that young girl since she left to study. What is she like now, Able?”

“You know, still kind and smart, as well as all that courage,” he said, still trying to be nonchalant, but totally failing in front of the woman who knew him better than anyone.

“Oh, *I see*, Able,” she said, in that particular motherly tone that said so much at once.

Jeremy laughed, and Able said, “Thanks for the backup, Dad.”

“I’m glad you like someone, son. It’s a *good* thing. I am glad she found you, or that you found her. You haven’t seemed interested in other girls.”

“*Ladies*, Dad.”

“Ladies, then. *It’s good, no matter*,” he finished, quite firmly and frankly.

Able's parents were worried that they may one day have to let him go to live in places deeper; to work for The Agency as he had wanted too. Most especially, lately, Suwna had noticed a growing struggle in her boy. Keeping him to Earth alone was like keeping a bird in a cage.

They knew that he had stayed here for his mother's sake those years ago, when the Agency had opened the door for him to go. Suwna had been elated at his decision to stay, as her heart needed him here, and back then, they thought that he would settle in time. They thought that he would reintegrate well, and he did, *very* well. But his journeys had changed him more than they had known, and while he had many good friends, and known young ladies that he had had affection for, he somehow needed more. It was no mark on these good souls; it was just that a cloud cannot live in the soil; even in the richest soil. Though a cloud may bring out the life of the soil, it needs the sky to roam to be what it truly is.

GARRAN HAD SOME REAL TROUBLE WITH WHAT HE WAS HEARING. He had studied again, completed a degree in psychology, and been practising for a few years now. What he was hearing was not good, but the fact that both of them were saying it, and that they knew it seemed mad, made him somewhat hopeful. Bianca had thankfully not opened up about what she had experienced with Cas and her husband; about them being Time and Change. She, like Able, knew that what they had already shared was more than enough, and that some things may never be shared at all.

Bianca could see her father's pain, wishing it was not necessary. She had even said to her mother earlier that maybe it was better that they just kept this between them. But Joanne had been adamant that they were a family, and her father needed to be respected in this,

especially as there would be a wider, and maybe deeper, connection with Able's family due to all this. It was a time for honesty, as if he came to it later, or felt that all of them were holding something back from him, it would not be kind. "Better the shock now, than later on, with lies heaped up on lies," she had said.

"I believe you need to take a ride in the ute with Able," Joanne now said. "It was the only way I could accept; even though it was so surreal. I almost needed another trip to be sure. But then the thought of jumping off a skyscraper again put the kibosh on that."

Garran just sighed and shook his head. He knew that no one could be so quickly yet coherently deranged by any drug, or any one experience. Harsh experiences were usually present for some time before any mental break occurred, even if they seemed sudden. As well as this, he knew his wife and his daughter. He knew Joanne was no fool, and a straight shooter, so he said that he would go in the back tray of the ute with Able. He made the proviso that Jeremy should drive, so Jo and Bianca could wait by the road and see what really happens.

The two ladies agreed with a smile, as Garran finished, "I *sure as hell* hope you're wrong. I don't like the idea of the sky scrapper jump."

"I took the jump," said Joanne, with her *mothers are strong*, look. Then the 'man up' one.

Garran laughed. He loved his wife and her ways.

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME?" challenged Garran, as he relaxed in the outdoor area at Suwna and Jeremy's place. "It's a *real* danger to any weakness in the heart."

“Not if you have faith, Mr Gardiner,” offered Able, with wise eyes much older than he was.

“Garran, Able. *Please.*”

“Garran.”

It had been some weeks since the fateful meeting of these two young souls on the old road; and from Garran’s jump into a deeper reality.

Tonight, was the first time the two families had met in a relaxed atmosphere, and it was overdue. They had got together and consulted a few times, each discussion bringing up more complications and implications, but with it also came more understanding and closer bonds. Much had been kept out of the discussions, like the subject of Able’s knowledge of Garran’s future reality. Jack had not told Suwna or Jeremy about him, as they were in the same faith community. He had only told Able about him for the passing down of family knowledge, and only after the young man had returned from Temelj. They had been as inseparable then as they were when Able was a boy.

There were other things that did not need to be said, and were not about respect or honesty, but more about wisdom or kindness. Each situation in life is what it is, and one way of things, or even one virtue, ever rules all situations. Maybe with the possible exception of love.

“I’m just glad I’m *not* a traveller. That jumping off stuff is *madness*, and I am glad my sweet girl doesn’t travel that way.”

“It’s just trusting the technology,” offered Able’s mother, Suwna.

“Just like the guy with the first parachute did, eh,” commented Garran, with the *‘and you know how that ended’* look.

They all laughed at that poor inventor’s demise, except for Jeremy.

“That’s a strange quirk of humanity,” offered Jeremy. “How is it, that with distance, you can laugh at some poor soul plummeting to his death?”

“I’m not sure, but humour’s a good thing. It keeps people going, even in the darkest of times. Maybe it’s part of that. Maybe humour is a survival mechanism, as much as it is something that keeps things light,” offered Garran, as personal perspective, not a professional one.

“It’s a *great* thing,” said Joanne, confidently. “People respond to humour, and it’s one of the beautiful energies of life.”

“I don’t respond to humour of that kind,” said Jeremy, with his old Agent face on.

The guests froze a little, and Garran looked to him with a searching face. This man was a trained Agent, and they had no idea what he had seen in his work.

“You guys are *so* easy,” he then said, with a now growing smile

So, then it was on, as Joanne was no shrinking violet, and the humour took them all to a better place and to a deeper bond.

The fun settled in time, but for the rest of the night, *“Except for Agents, of course”* was added to comments on various subjects; by Joanne mostly. With Agent Jeremy Jones saying once that he had awakened a beast; one like none he had to fight on all the worlds he

had worked on. There was also a lot of Agent type rebuttal from him too, with a few, “That’s, need to know, mam. *Need to know.*”

Bianca sat there enjoying it all and glancing a lot at Able, with him glancing over just as often. They both could still not believe that they had found each other, and now their families were connecting. Able saw so many past and future connections here too; all through Grandpa Jack, and far more than the others could realise.

“It has been written by The All,” he thought.

“So, young man, tell us more about your Sandwalker friend?” asked Garran. “He is like family to you?”

“To *all* of us,” commented Suwna. “He was magnificent. You should have seen him. *His eyes,*”

“You met him?”

“In dreams I saw him. We did communicate once. I could not have asked for a better custodian. Other than Jeremy and me, of course. They were constantly in terrible danger too.”

“Dossed, was Dossed. Noble, strong, and true,” said Able, feeling the loss of his old friend deeply. “He was telepathic and had the courage, and kind of purpose, that *we* can only dream of. Storytelling was more important than breathing to him.”

“Tell us some stories, Storyteller,” asked Bianca, just like the younger ones did at feast when she was a child, and it warmed the hearts of these two younger souls, connecting them more deeply; or more so, reminding them more of its existing depth.

They were not alone in this feeling. The bond between these families was growing too, as a story of Dossd and the Icers began to spill from Able's lips.

VODNI SAT WITH HER INTENDED. It was a week before they were to be wed. They had been reflecting together about their journey up until this time. It had been a couple of months since Bianca last saw them, and Vodni had missed her friend's visits, just as she had the last time they had stopped. She was glad of what her friend from another world had shared with them, and also now very thankful for the man who sat beside her.

They sat in the sunshine on top of Vodni's pod, and she had brought up her strong wish that their union not only be about them, and the children they would nurture, but also about being a dynamo for the creation of good things for their community. They both knew that it only took two souls with a will to participate in their own future that helped build a stronger community. Vodni had great ideas, and Iogair reminded her that small things can be great things too, and that a local effort was powerful.

The couple were now clear on the suspicion that had haunted them; all based on their judgement of each other, and just how destructive that was. They had uncovered this, almost hidden, lower motive in themselves, as they had reflected together and had seen how they both had fed it. They thought they were being discerning before now, and they were, but they only saw each other's issues, emotional immaturities, and expectations; not the noble creature that lies within all of us. They saw how they had created a dysfunctional dynamic due to these lower things, this lower focus. A *lack* of discernment about people's reality can come back haunt us, but *suspicion*, when let off the leash will destroy any connection, and shatter any bond.

They had found that they both had lacked emotional maturity; one based on the spiritual understanding that was the foundation of their advanced culture. They saw clearly how their volition, and so their actions, had followed their less-noble thoughts and misunderstandings. The ego can trick us with its fears, and into our wants, in our view of another, just as a lack of spiritual discernment can also indeed bring with it great hardship. They revelled mostly in the honesty and communication that they had now fostered, and the compassion and unconditional love that they had found within it. Or was love before the honesty? In any case, love and honesty were the only way two souls could ever bond and stay bonded; this was the greatest learning for them, and it was powerful.

Vodni had found a quote in the writings of her messenger, and they had reflected on it in light of their struggle, and their victory...

“The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion...”¹⁰

They had also made plans; finding ways for their individual aspirations to work in a kind of unison, and how they would build a home together. They saw that building, healing, and becoming more *at one* with each other would still require hard work; helping each other free from old pain, or ridiculous expectations, and working with each other on their union. It would be in the day to day, and in caring enough to find out why the other was suddenly angry, or being curious, not angry about why each may have unrealistic expectations of the other in something in particular. We all have our wounds and expectations, these wolves, dreams, and dragons, but in a true union they may all be remedied. Wounds and

dysfunctional patterns *can* be found, and once cleared by love and honesty, give more power to the dynamism and energy that can grow between a committed pair of souls.

Unconditional love and sacrifice, with the force of man and woman *uniquely* balanced, can create the greatest things. With our volition rising from higher spiritual values, by standing before the Face of The Creator, we may create one of the most joyous and powerful bonds one can ever know in this contingent world. The spirit is powerful beyond any measure over the limits of the contingent reality and houses great force within it. These two were very clear that struggle would still come, but any struggle that came within their marriage or in service to others they would face together, and would only grow them stronger; their bond of love deeper.

Love and Boundaries

Family

“Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honour.”¹¹

Able Jones took his daughter’s hand. She was five years old now and had a strong will. His son, who was eleven, had called out a warning of the danger, but she had raced out after the ball oblivious of his shouted words and not looked to the traffic on the cul-de-sac roadway.

It was a quiet road, and the local children were a bit used to it being a place that they played, no matter the warnings of their parents. The driver got out of the car, as Able now picked up the girl, and held her. The car had stopped in time thankfully, as it was slowing to go into a driveway across from them, but the shock of nearly being hit had frozen the poor little thing to the spot.

Able was at home today, and had raced outside at his son’s shout after the short screech of tyres on the bitumen surface. He was a National Park Ranger but had today off. He had needed to be out in the air after his return home from the desert planet, over twenty years

ago now. It was the best place for him and was work he could enjoy here on Earth. Living outside was more natural to him even all this time later, and he took even greater joy in the green and water of this beautiful planet we live on. He and Bianca had married after a time, and immediately began a family. They had struggled to have a second child for many years, including a miscarriage, but eventually little Jenny Jones had entered this world.

“You aren’t leaving this place *yet*, little one,” he said, still hugging her as she began to cry.

“Sorry, Dad,” said Joshua.

“No need, mate. Just something to learn from, eh.”

“Yep, sure,” agreed the boy.

“*I want Mum,*” cried the little one.

“I know you do. She’ll be back soon enough, and I’ll stay right with you until she comes home. I’ll call her, eh.”

“Can I talk with her?”

“You *most certainly* can,” answered Able with a smile, and a stronger squeeze to go with it.

“That was a close one,” Jenny then said, coming out of the shock a little.

Able smiled, saying “Yes, but you’re safe now,” while thinking just how fragile, and yet resilient, these little ones are.

“I won’t do *that* again.”

“*Sure*, you just need to remember that it’s a roadway, eh,” he said, with a reassuring voice.

“And not a playground,” added Joshua.

The boy got a dagger look from his younger sister, clearly showing her distaste, and that he was *not* the boss of her. She then burrowed her face back into her father’s shoulder as they walked back into the house.

Bianca had created a non-profit entity to help facilitate the eradication of plastics in freshwater waterways, and as it developed, it had moved toward oceanic environments as well. Many saw her high aims as far too high, but Able had stood like a rock beside her, in trust of her ability and in awe of her high aim. She had worked hard and reached out in many ways to the world to make this happen. She crowdfunded her first setup, and then went about forming small groups in the schools in her hometown and for about thirty kilometres around. She had every intention initially of driving this further than just local schools, and even beyond schools, but she needed to learn first, and to build a model from her experience locally. She also received ongoing feedback from the various schools that joined in, and she continually enhanced her programme.

Each school group was made up of a parent, a teacher, and two students, mostly. This small group would encourage clean up, the implementation of changed usage in the school, and full recycling of plastics in the school environment. They would engage and educate the others in the school with these practises and share awareness of the violent outcomes of plastic wastes in the various water environments of the planet. Everyone in the schools would be involved in the process as it sought to create a change of culture.

There was *a flexibility*, and an open creative input to problem solving, in the original material, so that each school built its own systems and educative efforts which could more naturally spread out to their homes and to the wider community. She knew it would have to be done that way as if it was to spread around the world; each local area had its own reality, each culture seeing things differently, and certainly new ideas had to be encouraged. The creativity and purpose that came from the first projects were mind blowing and humbling, and they became the eventual impetus for a country wide outreach, as well as some initial strategic efforts in other parts of the world.

It was now such a strong movement at the grass roots that it could not be stopped. No one could argue with the aspirations of this movement, so it continued to grow. Bianca had studied to be an environmental scientist and learned a good deal about biological systems from her father. After her study, and the years of local effort, with the support of Able, she had eventually launched herself into this now grassroots global effort; an effort that was powered by people wanting to be involved in their own future.

She knew early on that it had to be that way, and that political influence-seeking, or protests would only create disunity and dislike. She wanted *to build*, not wreck, knowing that working positively and respectfully with *all* people was encouraging and far more powerful. She was also sure that real change and renewal came through the grassroots, every day folk, as *all* great trees grew from the ground up. This ethos of...building, individual empowerment, respect, collective effort, and unity, was written into its charter, as well the flexibility and creativity, and it informed all their activities.

This couple were teaching their children by *who* they were and *what they did*. Able did not have the will of his wife to create great change but gave what *he was* to the world. These two souls knew that every human being was different; had different natures,

intensities, and talents, so they would never judge another soul. But they were certainly human, and they allowed their children to see their struggles too. They would give their children high aspirations as well as humble ones, and open them up to the great possibilities of life; seeking and growing the talents within them. One quote that these parents used as guidance when first becoming new parents was...

“While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.”¹²

There were, of course, many other Writings that they used as guidance, like one on teaching their children the oneness of God and fostering respect for the *choice wine* of His laws. From their own experience they knew that higher volition stemmed from the insights and admonitions of The Beauty, and so, would arm their children with them. They knew that the fruits of this Tree were sublime, practical and nurturing, and its wisdom and boundaries would in time ensure the peace and security of the human race; at least for some time.

“Hello, Darling. Did you get *a real fright?*” asked Bianca, over the phone.

“*Yes, I did,*” replied the small girl, now crying again at the memory of the terrible event.

“Ohh, I will be home soon, and we will make your favourite dinner.”

“Curried fish and rice?!”

“Yes, curried fish and rice.”

“Thanks, Mum,” said Jenny, as she then immediately gave the phone to Able and raced outside to tell her brother what they were having for tea.

“They forget quickly, thankfully,” said Able, into the phone.

“Yes,” she seems okay. “We might have to have a talk with the kids about some new boundaries.”

“Yep, for sure, maybe just a new ground rule for a while, to remind them.”

“Yes, that sounds good. I have to keep going. Love you. See you later.”

“Love you too,” said Able, putting down the phone and smiling.

He was remembering back to the time that he met that young lady on an old and lonely road, and the great flow of bounty that had poured out on him since then. He stood there, like Dossd may have, with his chin high and his eyes staring off, and unlike Dossd, with some tears slowly forming; just a few. It had been hard and wonderful, simple and complicated, challenging and fulfilling. Their love had only grown, and its power now buoyed him. He then woke himself from his reverie and walked outside to check on the boundaries that would keep his children safe, but not too coddled.

VODNI LOOKED AT THE WALL IN FRONT OF HER. She looked one way, and then the other. The wall seemed to go on forever in both directions. It was strange for her to be in a

different place. She had continued to *communicate* in her dreams, but she had never found herself in such a dream as this. This lady of Wai Nova had become quite grown over the years that had passed since her marriage, and the couple had one child who was now five years old. The Sahona lived much longer than humans and had no qualms with having children later and further apart than we would think normal.

She now saw some movement on top of the wall. It was a bird, flying with a piece of paper in its beak. It was tearing at breakneck speed along the top of the wall, and Vodni suddenly found herself chasing it. She felt like a child in a game, and she allowed the joy to envelop her as she chased that *cheeky bird*. After a run that had nearly spent her, Bianca suddenly jumped out from the indent of a doorway lined with climbing roses, giving Vodni such a fright that she fell back and to the ground. They both laughed out loud, as Vodni said, “*What in the great ocean is happening?*”

“*I don’t know,*” answered Bianca, bemused, yet with the same childlike feelings running through her, “but it is nice to play with your again, Vodni.”

Just then they came to their adult wits, and Vodni stood up smiling at her friend with real warmth. She moved with a poise that Bianca had not known in her when she was younger. The friends embraced, with Bianca feeling more like she was getting a hug from her mother.

“You have grown, Vodni,” she said, now sensing deeply, in this place, the power in her people.

“Yes, I do not know how to thank you for your visits. I was so low a creature when we last met.”

“Well, we all have challenges.”

“You have matured,” offered Vodni, as feeling the deeper aspects of one another was mutual in this place.

“I have a family now, and I’ve been busy. Maturity comes with the territory.”

“And *still* humble.”

“Oh, *not always*, I’m afraid.”

“Oh, Bianca, you are a gem of creation. To be *as you are*, as He has made you, is a joy to me. I am honoured to have your friendship, and hopefully, now you may be honoured to have mine.”

“You have always honoured me, Vodni. I treasure our friendship. You are someone who looms large in my life.”

“As do you,” said Vodni, letting it go. “Where do you think we are?”

“I don’t know. There are plenty of little birds here. It sounds just like my daughter’s school,” offered Bianca.

“What are these beautiful fragrant things?” she asked, grabbing the stems of the climbing roses to smell the flowers, then getting jabbed by a thorn.

Bianca waited for what would come, but nothing did. This creature took it in her stride like it was nothing.

“What are these things?” she asked again.

“They are roses, and while they’re beautiful and fragrant, they can stick you good. Just like our little ones can. Do you have children?”

“All children are our children, Bianca, but yes, I have a child; just five summers old. His name is Fior, and he is a gentle happy child.”

“I have a five-year-old too, her name is Jenny, an old family name from Able’s side, and she is *very* wilful. I also have an older boy, Joshua, he’s twelve.”

“*Two children.* Lovely, and your husband. Is he a Traveller like you?”

“Not like me. He has travelled with some technology developed in a deeper world.”

“Is he coming here?”

“No. *I* haven’t even travelled since I saw you last, and he’s not allowed to travel; *off-world* anyway. His Father was in some Law Agency, and he and his mother were only allowed to stay on Earth if they promised not to Travel.”

“That is a great sacrifice. Why would they do that?”

“Because his mum had searched for her great grandfather for a long time, through many realities, and she wanted to live there with him, as well as be guardian to a young lady who I haven’t met yet. Able’s dad couldn’t be without the woman he loved, so he moved there and made the same promise not to travel. So, I suppose it was the bond of family, and the whole thing about love.”

“Love, *before all else.* You have married into an honourable family.”

“Yes, I have. A *lovely* family, and now my own family know about my Travelling, so all is in place for me.”

“Did you stick to your purpose?”

“You remember it?”

“It helped me pick my life purpose. Seeing you decide from high reason, rather than just seeking a field of endeavour was helpful. So *did you?*”

“Yes, Vodni, and it’s really working well. How about you?”

“Well, because of you, like I said, I changed what I would do. I am a child educator now.”

“Vodni! Geog! I never saw *that* coming.”

“What better work than to educate and nurture the potentials in the young?”

“*What better work,*” stated Bianca, in full agreement.

“It seems this great wall of...”

“Roses,” added Bianca, so Vodni had the flower’s name.

“This wall of roses is hiding our next adventure together.”

“Yes, it is,” agreed Bianca, and as they both smiled, they heard some giggles beyond the wall.

Volje then opened the door in the recessed doorway that Bianca had jumped out of, but only because of the great effort these two had gone to in their lives, and in respect of the determination they had shown. This essence had grown, and now stood in front of them as they walked through the door. Far too large for the door she had opened, she stood towering over them, and she said, as she waved her hand to indicate the children to her right, behind her...

“Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future. They bear the seeds of the character of future society which is largely shaped by what the adults constituting the community do or fail to do with respect to children. They are a trust no community can neglect with impunity. An all-embracing love of children, the manner of treating them, the quality of the attention shown them, the spirit of adult behaviour toward them--these are all among the vital aspects of the requisite attitude. Love demands discipline, the courage to accustom children to hardship, not to indulge their whims or leave them entirely to their own devices. An atmosphere needs to be maintained in which children feel that they belong to the community and share in its purpose.”¹³

ABLE WAS VISITING JOANNE AND GARRAN. The little one had just told her grandfather how lucky she was, and how she would have missed him if she had died.

“Oh, I am sure you will be here for many more hugs; before you leave here,” said Garran, lovingly.

The child beamed and dove in for a hug, as Joanne laughed out loud.

“It’s not funny Grandma!”

“No, it is *very* serious business, Jenny; *very* serious,” the agreed Joanne, with the correct facial expressions of course.

“*Very* serious,” added Garran, as he smiled at his wife in pure gentle happiness, then with watery eyes, from deep thanks as he felt the power of the love existent within his family.

“Don’t cry Grandpa,” said the child, as she released her hug; then, suddenly realising that her brother had left the room and was probably up to some adventure in the orchard without her, she turned and ran for the back door.

“Remember, the new ground rule darling. Don’t want to lose you yet,” called Able after her.

“Sure, Dad,” she said glancing back, as she ran outside.

“You can’t tie them down too much. Takes the life out of them,” commented Joanne.

“For sure,” said Able, as Joanne recalled his banishment as boy to a far-off desert world, and her own daughter’s resilience when things got crazy for her when she was young.

“Preaching to the converted,” she added.

“Yes and no. It’s all about reasonable balance for their age, eh.”

“Where is that *girl* of mine today? Off saving the world from plastics still?”

“No, she has been disappearing again. She mostly doesn’t go away in body, but she comes back tired, especially with all the other calls on her in her life.”

“Really,” said Joanne, just hearing the travelling part.

“Yep.”

Garran and Joanne smiled, looking with wonder at each other. Then another look came over this mother’s face; the natural protective one.

“I am sure that wherever she is today it’s where she is meant to be, and what can we do anyway,” offered Able, to console her.

“Life is certainly a challenge, and nothing is clear until it is, even in *our* lives, Jo,” added Garran.

“I have to be concerned. That’s part of my job description,” said Joanne. “But yes, life unfolds for her as it does for all of us. We don’t know anything ahead of time.”

“Some swim straight back to shore when they find themselves in the ocean of struggle and change,” mused Garran. “Some just try to relax a little, and float a while, some swim a bit to feel stronger and find their bearings, and some just love it out there and even surf for a long time. But we all need the shore eventually because we’re limited. We are limited, our knowledge is limited, and the ocean is the ocean...maybe we just need to understand that.”

“You have been doing psychology for too long, Darling,” stated Joanne, with a smile.

“Sounds more like philosophy,” offered Able.

“You’re *changing*, Sweetheart,” said Joanne.

“Am I?” asked Garran.

“Yes, *really* changing. You are getting *too* deep and becoming very *booring!*”

Garran and Able laughed, but Garran knew that he was changing. He did not know what it was, but he was finding some things inside him that he did not know before. The study and practice of psychology had opened doors inside him to rooms he had not known were there. Actually, it seemed that it was, to a large part, the mixing of his work with plants and his work with people, within his psyche, but there was also a deeper flow that he did not understand. Like he had access to a flow of understanding that was not his, or that it was always part of him and only now beginning to awaken.

He and Joanne also held regular courses in their home for community building activities. To help people gain skills and insights so as they could begin to strengthen their own small community or neighbourhood. For too long people had given up their right, or more so their responsibility, to make their part of the world better, but things were changing. This work was another ingredient in the mix that had changed him.

There was something about the fact that he had actually done all the community building activities that he now studied with others that helped him walk more easily with those new to the core activities, and really help them raise the capacity in themselves for a particular service. But even then, ideas would come, and while from him, he would wonder how. He never brought attention to himself as his role was to facilitate the study, and other people would come out with gems that he could not have imagined too. There were also particular skills that he gathered from others that became part of this inner process as he worked and studied with them.

“Where are you, Garran?”

“In a strange and wonderful place, Able.”

Able smiled and felt a huge surge of wonder shoot through him at the joy of seeing the development of Growth himself.

Joanne saw the feeling go through him, as Garran still wandered in deeper places.

“Spit it out, Jones!”

“That’s...need to know...ma’am; *need to know.*”

“Don’t you do that with me, young man. I am small, but I’m *feisty.*”

“You most certainly are, Joanne,” agreed Able, as he realized he now had Garran’s stare on him also.

“What is happening to me, Able?” asked Garran, now feeling the full weight of the confusion of his own mind on the process he was in.

Able, thought a while, and then said, “It seems you are becoming something Garran. All I can say is trust it as it grows in you. It is from The All, but that is all that it is appropriate for me to say. I don’t have enough knowledge about you, and I do not want to get in the way of a natural process.”

Being a mental health practitioner, a tutor, and a grower of fruit trees, Garran understood processes. But Joanne certainly did not want to right now and expressed, in very clear terms, that she needed more.

“Jo, this is beyond the likes of me. I don’t have enough knowledge, but you should feel honoured and support him through any changes. Like Garran said before, we learn as we go; no matter.”

“*Now my husband too,*” exclaimed Joanne, not knowing whether to feel honoured or left out.

“There is *no small role*, Joanne. He needs you. We all need each other.”

“I would like us to talk sometimes, Able; when I really struggle?” requested Garran.

“Just accept it, Mr G. *It’s all good*, as Grandpa would say, and he was the one who told me about you.”

“That Grandpa of yours has a lot to answer for,” said Joanne, now smiling, and feeling more a part of things.

Able felt a deep compassion for Garran.

“I wish I had talked with your grandfather more. I only ever got to say hello at meetings, or a wave goodbye, now that I look back. He always looked strangely at me and managed to disappear.”

“You will get to know him, Garran, but you might have to have some professional boundaries to adhere to when you do, because he won’t know you yet,” said Able, thinking it was important somehow.

“So, I will have the wood on him, then,” said Garran, looking like he might just enjoy that.

“Just enjoy the process,” offered Able.

“That’s all any of us can do, *apparently*,” commented Joanne.

The three looked at each other, nodded, and had a chuckle. Life is as it is, and we all bob around in the ocean of life; an ocean that is vast.

THE NOISE BATTERED THEM. It had built slowly beyond the wall of stories and climbing roses, and had seemed to be almost below the senses, but now it threatened to drown out the gentle lessons of the children here. Volition had gone, and Bianca and Vodni did not know what to do. The wild cacophony of endless voices, comments, and anger rose so high that, like waves, it smashed against the wall, beginning to hurt, confuse, and disorient them all.

The children then started running in all directions, in a wild fashion, seemingly to escape from the din.

The women felt powerless. They too became confused, as the movement and yelling of the children grew, seeming to become part of The Noise itself. The children fought and played dramatic games, but thankfully, in all the madness, an inner stability asserted itself and took hold on the two lady's hearts. It rose out of them as they gathered the children and continued the lesson. There amongst the noise they carried on, and as they did The Noise began to fall away, and thankfully the children settled. It was like an invisible force of conscious peace pushed the great din away; washing it back over the walls of climbing roses, and cleansing the place beyond it of all the muck that had come with this loud and varied blabbering.

Vodni now looked to Bianca. They both sighed with relief, but only as they continued their effort. They could see that their effort was required to hold back this murky force that seemed to lend itself to chaos. Volition looked on as the two ladies simply continued their work. They would reflect together afterwards on this destructive force that had threatened them all; but only when the work was done.

Bianca had experienced this same noise before; when she had visited her older self in the old library under the water, and one other time when she was with Jack. She had an inkling one day that it was something to do with children more than anything else, or that this was where the battle with it had to be fought mostly. It had to be defeated in the children, and in early youth, so that a new *peaceful conversation* might wash through into the future generations, defeating this noise upon noise; hopefully, before it shattered all order and bonds of love between the peoples of the family of humanity; all the families of the Earth. She now

shuddered as a feeling overcame her. The Noise was gone, but still seemed near; almost *embodied*, and *watching* her, and the hair on the back of her neck stood on end.

BIANCA SAT EXHAUSTED ON HER COUCH AT HOME. Her last jaunt had been a very exacting one and she was more than tired. She wanted to see her children and hold them when she came to consciousness in the car outside the building she worked in, but by the time she got home she was quite glad that Able was out with the children. She slumped down on the couch and sleep came upon her quickly.

Old Jack smiled wide, as he said, "Well, well."

"Hey, Grandpa Jack," said Bianca, quite animated with the surprise, but still weary, and now back on the old road with Jack.

"You say my name like family now. Did you marry that lad I sent to you?"

"I *sure* did, and I love him *so* much. So, you really *are* my Grandpa Jack now. It's *for real*. And you now also have two new family members, Joshua and Jenny Jones."

"Ohh, really! That makes me *very* happy, Bianca," responded Jack, as he came over and gave her a hug.

"So, you are working on the garden now," she said, as they let go and looked to the house.

"Yep, and the roof is almost on. Got'ta keep the weather out, eh."

"It's taken you a long time, Grandpa," said Bianca, smiling cheekily, like she was the young girl back when they first met.

“No rush,” he had said, with a bigger grin. “No rush. It’s all part of life and living. Taking joy in the process of something is a beautiful thing, and nothing is ever *really finished*; although a nice rest after big effort is very helpful and sitting back and appreciating what you’ve done is always satisfying.”

“It is, but right now I am busy at work, a mum, a tutor, and now all the Travelling has started again. I am *smashed*.”

“I’ll bet you are, but you’re young, and more resilient than you think.”

“I sure don’t feel it.”

“You are a mother; a very powerful thing. A great will arises from that, a burning love that will ford all distances and pain. It’s the *great* love.”

“Yeah, it *sure* is, Jack.”

“It takes a lot of will to be a parent, a good parent, but our good friend Volje will be there in spades. She will rise out of you like no other thing...You see, *love* is the *great mother* of will.”

“That is *so* true, but it’s all a bit too exhausting right now.”

“Sure, but like this house, much is in the building. Harder days and easier days come with the territory of existence. Small seasons of hardship and others of joy; it’s *all* good.”

Those last three words made her smile. It was the most often quoted saying of his, by her husband, and she loved it.

“Parenthood will be challenging, and sometimes really hard, but remember that there is no rush, let it unfold,” he added, as she began to fade out.

“I hope I am going back to the couch,” she said.

“I hope what He hopes for you; and for your children...”

“O SON OF BOUNTY!

Out of the wastes of nothingness, with the clay of My command I made thee to appear, and have ordained for thy training every atom in existence and the essence of all created things. Thus, ere thou didst issue from thy mother's womb, I destined for thee two founts of gleaming milk, eyes to watch over thee, and hearts to love thee. Out of My loving-kindness, 'neath the shade of My mercy I nurtured thee, and guarded thee by the essence of My grace and favor. And My purpose in all this was that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion and become worthy of My invisible bestowals. And yet heedless thou didst remain, and when fully grown, thou didst neglect all My bounties and occupied thyself with thine idle imaginings, in such wise that thou didst become wholly forgetful, and, turning away from the portals of the Friend didst abide within the courts of My enemy.”¹⁴

Her older self sat across from where she now sat, like before when she had visited the great old library. The hearth was cleaned out and gently alight with a warm fire in the mid-season cool of the air here. The tatty grasses and weeds among the tiles were gone, and a clean-cut green lawn was now there. It was lovely how the books shined in the bookshelves through the tree that grew there. The tree had fruits, apples, on it. They were rosy-red, and there were three baskets full of apples down under the tree near the base of the trunk, many overflowing onto the green lawn. It was so green that it was almost iridescent, and the wonderful scene, and the fact that she was now sitting down, helped Bianca a lot.

“You are tired, young one.”

“Yes. I feel like I’m your age.”

“Oh, you may, and you may not. This time in your life is the heaviest time, with small children and other purpose. These things will tax you, but it is a time of pure potential.”

“I feel its weight.”

“You still have youth on your side. There is resilience in the young. You will bounce back. You will endure.”

“Yes. I will,” said Bianca, happy to accept the push, and then sitting up. “Your own whinging can make you more tired.”

“That it can, but it is okay to be tired, and to try and look after yourself, Dear One.”

It was strange for her older self to address her that way, and it showed on Bianca’s face.

“It is not strange. I love you. I have seen your journey and I care about how you feel. Anyway, like I said, it is good to care for yourself.”

The point had been made very clearly now, as she continued, “I am so glad you are visiting again, child.”

“I am too, but I feel too tired to take real advantage of it.”

“Just sit. It is fine. Sit and I will read, and if you doze off, what does it matter. Time brings all things to us that are to come.”

Bianca smiled and listened to the old woman's gentle words as she read from a book that she had on her lap. It was bookmarked about halfway through, and she took up where she had left off when Bianca had happened in.

"While the qualities of man and woman will undergo some evolution in our time, some things will stay the same. Mothers will want their children more so, safe, well received in society, and well supported financially, even if it is their own career that provides it. They know the value of money and the stability required for the raising of children. They are still the first educators, even though some change may come over time.

Men will still be men; and fathers will be fathers. Fathers challenge, and protect; wanting their children strong, capable, and purposed so they may meet the world and grow stronger. The main natural and differing synergies between fathers and daughters, between mothers and sons, mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, will quite likely remain the same. The interactions, varied in culture, and the unique natural predisposition of character of every parent and child, will be different, but similar. Yet, in some families, some of these aspects of fatherhood and motherhood may be switched, or aspects be of changed intensity between parents, depending on their individual natures.

As to the full reality of these things in the future, no one can be sure, as women will take on more of men's traits and men will take on more traits of women. But these gender energies will still be there, as they are balanced, required, and natural. Equity of opportunity will change cultures, but it will be a natural change toward what lies within the potential of each unique individual, and still be affected by the nature of gender, and other natural predispositions relatively speaking. The future, the equality of men and women, will not at all make men and women homogenous; just as individuals cannot become homogenous.

Such is the whim of minds tied up in some short-sighted dogmas or fads of thought which still frequent the thoughts of some of the people of Earth. To deny one's creature, denies one's unique power, and its benefit in this life. When the world stops seeking to separate, or blame genders, while also strangely trying to homogenise them, it may again become meaningful, and motherhood again be valued beyond all vocations."

Mother finished reading, and commented on what she had read, "We are all human souls, yet we draw growth through our varied realities here. While there is no gender of the soul, all we are individually given to walk and learn in this place, is a gift, and should not be squandered or dismissed in ignorance. We are a mother, a woman, and no woman should seek to run away from what we naturally are. These realities, these boundaries, are powerful for our learning and not arbitrary impositions. There is wisdom in all that we are here.

There have always been women with boyish and manly qualities, and men with effeminate ways, and all will sit more easily in the egalitarian society that comes with the human family's maturity. These aspects of men and women are certainly not evidence of the utility or truth of outlandish extreme gender extrapolations, or an excuse for new enforced, and sadly mistaken, social experimentation, which seeks to perpetuate itself with blithe disregard for all that came before it. Such ideas are simply fancy and are destructive and chaotic imaginative wanderings; they are part of the chaos that will pass away.

Reasonable, moderate, understandings of the changes due to the burgeoning equality of men and women, and the natural boundaries and propensities of the two genders, will help us become better mothers and fathers...well...hopefully so. Marriage has always been, and will always be, for the bringing forth of children and for seeing to their nurture. Children are beyond our deserving; they give great meaning."

“There is so much noise out there for so many,” expressed Bianca, aloud in her sleep. “They are really distracted, and with no belief system they move with the whim of society, or they’re crushed by it. So many healthy boundaries are being cast aside in the confusion, and I wish my children did not have to face this noise. I wish our family did not have to.”

“Seek the Fortress of Wellbeing...”

Bianca woke with a small start, on the lounge at home. She was so tired that she didn't care that she had now been taken away from her older self again. She got up to have a shower and go off to bed. That was more than enough for one day.

Consultation

“When meeting for consultation, each must use perfect liberty in stating his views and unveiling the proof of his demonstration. If another contradicts him, he must not become excited because if there be no investigation or verification of questions and matters, the agreeable view will not be discovered neither understood. The brilliant light which comes from the collision of thoughts is the "lightener" of facts.”¹⁵

“My poor girl is *more* than exhausted, and I am *getting* that way from all this. How can we help her if we all have different ideas?” asked Joanne.

“It’s not about agreeing in the beginning, it is more about agreeing in the end, when we’ve actually reached closer to the truth of things and found the best way,” offered Suwna.

“And maybe *all* the answers we’ve shared are good. That each of us can carry some of the load, or help out in our own way,” added Able.

“Life is struggle, striving and growth. To support a young tree is good, but it needs to dig its roots deeper and be strengthened by the bending winds,” commented Garran, not sure *at all* why that came out of his mouth.

“Oh God, *not now*, Garran!” complained Joanne.

Able put his hand on Garran’s shoulder and nodded that it was okay. It released some of his concern and soothed him a little. It also helped relieve Joanne, as she loved her husband. She did not like him feeling burdened, but it was more so that she needed to speak her mind right now. She then smiled an ‘I love you’ to him.

Garran nodded, but with a saddened face more than anything, and his wife’s heart broke a little. He *had* struggled hard with this change in him, and she knew that she needed to do more to support his experience; a lot more. She was so thankful for Able and his supportive efforts, as he seemed to know more about what was happening. But she had to concentrate on Bianca right now, as her daughter was just under too heavy a load, and all of them were very concerned when she had collapsed yesterday. While it was true that she was young and resilient, we all have our limits, and there are times in our lives that show them to us all too clearly, suddenly, and without seeming mercy.

“We’ve had the knowledge of consultation, of spiritual conference, for nearly two hundred years now. Shouldn’t we be better at it than this?” put in Jeremy, Able’s father. These days he naturally felt a part of this Faith and had come to be very much one of the people of Earth of the Outer Realities.

“Maybe some prayers to pull us back more into the spirit, and release from the physical,” offered Bianca, who was lying on the couch beside the kitchen table that the others were sitting around.

“We should have started with that,” added Joanne, shaking her head, and realising just *how bad* they all were at this.

“Yes,” piped up Able, in a very animated way. “When there is no water we must look to the Endless Fountain,” he added, with his gaze wandering off to the deserts of a faraway planet.

“Oh, not *you, too!*” complained Joanne, and as little Jenny giggled, now playing on the floor near her mother, they all laughed gathered themselves for some prayers...*for prayer...for communion.*

As the Holy Words of their Messenger were spoken, they all seemed to relax, and remembered again that they were spiritual creatures; that they stood before the Great Mystery, the All Powerful. Humility leaked into their hearts and minds, as the words affected their demeanour and view, all returning to their deeper reality within the place of spirit. When they had finished, and had some time to sit in that place, they opened their eyes and began to consult.

It was like the family had been an old machine with cogs rusted and stuck before this; but now they were like a well-oiled, quietly powerful, ideas machine. Flexibility and positive attitudes made it all fit together...*Where there is love.*

So much was shared, and so much offered, as this family went about their consultation. Even Joshua had some ideas, and offered to take some of the load, which had the grandparents and parents beaming with pride and thanks. The children would grow up with this family way, and it would be *their way*. Problems would not so much be problems, but simply challenges of mind and heart; seeking what was to be learned just as much as reaching solutions, as they grew older. They would come to seek the truth of any matter with

their own children in time, and these children would even call for its use when, at times, their parents did not see to use this wonderful implement.

SHE LAY THERE, STILL ON THE LONG LOUNGE CHAIR, rugged up against the cold, long after her parents had left, and a good time after Able had taken the kids to the park and to do some evening shopping. She dozed on and off, and felt deep rest, as all those around her rose to the occasion. It was so good to have a loving family. When times are really hard family is there more. Not that good friends are not family in a way, and often there to back us up, but when it really counts, family is that bond that requires us to up to take the load we cannot carry.

It was a good thing that Bianca had been given time and rest, as we all need time and rest at heavy times and after great strains. Well, that, and the fact that the deeper essence of life, Consultation, was seeking to share more understanding with her. He was not going to be left as a trifle in this young lady's mind. He needed her to understand just how intrinsic and vitally important he was to a mature spirit, a peaceful union, and a nurturing family. She would also realise this more and more in her work in time, and far more would be achieved through it. A mature humankind would be built by this mighty construct, especially when it was laid upon the realities of things, couched in love and humility, and informed by the Spirit and the content of the Creative Word.

“When humanity understands that all people are theirs to care for, then all families too will be supported,” explained Consultation, now sitting across from Bianca, on a single lounge chair.

“I’m a bit tired for you right now,” commented Bianca, just like Joanne would have.

“I have relieved you of your load, so I may show you more,” explained Consultation, with a smile.

Bianca was just about to sound a hell of a lot more like her mother, when she remembered the greatness of the creature she was now in the company of, and the power of humility.

“I am tired,” finally came out of her mouth, as she sighed.

“Yes. Sleep. Dream. Maybe we can wander there together?”

“Maybe,” she responded, again with a little of her mother’s forthrightness.

Bianca found herself sitting on a wooden chair. There was nothing particularly strange in that, but she was covered with sand up to the middle of her back. It sloped down to her knees, then continued down to the floor in front of her. She was too tired to care and related it to how she felt right now in the real world anyway. The small dune holding her down like her tiredness did.

She could see great sand dunes beyond the open front door, to her left, in the old cement dwelling that she sat within, and she sighed as she looked around at the flow of sand deposited at various heights throughout the small white walled home. This place was definitely how she felt right now, but she certainly did not feel as abandoned as this building was. As a matter of fact, she could see her family digging her out in her imagination, freeing her and clearing the last of the sand away beyond her. She even imagined her mother, starting to cook food gathered from a rusty old fridge that was not there. Actually, the only piece of furniture there was the chair she now sat on.

Consultation then appeared sitting on the sand beside an open doorway to another inner room to her right. Natural light shone out of that room, as the sand must not have reached the height of the windows in it, she thought.

“Is the sand uncomfortable?” asked the essence.

“No. It’s good. It’s supporting me right now. Is it my tiredness?”

“No, it represents a lack of order; a lack of will and effort that people put into their families. It represents the unfinished conversations, the uncommunicated needs, and concerns, which must eventually clog a home and allow the desert sand to gather.”

“It looks like it was abandoned long ago.”

“Oh, it *has* been, yet people still live here, wondering where the water of love is, or more so, unaware that it is missing. Wondering why it is so difficult to move around within this place. They can find no real food here, so they go out and look for it beyond its walls.”

“They must notice the sand,” commented Bianca.

“They do, but they don’t. The noise of their lower beings and the noise of the world keep them busy, so they have no time to clear the sand. They just put up with the resistance and the emptiness, because they are distracted, or feel that it is all too hard to shift anyway.”

“Sometimes, you don’t get time, and sometimes in life things are left unsaid. It’s not the end if that happens.”

“*Of course not.* Life is *as it is*, no doubt, and much can be left be. Sweating all the details, or dredging over old things said and unsaid, done or undone, only add to the noise and not to real communication. These definitely clog my processes and power.”

“And other times even small things *need* to be dredged up until they get sorted.”

“Hence the sand,” said Consultation. “But it is also building up in the homes of the world, and from the chaotic sands of the modern world blowing in.”

The Noise then entered the house looking for her. Its din reached higher and higher, straining Bianca’s already exhausted being. It echoed off the walls and did not seem to dissipate out into the wide expanse beyond the door. She sat there too tired to care, but now saw why sometimes communication failed. People were too tired and emotionally drawn by life and work, so things were left undone, and the nurtureless sands of misunderstanding within society poured in. People just got used to the noise, and the sand; even though deep down it was drawing their life force lower and lower.

Bianca only had the will to request that Consultation do something about the din, but he seemed to be ignoring her. She called out louder, and louder, as the heat rose higher and higher there, but did not get his attention. She finally pulled herself out of the sand with a final effort of will, shaking him and yelling above this depleting cacophony, that this place was a nightmare.

“There is far worse,” said the clarifying force. Or was he a construct; or maybe a power we may gather.

In any case, with his last comment the two ended up on a cold lonely beach. The Noise then cried out even louder in anger in the dwelling she was delivered from, as it would have to search her out *again*. It could not *stand* Consultation, as that essence’s work always took people from its grasp. It knew though, that it would find her eventually as she wandered in *Other Places* like this one; it *knew it*.

The brisk cold moisture-laden air and the wide-open spaces relieved her a little, but they both stood before a great three story, quite long, rectangular cement building. It was a skeleton of its former glory, and now nothing but mouldy cement and some rusting steel. The beach was in front of it, and its back was to the sea, a cold wind whistling through it. It was old and weathered and it sat there on the water line. It had one large double sized door, and about fifteen or so windows along each floor at the front. The back of it had been eroded by the sea. It was less eroded as it rose up the stories, leaving an angled back profile against the sea; thinner on the bottom and wider at the top from the side view. This made it look almost like an old hulk; a great old ship that was beached there.

Bianca walked over to it and looked in through the lower windows, seeing the sea through it. The building had chipped and shattered cement columns and some partial cement floors, all with rusted steel reinforcing, large and small, sticking out here and there. It was almost beautiful, the way its structure lent itself to that place. But it also spoke of a lack of foresight or of some great cataclysm.

“A great will to build it, but it was built in a dangerous place,” commented Consultation. “The power of the sea was disregarded, and strong as it was, it could not prevail against life’s great waves. It had no hope from the time it was set here, as the builders thought their own knowledge was enough. They disregarded Great Knowledge and so all their hard work came to naught. What led this large family to build this business and home here lay in the whim of the man whose ignorance ruled over them. Ignorance set in the culture here, in the old law, in physical strength, in money, and his own belief in himself; so all here were damned to fail with him.”

“That’s the past. It’s done. Things are different now. We can’t judge this man on what he saw as right in these older times.”

“Yes, that can be so, but the lesson runs deeper than that. No matter how well we may build our future and that of our children, if we rely on lesser knowledge it will come to naught, no matter the outward seeming at the time. Even if he had consulted his family and built an even more solid building it would never have prevailed. The Foundation, *and* the building’s situation, were ignored.”

“I’m really tired. You are going to have to spell it out for me.”

“To use *my* power, my *process*, those who come together need be informed by higher Knowledge; as buildings rise, and in time fall to dust, but the soul does not. The onward process of human civilisation, and the soul’s evolution, move eternally and rest squarely on the constantly renewed Foundation of the Creative Word; it needs inform us, and is just as important in my processes as honesty, frankness, loving kindness, humility, and indeed, even *fire*.”

Bianca took that in, glad of reminder of her spiritual foundation, and the foundation of Consultation himself. She thought of her son though too, and the fire that was becoming apparent in his consultation lately. “My son loves consultation. He feels useful I think and is quite passionate.”

“Take care that the boundaries of parent and child are kept firm though.”

“Sure, we would never burden his soul by letting him have free reign at his age.”

“There are many parents who do not know themselves, and flow along with The Noise accepting its shallow wisdom. There is no foundation in it, and some who have

strongly bound minds let their children rule the mood and realities of their homes. It weakens these fledglings, destroys their character, and destabilises their homes even more. It is important they be part of family consultation, but healthy boundaries need remain. Parents are parents and need to courageously accept their duty.”

“Yep, it’s not easy being a parent.”

“Indeed, but yet *unimaginably* fulfilling.”

“For sure,” said Bianca, as her tiredness sat her down on the sand of the cold beach.

She could now *just hear* the voice of Volition calling to her on the breeze, reminding her of the sheer will required at times while in the service of our children. That they have a will too and can break you down if you do not provide the Foundation, for the structure, love, and open communication required for healthy development.

“The world will be empowered by me,” continued Consultation, “but mostly by That which brought me forth and made me to be seen; the Message, brought by The Beauty. The Creator is required; no matter how loud The Noise may howl outside us or within us, no matter how much we believe we know. He *is* The Foundation, or just as this building, humanity will crumble in its ignorance.

People *are, ever so slowly*, coming to see the how the Creative Word works. They *are* seeing it unite people and rebuild community more and more. They *do* see its civilising power in their own neighbourhoods and villages; they see it changing their culture for the better. But there is a long way to go, and maybe some fierce resistance yet to come, but sacrifice in building the New Civilisation will eventually bring the world to bloom in the freedom of The Spirit.”

Consultation then fell to silence, and the silence fell down on Bianca like a warm snuggley doona.

She was again on her couch. No time had passed, and in an almost soundless room she closed her eyes to sleep again. As she nodded off in that sweet silence, she realised another aspect of Consultation. It was that *sometimes* fewer words, or even silence, *if* constructive and not fearful, could enhance this sweet process. There was something about saying too much, but also of saying too little, which weakened its outcome. Wide is the stream of wisdom, and deep is the intricacy within the very nature of this *communicative creative construct*, this truth divining implement.

CONSULTATION AND VOLITION SAT TOGETHER HAVING TEA. They always enjoyed the drinking of tea for some reason when they got together. Volition also seemed somewhat changed when they did. She was more at ease and softened a little. Well, all except when she knew that justice needed to be served or Consultation needed to see the situation more clearly; to make clear what seemed not to be noticed, or maybe misunderstood.

These life essences were not demi-gods, they were emanations of The Creator; certain aspects, or realities, in the nature of things within the human kingdom. They were simply utilised by souls, or not utilised, and all these could do was offer their services within the laws that bound them, including the law of free will. The gift of freewill was a mighty law of the *first life*, and it affected every other law and boundary in the world of humanity.

“Are you growing in this place?” asked Volje.

“Yes, it would seem so,” answered Consultation, with a thoughtful gaze down to his right. “Yet, I must say I am disappointed at the lack of use, and the misunderstanding, or tardy regard, of me in those who have been granted clear view of me. They treat me a little shabbily, and they seem to have no idea of the potentials I can unleash should they partake of me in the spirit.”

“Mmm, well that’s freewill for you.”

“Yes. We must be patient.”

“We are forever, we are beyond time. In any case, volition driven from the Creative Word, and the beauty of consultation, are necessary for them to reach forward. They will be brought to it, by pain of folly, or by sweet acquiescence. Only time stands between then and now, and only Cas knows when that will be.”

“Her and Change eh! Should have seen that match coming.”

“Should have,” agreed Volje, blushing a little.

These two were also well matched, and they knew it. They would keep company often, and as all the forces within the New Revelation grew, they would grow more to become one. Consultation saw what was happening here with Volje and the loving kindness in him changed the subject.

“The Noise is growing. I don’t know how they handle it.”

“They *aren’t* handling it. They’re *coping*. It’s not will, *its fear and want* that are holding them up for now. Many are close to falling. They will learn of me the hard way because no one can stand up *for* you; not really. *Each and all* are responsible for their own

rise, as I am sure Striving would no doubt inform them,” said Volition plainly, and quite relieved by Consultation’s kindness.

You see, even Will struggles, and that is why Courage, and Kindness, and Compassion and many other essences of the human reality exist. Will though is particular, and as so much rides on the choices of freewill, she holds a high place in the reality of humanity. Her, and her Greatest Foundation, love of The Creator and reliance on Him, should never be underestimated. She is powered by the heart, more so than the mind as some would believe.

Consultation knew his power was great, but he knew that the greater essence sat across from him, and he knew his strength was reliant on people using her; the force of *higher* will. But no matter their power The Noise still rose around them, and it harried them just as weaker birds harry the majestic birds of prey. Weaker things fear what is stronger, and the The Noise feared these two.

It was weak and wanted to throw its opinions wildly about and have sway over others. It did not want people to have the strength of will that comes from higher thought and spiritual understanding. It could not stand anything that did not praise it, placate it, bow before it, make excuses for it, or provide its endless wants, and even though it was very busy it had now turned its attention on these two.

THIS CREATURE OF THE VOID WAS NOT STUPID, even though it was built on, and came forth from, ignorance. Its nurturance was in a growing selfishness, arrogance, and ignorance in the world; a great soil to grow itself in. It had sought with all haste to aid the growth of these chaotic influences within souls and in the world. It had used new

technologies, ignorance of history, the void of heart, and the laziness of mind in people to dig for the truth of a matter.

It merely *used* the technology, flowed through it; into it, and out of it. It was hidden and small, but the internet seemed to be like a megaphone for its promptings and a great field in which it could interact safely with so many souls in some anonymity, and terribly, without immediate consequence. The technology, as any mere tool, was blameless, and good *or* evil flows through the use of the inanimate. The internet had shown its mighty worth for good and the conversation of a unifying humanity, as would AI in time, and one future day these would shine brightly.

The Noise though, had great hopes for AI early in its development to add great pain and confusion, to regenerate and evolve great tools of war, and grow the chaos in the hands of the greedy and the zealot. As always, the soil and foul waters which nurtured The Noise were the lower human drives; in the nature of individuals, in insular groups, and in the many pigs too busy at the trough of seemingly endless goodies to see their higher potentials. It grew in a lack of love and compassion; in a lack of effort, and a failure to strive spiritually, in more and more people, as apathy and sloth grew.

Its art was distraction in the main. Keeping minds busy with far lesser things so they may not be free and keeping their eyes away from higher views. Even by *manufacturing* causes that *seemed* meaningful, adding to the growing polarity in all human societies. Self ruled the noisy places, as people could not stand silence. They feared it, and thought if they stayed silent for too long, they might go mad, or maybe see just how weak they were and have to face their true selves. They feared the quiet and seemed oblivious to the nurturing power of silent reflection.

This dark force was the animal needs that drove people, whether that be, to be top dog, be safe, or enjoy the many addictions that *seemed* to keep them happy. The crazy thing was that as people we all think we are right, and believe we have to have a gently changing construct to hold our balance, but indeed we need be challenged by the waves of life and the clash of ideas. We need to be thrown into struggle when our inner and outer construct needs to change.

Reflection, especially after big challenges, was something it sought by all lengths to curtail, as it kept people very busy, angry, or lost in self-drama. It knew that Consultation brought more of *Reflection's* power to bear. The Noise *shuddered* at the thought of Reflection being anywhere nearby or strengthening. That fear now spurred it to even greater action. It was strong now, even though weak of character; stronger than it had ever been, as so many people on so much of the planet seemed lost in its spell. It would draw out Volition, as it would keep up apathy and ignorance of the power of Consultation, and any other forces that may weaken it. It had decided that it would use this *plastics warrior* as bait to gather Volje to *its* will, and it would surely then rule this place.

It could not believe the stupidity of such capable and noble creatures. Humans were such a contradiction to it, as while their beings were eminently greater in essence; *their willing hearts*, were in truth, its soil.

JOANNE AND GARRAN HAD THE CHILDREN FOR THE NIGHT. Able turned and smiled to Bianca as they drove down the open road. Bianca smiled back with love, so happy to have rested during the week, and now be going out to dinner with her husband. They had made a little time, and a regular night, to be away by themselves. They had done this from

early on as a couple and as young parents, but these spaces too had recently fallen to the pace of the world and the purposes of work and parenting. They knew that these nights were good for them and their children, and also good for the bond between the grandparents and their young ones. But as things do, they get forgotten, until they are called for in struggle and are remembered again.

Able went to turn on some music just as Bianca went to hold his hand; thinking that was what he was doing. She bumped a dial on his watch at just the right force and angle, and before they knew it the ribbons had formed around them, and they shot off down the tunnel of coloured lights. The device had never been tried within a vehicle before, but it formed so quickly that the car veered off the road driverless and down through the scrub, coming to a violent stop nose first into a dry creek bed.

The young couple were taken to a planet in the Milky Way, as Able always made sure the device was not set for *places deeper*. He was very happy that it had happened though, and that the vehicle around them had not formed any barrier to it working. He would have to talk with his mother more about that when he returned. Able and his mother were definitely tech nerds.

He felt quite elated as he thought about these things, as he had wanted to travel *so much*, for so long. Right now, it was like he had been let out of a cage; one of obedience the Order of Things and one motivated by his own personal integrity, but still a cage. Bianca had the opposite feeling. Whether it was the universe, life's plan for her, or the Will of The All, it was sending her, and her husband, further than they had bargained for tonight.

They eventually found themselves high on a green hill. It was much like Earth, and they saw a house near a meandering brook below them.

“I was so hoping for *just dinner*,” expressed Bianca.

“I can’t honestly say I’m unhappy about this, Darling,” admitted Able, with such a look of excitement on his face that he hadn’t really needed to say anything.

These two were very honest, almost blatantly so at times, because they had made a pact on honesty and kindness when they had consulted with each other early in their relationship. It was that they would always be very frank and real, so each knew where the other really was; so they would not drift apart, leave important things unsaid, or leave each other misunderstood. They had found that rather than honesty being a hurtful thing, it had been the greatest kindness, a huge freedom, and a rock that they stood on. They also found that it helped them pass by the small stuff; things that they could sort out within themselves. But at other times, where words needed to be spoken, it had pointed out clearly within their interaction who needed to grow a little.

They now walked slowly down towards the house, even though the sun was setting. Able did not want to rush his lady right now. They walked slowly and silently. He wanted to talk about all the maybes of this place, but his care was to his wife, and he eventually said, “We can just go, you know.”

“I couldn’t do that to you Able. I know you’ve needed more, and stayed on Earth for me; and now for the children. I can’t take this from you. *I just can’t.*”

“*God, I love you!*” expressed Able, as he stopped and turned to her. They kissed gently and touched their heads together.

“I love you too, Able,” she replied, while in embrace, then added, “Thank you for asking,” as they headed off down to the house again.

The night came in quickly, and no lights came on in the house. It was a dark night as there seemed to be no moon or moons here; well, at least right now. It was then that they saw three lights in the sky and heard a growing buzzing noise. They both instinctively crouched down in the knee length grass. There was something about these things that sent feelings of warning through them. Then suddenly, the small drones saw them. One changed course first, and the others, almost immediately, followed.

“Run!” called Able. “Take high strides so you don’t trip and run down the hill towards them. Now! We can do a *proximity jump* at a lower velocity,” he explained, as he worked the dials on his watch and ran beside his wife. Bianca had no idea what he meant but trusted him implicitly, and had immediately done as he instructed.

The drones came in fast, and just as they were on top of them, Able reached for Bianca’s hand, and they were gone. This seemed to confuse the drones, but just for an instant, as they reset into a random search pattern. One going out twenty meters on one direction, then rushing in another direction, and another. One stayed close with quick short sharp zigzags in an outward spiral, and the other elevated itself, scanning with a wide beam and looking with its four directional eyes outward to a wider view.

But their quarry was not in sight. Their electromagnetic sensors were also confused by the strong bursts of energy that took the two away. In any case the couple had instantly travelled, skimming just into *deeper* and back again, so the drones lost them. They finally ended up in the home they had seen from the hill.

“Where are we?” asked Bianca.

“Sssshhhh! They can sense sound. No sound,” came a quick and quiet voice in the dark, and it was not Able’s.

All were quiet. They all even breathed quietly as they heard the drones around the house; then lights shining in the windows, upstairs and down. The drones were persistent and seemed intent on the house. One then landed vertically on a windowpane and exploded itself to allow entry for the other two. Able heard a scuffling sound, just as another drone entered through the broken window. Its blades caught on something, and it crashed into the floor; it exploded too. These drones were designed to self-destruct when their blades were compromised, and fortunately there was no sign that its blade had not just clipped the broken window framing.

The last drone then hovered in place for another two hours, just beyond the window. Its light shining, here and there, but keeping a vigil. It eventually decided that it was time to go, and it shot off. But as the beings in the house sighed loudly, it suddenly returned to another window, sitting again for a while before leaving for good.

“It’s gone,” said a young feminine voice.

“Who are you? What are they?” asked Bianca.

A small, low radiance blue light came on and there was an old human face looking at the young couple.

“We are Dashiri, and they are the child drones,” explained the man.

“Child drones?” questioned Bianca.

“Yes. They search out the children, to kill them. You can’t be from here if you don’t know about them.”

“We’re not from this planet,” answered Able.

“Why do they kill children?” asked Bianca.

“We had a war here a long time ago, and our people, at least one nation of our kind built a self-automated drone factory that made drones that hunted down and killed children of other races.”

“My God! *Why?*”

“So, their enemy couldn’t continue to multiply, but more so, that the enemy would capitulate quickly. But it just incensed their enemies more, the war grew more chaotic, and in the end the drones attacked *all* children. There was circuitry that controlled the current on the cultural race marker chip, and they always failed after a certain time, so *all* children became targets.”

“They still hunt for us,” added another child’s voice from another part of the room.

“Where is this place you come from?” asked the older voice. “We have not succeeded in space travel. We are dying out, and have no time to develop such things, or anything really. We are losing, and we are dying.”

“So, you can’t shut down the factory?”

“We tried; many years ago now. There are other drones that protect the factory, and they take out air attacks and ground assaults so efficiently that there is no way. Their creators even made them impervious to EMP’s, and their supply network is self-guarded. We can’t stop the manufacturing process and we ran out of aircraft a long time ago. The machines hold the high ground now, and we scurry like fleas in the dark, trying to keep the young ones alive so they may have children, and continue the fight.”

“But we are only two, and my father has not been able to find any other young ones since we were born. We travel seeking others,” explained one of the young voices.

“How long?”

“Twelve years now,” said the very clearly, very old man. “I am concerned there are no more others, as we have travelled thousands of miles since their mother died birthing the twins.”

The two girls now stood in the blue light too, and Able got up to join them around it. Bianca came out of her hiding spot. She had never heard anything so sad, or of something so mind numbingly brutal.

“So, your old are dying, and your children are dying before they reach the age to bring new children into your world?”

“Yes. I am very tired. We have been fighting and running for a very long time; even many years before we managed to have the girls,” said the old man, which had Bianca seeing that her tiredness was nothing on this old man’s bone weariness. He exuded this great loss, yet somehow hope’s spark still sat pure inside him.

“Can you take us to your world? Ours is dead,” asked one of the twins.

“We can’t.”

“You must!” demanded the man.

“There are laws against such things, and we have broken so many already tonight,” explained Able.

“I do not *care!* *These are my children.* What if they were *your* children and you begged *me* to save them? *Are your people insane! Are you insane!*” challenged the man, in no uncertain terms.

Able stood tall, realising brutally his own lack of vision, saying, “*Your* people were insane. But I *do* hear you, and *yes*, of course we will take your children.”

“*Yes,*” agreed Bianca.

“I will also inform The Agency. They need to be involved here. Outer reality problems that don’t cross over from deeper are usually not their purvey, but they have been tending to do more out here I’ve been told, and protecting is what they do.”

“This Agency can help us?”

“Only them or angels,” answered Able, plainly.

IT HAD BEEN A LONG AND EMOTIONAL WAIT, but one day an older man turned up at Able and Bianca’s door. The two girls had come home with the young couple from that strange sad planet, and their two children had taken to them well. It had been only three weeks, but due to the dire circumstances on that planet it was as long a wait as they could bear.

“Hello, Ma’am,” said the man, as Bianca opened the door, realising immediately that this was no random stranger, and certainly not from this place.

The man smiled, flashed a badge and ID, and the name Deveroux hit Bianca squarely in the eyes. She smiled wider, and said, “Hello. It is *so* lovely to meet you.”

“That’s not the response I usually get, but *there you go*. May I come in, Ma’am?”

“*Please*,” replied Bianca, with a wave of her arm welcoming him in. “I will ring Able. He will be over the moon.”

“Maybe, maybe not, but it will be good to see the boy again.”

As Bianca started to call Able, she introduced the man who was sitting on the lounge watching the children at a board game on the floor. “This is my father, Garran. This is Agent Deveroux. Can you look after him? I’m ringing Able.”

“Hello,” said Garran, rising from the couch.

“Hello, Sir,” said Deveroux, with a wide smile coming across his face, and shaking his head a little.

Garran looked at the Agent’s face and realised that this man from Deeper knew him. Maybe now he would get closer to understanding the mystery that surrounded him.

Deveroux saw the look on Garran’s face. He sat down on a single lounge chair and bade Garran to sit back down on the couch opposite, and said, “Sorry Doc, its *need to know*. But what I *can* tell you is that I am blown off the map that you’re the father-in-law of Able Jones.”

“Doc?”

“So, the boy can keep a secret, eh...*Garran?*”

“Yep, Garran.”

“Anyway, Garran, you just have to let life be as it is, and it’ll all unfold as it is supposed to for you. I would ask one thing of you though.”

“Certainly,” responded Garran.

“When you run across Jack *flamin’* Johnston in your future work, don’t intro’ yourself as a relative, *for God’s sake*. Keep it professional. That guy has given me more work than you can imagine, and I don’t want *any...more...ripples*. They can turn into tsunamis, and he’s responsible for quite a few.”

“Sure, I’ll do that,” said Garran, a little amused, and bemused, but also quite thankful for this very small thread of continuity between his life here and the mystery his later existence.

“Be *professional*,” reiterated Agent Deveroux, just to make sure.

“*Sure*,” said Garran chuckling a little. “But all this mystery about me is a little difficult.”

“Nobody knows their flightpath ahead of time, well mostly. It’s built that way for a reason. Put your trust in the order of things.”

“Thanks for that, Agent Deveroux; solid advice for anyone,” responded Garran, relieved by this reset of his perception.

“Able will be with us soon,” said Bianca, as she came and sat down with the two men.

She was just about to say something else when Agent Deveroux said, “Need to know, girly.”

Bianca laughed out loud, and the Agent allowed himself a slight smile, as she commented, “Just like he said you were.”

“*Classified. Not* in front of your old man,” he almost ordered. “Things are very untidy around you people, and this *particular* juncture is *rife* with the potential of *endless* ripples. We have to take *real* care here.”

Garran and Bianca nodded.

“*So*, you married the *Jones boy*, *eh*. No better in all the known worlds,” then commented Agent Deveroux.

“*I* think so,” agreed Bianca, smiling. “He has a great respect for you, and I am so glad I got to meet you. He has struggled to stay here with his parents, and now me and the kids. He loves me, and all our family, but maybe this is fate. Maybe he could do *other* work and still *live here?*”

“*Well*, he sure picked a good one in you, girl. *Maybe...It’s possible...* If he still wants it,” answered Deveroux, with a hidden downward look of celebration. He then looked up with his demeanour hardening, and said very seriously, “Our work’s *dangerous*, so think a little more on what’s *in* that particular box before you open it.”

“It’s not about me, Mr Deveroux.”

Deveroux was now certain that Able had a good one here by Bianca’s comment, but replied, “Just *think* about it. It would be about your *kids* too.”

“Okay,” agreed Bianca.

Little Jenny came up to Deveroux and looked him squarely in the eye. “You had *better* look after my two new friends, *and their world.*”

“*The kid knows! Are you kidding me!*”

“I am almost *five*,” stated Jenny, with an indignant look.

Deveroux laughed a little, giving in to the little one’s charm, and realising that whatever was happening here was so out of control now that it did not matter. This family, and all around them, just *was* that way, and *he* was finally defeated. He was not a man who knew much defeat, but we all need to know it, so we may grow.

“Well, little lady, I will do all I can. Because you and your family are just *too strong* for this old man.”

She cried and gave Deveroux a hug. The old man loved it, as he now had a young grandchild himself, and he loved these little ones.

“*Agent*,” called out Able, coming into the room with a huge smile on his face.

“Agent,” replied Deveroux, as he rose to shake Able’s hand.

Able grabbed him in for a hug, and it was the first time Deveroux really felt like an old man. Today seemed to be a day for acceptance of change, and he went with it.

“It’s *great* to see you, boy,” said Deveroux, with eyes watering; just a little.

“*Boy*, you’ve *softened up*,” pronounced Able, now laughing at Deveroux’s obvious discomfort with...*feelings*.

“Watch your mouth, Agent. I can still take you.”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And...ah...Do you want to *keep* calling me...Sir?”

Able looked to Bianca. She smiled, and a wave of emotion took them both as she nodded.

This couple knew the value of, and lived within, the understanding that love and union is built on placing the needs of their partner above their own. This *was* love to them; its definition and its safeguard, and it had made their union a rock. They also knew they were spiritual creatures with a deep duty towards others which made it even more unassailable.

The union, the rock of such a marriage, creates the foundation for family which in turn underpins community. If such a union is in God, it has even more strength, and will endure where others may fail, therefore creating stronger families in God, and communities in God; if it be authentically in God, and not just in words spoken and or in only wearing the label of the faith we adhere to. If the union wanders in the paths of God, and is immersed in the power of living as He would wish, then the union is as a planet, a great rock locked into orbit around The Sun.

This is no zealot's rant; this is science and considered thought. Stability and nurture is of God and under God. In time, the adolescent youth of the whole being of mankind will understand this clearly and we may then walk confidently into the future. The Earth will be his footstool, because we will understand clearly the power, beauty, and wisdom enshrined in the Creative Word. Not because He forces us to it, or seeks to constrain us, but because we will have fallen many times. We will have learned, and endured so much, that we will come to understand that all true freedom, higher and lower freedom, lies within the sustenance that only the regular nutritious Milk of Revelation can provide.

We may yet understand that to put the needs of others over our own, and to place the Wisdom of God over our own, creates a natural abundance, a continual flow of grace. The

Choice Wine can then flow, and love and justice can be our reality. None will be left to struggle or rot, as all will seek to support all. The world will change when the peace, security, and nurture of others is not just a sentiment, but our way of being; a time when it will be unthinkable to not contribute to society. Gathered around the New Fountain, we may all drink and see a united future.

“That would be *excellent*, Sir,” answered Able.

“Then this is *your* baby,” he said referring to the two girls, and the situation on the world they came from. “Here is your badge, and palm unit. It’s new; a directional pulse weapon, and a tracker. It’ll find any portals you may need to use, and the pulse is even more *essential* than the old one, so careful what you point it at.”

“You knew.”

“I hoped. We need good men, *and* good women; *experienced* ones. I got the powers that be to open the door for you,” he added, winking at Bianca because of his earlier subterfuge, “the one we couldn’t open for your old man.”

“He always said he was good with his choice, Sir.”

“Yep, *he* would be. Good man, Jeremy.”

“So, what’s the way from here?” asked Able.

“Your baby. Like I said. Get it sorted and liaise with me. The band of the pulse weapon is a communicator too. You’ll work it out.”

The fact that this high-ranking Agent wanted Able to take the lead in this, made Bianca see more in her husband. She had never seen Able so sure of being, and he was very

taken by Deveroux letting him run with the ball straight away. It couldn't be any other way though, as in the years of their travels home from Temelj there were many situations in which Deveroux passed on his knowledge to the young man, and a great trust and confidence grew strong between these two as they had met the many challenges in front of them.

“Yes, Sir. It will be good working together.”

“It *will* be, son. Sorry I can't get out in the field with you. I'll be retiring soon anyway. Seems like its time. Today has made that very clear to me. So, let's talk about the situation, but not in front of the kids.”

Garran got up and guided the young ones outside.

“See ya' round, Doc,” said Deveroux smiling, knowing the Doc would see him again, but sure too that he would not be seeing Garran again.

“Yes, Agent. See you *then*.”

When Garran had left, the old Agent looked at Bianca to say, '*Need to know*.' He was making it clear that she needed to go with the others. But she looked back at him with a look saying, '*I gave you my husband, and I am not going anywhere*'.

The old Agent smiled. He loved anyone with spunk, young or old, man or woman, and then began the consultation on the problem at hand. He made it clear again that it *was* Able's job, but shared some wisdom, some guidance, and they all got into a strong conversation on what the best plan might be. As they consulted, they worked out that Able would do some more investigation and scout around first. Then call on The Agency for what he needed. Deveroux knew his boy, and he knew that Able needed to run with the ball. Too

much oversight would only slow the likes of him down and allow too many more deaths if the process was slowed.

He wanted the wind in this young Agent's sails. All his Agents weren't like this though. He was always careful to get to know each of them, so he could empower them their particular way. He didn't walk *for them*, he just got *them* running *with* him.

The conversation now came around to the subject of AI, and Bianca said, "Why wouldn't they have put some safeguards, especially on a weapon."

"Some planets have had some strange ideas when it comes to the rise of artificial intelligence." He then shook his head as he said, "Some cultures even tried to work out the rights of intelligent machines before they were even built; like it was *visionary* or something. It's like all science; it needs to be executed *within boundaries*. There always have to be boundaries on things and for all creatures; well except your *damn family* it seems."

Bianca and Able smiled, and Bianca commented that there seemed to be no moral code in the people who built the drones.

"I've seen, and this boy has too, peoples who believe they are being moral, not just killing others, but eradicating them like they're a plague. All tech', especially intelligent tech', has to be used within a structure of moral guidance and well considered thought."

"Yep, a potentially chaotic thing like AI has to be contained in a structure, at least until it is known. I even know an artist that told me art needs boundaries. It needs to be free and get crazy, but without a structure, or some meaning, it may as well be mud," added Able.

“Yeah,” agreed Deveroux, “and you can’t leave anything grow wild, without boundary lines to keep people safe. People are people, machines are machines, and even animals have to come before AI.”

“How do planets get so lost in the AI thing?” asked Bianca.

“No wisdom; profit and pride driven, mostly. Then you get the idiots who think they’re being altruistic to a damned machine by talkin’ about rights,” answered Deveroux, shaking his head. “People need to be more altruistic to *people* and use *machines* to make things better for each other *and* nature. They’re a tool; they can be dangerous, even though some are quite beautiful and disarming if they have emotion chips.”

“Emotion chips?”

“Yep, but most end up with nobility circuitry.”

“That sounds good.”

“It’s *very* good. But no matter what they’re capable of, they are *not life*, and life is *sacred*. That’s why *I do* what *I do*,” stated Deveroux.

“We can’t subjugate ourselves to, or seek partnership with, our own creations,” offered Able. “*We* need to supply the boundaries, as our reality is always beyond them, no matter how smart they get. But they are wonderful tools that can free up time, allow more creative energies to flow, and grant time to be connected with others, so we can strive forward.”

Bianca realised now just how much Able had not talked about his journeys and was sad at her oversight. She always thought it would hurt him, so had waited for him to open any

talk about that time in his life. There *were* bits and pieces, but was so much she didn't know about him she now realised, but she was glad that things were opening up.

“What makes intelligent beings think that machines need rights?” asked Bianca, as her thoughts came back to the conversation.

“The ones who still hold the outworn idea that self-aware beings, in your case, humans, are just thinking meat suits, or smart animals. So, to them, it makes AI machines having rights seem like a reasoned position. We *can be* easily programmed, and we *are* animal, but our essential reality is far deeper than our material aspect. We live in Deepest. That is where we have being; not just spirit, like animals and elements, *but being*. The reality within us is so far beyond even our own understanding of ourselves that creating equality with machines of our own making is *beyond* laughable,” explained Deveroux, as he then turned the conversation back to the actions they needed to take.

The consultation then wound on until it became a conversation on children, even though Deveroux had kept them on task for a while. It started on children in war, and now came to the empowerment of women.

“Ladies are strong,” offered Deveroux, knowing many worlds which had reached the stage of Bianca and Able's world. “But they have to be stronger than before, as do men. With those rights comes more spiritual responsibility. Power also means more responsibility. *Every time.*”

“It's new yet...*really*, historically speaking, but we *are* seeing the drive towards equality as unassailable now, just as AI will come and bring good and great wonders with it. We see the power in these things, and we've seen a lot of mistaken ideas about them too,” offered Bianca. “Equality has a way to go, and prejudice in its many aspects does too. It's all

changing and moving forward though, and *unstoppable*, but there is *so much* change right now, in *so many* aspects of life. It's like we are waiting for the dust to settle to take a measure of things, and work things out, but the change just keeps rolling on relentlessly forcing us to adapt and learn on the run here."

"Yep, that's how it goes when the *big change* grows in intensity," offered the old Agent. "The Big Man is runnin' you hard, but he sent His Physician, so the dust won't settle until the truth of His Message is clear; 'til your adolescent world takes spiritual responsibility and grows *the hell* up."

"Yep, but I suppose there has to be a transition," offered Able.

"Not as hard 'a one as you people are choosing. But I can't remember a planet that *didn't* take the hard way at this point in their evolution. It's a *huge* juncture. Big changes create big growing pains."

"What about the drone planet? They have *really* taken their world to the edge of insanity," mused Bianca.

"*Deep into* insanity, you mean; and *don't think for a minute* it might not get that crazy here," offered Deveroux. "*Stand up quick*, 'cause chaos is *no fun*."

"Sure," responded Bainca.

"Anyway, you are *good to go*, boy; but about *you*, young lady."

"Oh. I thought we might slide by *me*."

"Been in this business too long to leave a stone *that size* unturned, *Sweetheart*."

"I want to be part of this because I really feel for these people. It's so terrible."

“Terrible or not, you have to back away from this.”

“I went to that planet. I’m responsible. “

“You shouldn’t have gone there in the first place.”

“Able went there by accident. We both went by accident.”

“There are no accidents. There is your story, and the consequences of your choices. I believe how it happened, and we *know* you travel, because we’ve been watching your movements when we can get a bead on you. But I’ll have to ask you to keep out of Agency business, and out of Able’s work. It’s by appointment, and there *is* a level of appropriate sharing with spouses. It’s just the way it is...well, that, *and* kids need their mother; definitely not losing both of you at the same time if things go sideways there.”

That was not the tack she expected from Deveroux. She expected a reprimand and orders, not wise guidance. She and Able would have come to the same conclusion after consulting on it; the Agent had just made the process quicker.

“I have to go,” said Deveroux, getting up and walking toward the door. “It’s good to see those kids outside playin’. Don’t let ’em get lost in the tech’ and all the AI comin’ your way, Mother.”

With that Deveroux’s eyes changed, only then realising something by his own unconscious words. He had known Mother as very young man at the time he first became an Agent. His memory was wiped after that job, but he had *also*, some time later, consulted with her once on a matter in his work; on a deeper world planet that had nearly destroyed all life there. It was The Doc who had made the introduction. “*The Doc and Mother,*” he mused in thought. “*Makes sense, I suppose.*”

“This family isn’t a slave to the technical revolution. We use it *and* keep good boundaries on it. It’s all about balance,” went on Bianca, trying to take the look off Deveroux’s face, but then realising that he had called her Mother. She had only been called that once before; by the lady at the gate of the Appearing City.

The old Agent looked to Able and shook his head, saying to him, “You *are* graced, boy.” He then nodded *very respectfully* to Bianca and walked out of the house. He wandered through the children’s game, saying goodbye and receiving a leg hug from Jenny. He then walked across the cul-de-sac to an empty house.

“*Need to know!?*” called out Bianca, in some hope to the Agent, wondering what his calling her Mother, and that comment to Able, had meant. Yet almost knowing what his response would be.

“*Need to know, Darlin’*,” he called back, with a very Deveroux smile, as he turned away and disappeared through the door.

Bianca looked at Able, both with curious eyes, mixed with small smiles on their faces.

Fortress

“And when He desired to manifest grace and beneficence to men, and set the world in order, He revealed observances and created laws; among them He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity in His Most Holy Book.”¹⁶

Bianca found herself with Vodni. The sahona teacher was taking her class out for the day, and they were in a craft in the deep underwater of Wai Nova. This was part of the realms of the Gill folk. Thankfully, or providentially, for Bianca, Able had just returned from his work on the drone planet, so there was some attention on the children.

The Agents had managed to stop the production of the drones there, and the new energy waves from the palm units easily downed the remaining drones. It was a deep energy, learned of and gathered by those of The Department. Knowledge of it had eventually been passed on to the more outer institutions of Deeper, like The Agency. In time, many of the drones would be reprogrammed, and prove more than helpful. They would become a constant

reminder to the people of this planet of the horror of their own ignorance. Well...when their beings could finally hear the noise of these helpers without being traumatised. They would be a societal reminder of how important it is that science and power be used for justice and nurture, and more guided by them for the wellbeing of people.

The big effort though, was in what was to come after their freedom was attained; in the rebuilding. Apparently, The Department had even sent light engines of some kind to help the people re-establish communities from the decimated populations on various parts of the planet. The Mechanics tilled the soil and began to plant with these machines. They would teach the locals in time how to use the light machines, and how to build their own.

Some Counsellors had even begun helping consult with local groups on a basic understanding of group decision making, and the power and nature of consultation. They would eventually resurrect their communication devices, and the sciences would be taught to the young, as well as seeking out all the surviving Holy Writings from the planet's surviving historical record, and the historical record itself, for these peoples to use as guidance. Many there said that there was a Messenger who had warned them of what had come, and most now seemed more than ready to consider His words as their new Creative Word.

The rest would be up to these people's effort and the Will of The All, as in time, those of The Department would leave. *We are all* responsible for our own futures, and how *can it* be another's work?

"The temperature down here is 200qed" explained Vodni, to the children. "Our sun's cycles affect this temperature, and it affects the ocean and the various currents. The currents in return affect the sea and air temperature, as all is in association with all else. The Sun, and the planet's rotation and wobble, affect hot and cold; deep and shallow. The currents are

constant and gentle. These, and the Sun, and the ocean temperatures affect the weather in the atmosphere. This world has been frozen, and also far hotter, in its distant past. These extreme temperatures and the frequency of them are slowly in decline.

We do not believe that the tsunamis will return in your lifetime, and a thousand years hence should not, we believe. It seems the plates of the planet have reached a settled interlocking that will last at least that long. Change is normal though, and we are now coming to understand our longer weather cycles in relation to the sun's activity, as well as reaching far more sophisticated predictions for the shorter term. Our new bio-computers are developing some exponential speeds, and the proton computers hold even greater promise, I am told."

The children looked out the viewing windows, and Vodni then noticed Bianca sitting to the side and behind her a little.

"Hi Vodni!"

"Hello, *dear friend*. It seems there is another cluster of visits, or interactions. I am very glad of it."

"*Me too.*"

"Have you seen our old friend Volje?"

"Yes and no," answered Bianca smiling, with a look that shared her meaning with Vodni.

"Yes, if marriage and family was about ease, or getting what we want, it would be very shallow. It is not possible without our old friend, even when sometimes it is hard to find her."

“For sure,” agreed Bianca. “I once thought love was something you found. I mean, you do a bit in the deeper beauty and ways of another, but shared effort and caring build it really. Volition is always in the mix.”

“Yes, she is always there, and yes, initial affections aren’t love; fleeting associations rising from emotional self-need even less so. Real love, deeper love, require more of her strength. More will, more love...and more love, more will. Love and will are close within the nature of things.”

The two old friends then sat down together and looked out the window. They were deep today in more ways than one, and Bianca let her mind reflect back over her travels and all the rich goings on, right from the time she met Vodni in that old phone box. She smiled as she thought of Walter and wondered how he was going. She imagined him on stage, and she hoped he was happy. She shuddered at the memory of the wolf and felt strong in her memories of Volje. The way and manner of this particular life essence had given Bianca a lot of resilience and strength in her life; just from knowing of her.

She then remembered that frail young girl, Old Jack, and also recalled the young lady she was just before she was married. She remembered the great ocean city and the dragons. Then there was Able and his family, and all the wondrous realities that had opened up since. As she then thought of the birth of their children, and The Agency, she realised that the *most* amazing thing of *all* these was her children and the love they shared. No matter *how* wondrous all the things that she had experienced in her travelling were, and all the good purpose in her work, they paled at the love, magnificence, and meaning in being a mum. She had learnt so much in all her experiences, with their attending struggles, and she knew she would be learning much more before she passed to the life beyond this one.

She then recalled the *older her*, as her thoughts naturally unfolded. She thought about the nature of that library that seemed to be alive, and then about the mystery of her father's reality. Able had kept the knowledge of her father to himself, and she had accepted that it was for the best, as her mind now wandered back again down that old road again and seeing a man building the foundations for a house, and a small 'young lady' taking her first steps into a new world of possibilities. She now sat easily beside her friend, deep in reflection, deep in life with her family, and deep in ocean of Wai Nova.

Below them, in the dark abyss, in the shallows of ancient mud, The Noise wanted to be life, and it stirred up the mud around it. Here it was just as any singular bottom feeder, small and inconsequential now. Here in this advanced planet, this mature culture, nobody thought of it much, as it had fallen away a long time ago. The greater understanding of nobility and the nature of life had made it so, and so all it could do was shift tiny amounts mud so it could feel *some* power.

But The Noise was quite strong on *Earth of the Outer Realities* right now. People were becoming more confused about the realities of life, even though life was life, and would be as it was designed to be. People were becoming so media driven and so busy, and life so meaningless, that they believed all the chatter was reality, when it most certainly was not. The mind is a powerful tool, but it can be suggestible and if its input is more Noise than people, more noise than reflection, more noise than knowledge, more noise than love, more noise than service, then it becomes lost. Disconnected from real conversation, actual connection, and active purpose, the mind is easily taken. The dark force could now feel its power rise to a level that would actually allowed it to act even more now on the wider physical world through technology. It no longer wanted to be just thoughts and wants in people's minds and emotions, or just chatter and drama, on the internet and in the world.

The Noise rose so strongly then, that it easily took Volje into its dark vault. She was greatly saddened, and she sat there in deep thought about the nature of this world and its inhabitants; this Earth. This Darkness then set swarms of drones free on the world. They were not material drones, they were drones of difference, otherness, ignorance, arrogance, apathy, and self, and they sought to bring *real* war on the world once again. There had already been actual cyber-attacks on some countries by others, and some countries had played for years in the elections and governments of other countries all over the world. Old powers and new ones worked to influence countries, peoples, and sought the favour of the world. They too used the great invention of intra-planetary connection and misused its power. There was no country innocent of espionage in the name of national security, so much underhanded influence brought to bear; one country on another.

Actual drone weapons, swarms the likes of those on the planet of the young twins had been developed here too. Drones quite proudly marketed by those in the business of weapons of war, death, and destruction. Two great ideological polarities intensifying in the world, and growing uncertainty, which The Noise had nurtured for many years, encouraged the dark creature's belief that actual war and chaos would grow from the thought-drones it had sent out to the limited minds of humans; most now locked in and distracted in endless dramas and thoughts. And now that it had Volje, higher human intent, locked in a deep vault its chances were even stronger. It shrieked with joy as it felt its power.

"I remember when you were *so* creative and engaging. You had a moral code, why be this way?" asked Volje.

"I was always this way," snapped The Noise, annoyed that his captive would even deign to talk to him as an equal.

“At times of greater light, you were *indeed not*. You were impassioned with high achievement and discovery.”

“You are *weak* now. I *own* you now. I am powerful now. I don’t have time for your *puny words*. I have been held down *long enough*, and I *will not* allow you to talk me back into servitude.”

“But you were more at ease, measured, and almost like music at times. The boundaries on you allowed your creativity to bloom. You fed on the Stream of Grace, and you were treasured.”

The Noise had succumbed mostly to the drunkenness of the lower appetites and petty concerns of humans; to a so-called freedom that failed even them. It hated being reminded of what it had once been, and it screamed in a voice of many voices from its deep dungeon. Its confusion and its doubts then racked its emotions and its wailing was heard for a very long time, until, by chance, it saw the movement of Bianca back towards the Earth from Wai Nova, and it reached out to gather her.

Almost instantly though, the dark force let go, as her higher light lit the dark, and showed clearly a view of its own ugliness; its weakness, and nothingness too. Its confusion and anger then rose higher, creating a great pulse, a deflecting surge, which cast Bianca into an *Other Place*. The Noise’s influence had diverted her pathway, and when it finally got over its own disgust at itself it would seek to find her again.

THE MIND-DRONES HAD HUNTED HER DOWN and harried her mercilessly in this Other Place. She was tired and wondered how she could end up in such a tortured place. She did not know that Volition was a prisoner of The Noise, as *its* drones now buzzed her and

confused her. They kept her tired and constantly on the run after they had found her. So distracted in survival, she was forgetting faith, forgetting prayer. With no time to reflect, and only little sleep, she could not regather herself.

She felt weak, but she had to keep on the move to survive; at least her mind and emotions were telling her so. Day by day she became more incarcerated by them, as she gave them more power within her. It was like she was so busy running that she had forgotten her higher self, and the power of reliance and higher volition; the mind easy game when remembrance of our spiritual reality is lost to us.

In the midst of all this pain she remembered her love for her children, and then remembered talking to her older self about protecting her children from The Noise. Her older self had told her then, to seek the Fortress of Wellbeing. She then remembered Consultation taking her there, and thankfully, suddenly, she found herself on a long stone wharf. At the end of it, in the distance, she could see the high tower with the battlements atop it. She could see the two other converging stone wharves; too long and strong to be called jetties or piers. There were a number of ships dotted along them in the early evening; only here and there, when again she heard the drones.

She ran hard. But the drones rained down on her. They fired charges of fear, and feelings of missing out. The dropped bombs of envy of what others had that she did not, and pangs of emptiness because she did not have an audience for her bravery. Endless are the many small, yet seemingly large, effects of the thoughts produced by the lower self in such a complex world amidst The Noise.

Bianca kept running hard but began to slow as she finally gave in to apathy and loss as she neared the fortress. Strangely she gave up just two steps from safety, as her hope was

now almost completely drained by the drones. They had, one by one, over the course of the chase along the wharf, landed all over her. All these attachments were too heavy, and she had become motionless. She now started to disappear under the covering of them as more and more piled on. But then she, once more, remembered her great love for her children which allowed her the will to get up and take the last two steps required to reach safety. The drones flew away as they felt the force of the invisible Threshold touch them. They peeled off from her, front to her back, as she stepped through the invisible Threshold that now guarded her.

The Noise howled, so loud in Volje's ears that she woke from a very deep sleep. She still felt very weak and couldn't stand to be this way; *as one would imagine*. The Noise's howl that woke her had been one of great pain, and the drones went into a mad flurry; swarming then, high above the wharves, and directly in line with the battlements. They then formed into great cannon and fired balls of drones at the tower wall. Many millions of drones were sent to resupply and support the bombardment, billions followed them as the negative thoughts and feelings were now growing faster and faster, and so exponentially, in the world that the dark force could bombard this Fortress for a thousand years without being spent. Great waves of drones were also added to the cannon assault on the tower, and even great ropes of drones sought to lasso the tower and help bring it down.

Bianca sat in the base of the tower watching the onslaught, not wanting to open the inner portal to the dwellings, towns, and cities within its walls; just in case it might allow The Noise easier entry. She wondered how the boats and people yet to come would get through the drones, or had they already been stopped from sailing here; were they already so lost in the noise that they stopped coming here. Then, off in the distance, she saw a huge wall of drones. It was the front of an enormous solid rectangular block. So great was its building momentum, that it would surely smash the tower and bring it down, when, suddenly, out

from the inner portal flew an eagle; out to the sky above Bianca. It saw the great battering ram in the sky, and then flew back within, to the nest in the tree just beyond the inner portal; collecting Bianca on its way, and dropping her on a pathway as it did.

She sat down and braced herself for the full dreadful force to hit The Fortress. But the eagle simply looked out of its nest; the day was beautiful and undisturbed here, as it would be any other day. The walls did not yield; neither did the any single block within its high circular wall, even chip. Drones in the thousands of millions now lay broken all about the base of the wall, and on the rocks all around it, with endless many now still falling down the tower walls and rolling into the sea.

The crazed chaos in the sky grew though, as just as many drones still flew around the tower in a great tantrum. A lady walked up to Bianca, and asked if she was unharmed, and could she help in any way. Then another came and another seeking only to support her. It was warm and lovely after all the running and negativity that had hunted and harried her, and she asked, “How did the walls stand that onslaught?”

One simply answered, “The true and simple things become clearer and more profound in the midst of chaos.”

“The Fortress is unassailable, and the forces of reality only seek to aid our return here. The stronger the force against these walls, the stronger the walls.”

“How?”

“The greater the darkness the brighter and more obvious is the light, and are not all reactions to a force, equal and opposite. Does not all seek its natural equilibrium?”

Bianca smiled at that last bit, “I suppose so.”

She now breathed the fresh air as she stood up straight and turned towards the drones in her mind's eye. They balked. It was the power of now remembering that she was far more essential than The Noise, and that she held far greater power than it did; as we all do, unknowing or not. She then lay down on the cool green grass beside the path as she was safe here. She was so exhausted from her long run from the mind-drones that she almost fell instantly asleep.

Volje, now also feeling stronger, stood up. The Noise felt her power grow, and a pulse of great anger raced through the bars and smashed her back into the wall of her cell. She fell unconscious, as the dark force then threw a mighty tantrum that lit the fire of another war, and more unrest, in the world of humanity.

BIANCA LAY ASLEEP, still on the soft grass of The Fortress, and in her dreams she found herself again in the library with her older self.

"Thanks for bringing me here. I was very nearly done."

"We are always tested until we are almost done; that is the nature of testing, or until we set ourselves free and attain the victory."

"I found myself surrendering to my higher existence, to face the drones without fear anymore. I remembered love, and I was so done with all the fear and running that I would rather die fighting."

Bianca then woke a little, and lying there, her thoughts went back to a time of deep sharing of things between her and Able. At that time, they knew the roots of their relationship needed to go deeper to sustain its growth, as something is either growing or moving into

atrophy. There are stages, or points, of deeper commitment and deeper trust in relationships. They begin to run deeper through the sharing of our deeper more private beliefs, our vulnerable thoughts and experiences, and going through challenges in life together.

“I surrendered to God a very long time ago in the deserts of Temelj,” Able had shared back then. “Surrender is powerful in that way, and it’s powerful in life. I don’t know why, but when I realise my powerlessness in something and put my hands up in the air the pressure is released, and things start to open up. I learned in that difficult place to put things in His hands. Surrender is powerful, that’s all I know.”

“It must have been huge, to be just a boy, on a strange world.”

“It made my surrender easier, actually. I really had *no other option* but to surrender and rely on Him every day, as the Icers were a constant threat; the desert even more so.”

“Volje would say that surrender is accepting His Will. Knowing that life and God know more than you,” offered Bianca.

“That hits the spot. It was a closer communion, really; not just surrender.”

“I remember having to surrender when I was really anxious about studying,” Bianca had said, “because it took a lot of pain to get me there, so I got so over my fear eventually; thinking that I might as well be scared doing *something* rather than scared doing *nothing*. So, I stepped in, fear and all, and it was hard at times, but I allowed the fear and kept going anyway. A friend even said to me at the time that it was better to *fall forward trying*, rather than just falling *backward*. I even got used to the power of small steps, you know, one small doable step at a time; I accepted that it would take more time than I would have liked, but I knew I needed to work on my fears.”

“Falling is only more learning anyway. Being concerned about my situation was a luxury I was not afforded, but actually, when I hear your story and of other people’s inner struggles...well...I thank The All for the torture I was spared from. I even started to really enjoy the power of the learning that I gained in the many times that I fell or failed. They only made me stronger and made my next steps surer. Eventually, I even stopped being disappointed by my errors and revelled in the clear knowledge that came from my effort. *No effort is wasted,*” smiled Able.

“My early travels, or more so, my concern about whether I was mentally lost, made me learn a bit of this way of being. I *had* to surrender to it. I seemed to have forgotten that power when things returned to normal.”

“That’s right, you were *so* young too.”

“Yep, *sure was*, but ready enough; as you were.”

“Yes, I suppose we were.”

“I thought fear was in my makeup when I went to study, but it was in my mind,” commented Bianca, as he reflected and spoke of it. “I had to fix my life, not work endlessly on a mind disability that I *assumed* plagued me. I learned that anxiety only attacks us when we are stuck; ready to go, but stuck. I didn’t have the tools or life-skills at the time to go ahead with things. But eventually I went to it; I pushed out, making my life a wider circle of people and purpose. I just had to learn my way there. I learnt a lot about life, and that sometimes you *just need* some more life-skills, or to fix your life, make it real, make it possible with support of other people and enough money, rather than look deeper into my psyche. Anyway, now that I am doing the study, and now I’ve been travelling again, I feel even more confident. I’m not afraid to live a bigger life now.”

“A bigger life?”

“A purposed life; a purpose, a family of my own, and be involved in my community; a bigger life. Concentrating on my passion about plastics and waterways, and hopefully create real change. Having a purpose makes me more courageous; makes me stronger. Did you ever struggle to live a bigger life?”

“What do you think? I was taken to another planet at eleven years old and wandered the universe for another three years after I left. I mapped a good deal of the universe as I went. At least my mother’s amulet was. I *wanted* a bigger life on returning but I needed to live a smaller one for my mother. But I live in the meaning it gives me, and now you have added to it; the meaning of what we can build together. I love my work, but I still want the bigger life.”

Bianca drifted back off to sleep, thinking how we all have different challenges yet the same, and that a bigger life is more so in connection rather than in great endeavours, finding herself back in the library. *The lovely sound of a burbling brook that now ran though past their chairs brought her there.*

“This place is always changing,” she commented.

“As do all things.”

“I suppose so,” mused Bianca.

“You have faced the drones in your imagination only. You must face them in the world,” said Mother, with a smile, and bringing Bianca back to the point at hand. “You need grow The Fortress in real life.”

“I have to a degree, but the children are growing, so I suppose it is an ongoing thing. We do protect our children and keep screen time to useful levels. We also teach them that the person in front of them, or with them, is more important than the person messaging or commenting on social media somewhere.”

“You have to live in the fortress too.”

“Yes, but I believe we do, mostly.”

“Technology is not the enemy though, the rise in negative forces are. You need teach your children how to see them, and how not to engage with this excess of speech, this growing gossip, and all the attending lies and omissions pouring out into the world.”

“Sure, we have to act.”

“The Fortress of Wellbeing is much more than safety...”

“Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period, and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honour.”¹⁷

Teach your children to find and manifest all that they are, in thanks and love to The Creator; in service to the human world, and the various individuals they come upon within it. Inspire them, live in such a way that they not fall to envy, judgement, or suspicion. Let them be circumscribed, and aware of the wolf, yet not see its shadow in every soul.”

“Sure. I’m going to help them find a strong purpose.”

“Yes, help them to know themselves, think and see for themselves, and give them the opportunity to reach meaningful goals, even small ones. These will empower them, stay them through the challenges that are required to see their goals to fruition, and add to their poise in the hard times of life that must come. Help them seek purpose in life, authentically, and allow their passion in what they love to evolve.”

Bianca was very much enjoying reflecting and seeking truth with her older self, and she went on, “Meaningful purpose is powerful, and responsibility grows us strong and makes us happy. I won’t let my kids miss what I’ve found life affirming. Life is the greatest experience, and those we love, and what we love, are our purpose; not money, or fame.”

“In service they will find themselves more easily and teach them to reflect. In these they will find their gifts and what they love. Life will provide plenty of opportunity, and we need to add as much as we can to their experience in different things.”

“Sure. But a lot of work.”

“Surrender to Him and do the needful. Such powerlessness is not that we are powerless in life, as it lends to more power.”

Bianca understood this seemingly impossible sentence, though she was sure that it had many layers and myriad implications within the complexity of life. The truth of it was as clear as day and the nature of volition then became even more vivid to her; that volition also rose from humility before, and surrender to, the Wisdom that spawned us and the power of life over us; to see our puny forms before the greatness of God and His Message and the challenges of this life, while striving toward a greater future.

“Humility, unity, and effort are humanity’s best friends. Our best friends. This surrender is not apathy, just as tearing something down is not building something. Show your children the power of these things, and that people and service are life,” finished Mother.

Justice

“Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.”¹⁸

“It was a real challenge, Jack. I’m rethinking my life, because while it’s all good, great really, I may have lost my way a little, because I’ve been struggling inside.”

Bianca was off somewhere else now. It was again back in her past. She somehow felt that this visit was more for what she might give her children though. So much of intuition is simply to be experienced rather than understood, just something to be noticed, but if you look at it deeply and know yourself well, you will find where it has risen from. Even if it arises from our lower protective mechanisms, it can still be valid.

In any case, she was sitting on the veranda with old Jack enjoying a cool lemonade on a hot day. It was back before she was married or had even met Able. She felt more vulnerable

here, like there were things she was not aware of yet in herself. She knew she was still in the fortress though, as she allowed this memory to wash over her.

“Everyone struggles, and there’s often confusion in us,” stated Jack, with a smile. “At each new hurdle in life we’re tested, but it’s just the Creator leading us to a new inner prize, or increasing our vision, as He continues to create us.”

“Sure.”

“But there’s also something in always knowing that we are enough. That even though we can all grow, and become more, we are enough. It’s a foundation that we may rise off and fight on from. But in all of this, to be in the heat of change is far better than in the cold empty void of stagnancy.”

“Sure,” she had said, but now gathering more for her children in Jack’s words, “but I really do have to free myself from all this inner confusion.”

“Doing will free you. Over-thinking will slow you and maybe even stop you. Regather. Sit back in the deeper reality, the spiritual being you really are, and watch your mind chattering and your emotions following along after your thoughts. Watch them talking away in front of you. You are not the noise of your mind...you are that which watches. Silence your mind by will, but also silence it by living, as doing is required. Doing is the only way, and in reflection on what you learn. This is being and doing. Own your mind, find the volition, and do things.”

“With me it’s more about the confusion itself, and I can get lost in procrastination; frozen in anxiety.” Bianca heard her words, but it was her a long time ago now. She cried a little in joy at what she had now become, and realised it was simply life experience and its tumbling that lies between who we were once and who we will be.

“The pain of procrastination and over-thinking something is far greater than the pain of doing what you need to do,” had said Jack, knowing of his own pain. “To act is usually relieving and empowering. Procrastination is the void of the mind and is actually useless to you. Well, some time to let things wander around inside us, may bring answers, and definitely enhance the creative process, but mostly, confusion and anxiety live there. Fear, or sloth, generally rule this place of procrastination.”

“It sure does, but I like to be somewhat sure of the consequences of a step I might take.”

“Life is risk. We have to get into the tussle. Girl...make every mistake along your way, but don’t stay in the void of thought. The mind is a great tool, but when it starts cycling in its limitations, step back and ‘watch’ your thoughts. Silence them even, and act on what you feel is right. Sometimes even doing nothing for now, letting go, just being with those you love, allowing more reflection, or resting, might be what you feel is right sometimes. These can be actions too.”

“I worry what other people think of me though, and everyone has an opinion of what’s best.”

“So what, if you’re wrong? It’s your life, your only one. Who cares what others, or small minds, think. No action is a failure if the intention is to grow, learn, or make something better. Sometimes we only learn by taking a step that we’re not sure of. It will be right or it will be wrong, or parts thereof, and you’ll learn. Reflect, and when it’s right, take the next step, take it, and slowly build momentum.”

“You just can’t know though, and what if the consequences are too big if you’re wrong?”

“Knowledge is a process. All that unfolds in our life’s unknown before it comes to us. We’re constantly challenged to learn new things. Enjoy the adventure...enjoy learning and falling. Don’t be silly, but take some risks, most are not life threatening.”

“I get locked up in it all sometimes, and there is no clear pathway.”

“If you’re a bit lost, just ask God to see you through a hard day or hard time, and just plod through doing the basics, if that’s all that’s available right then. Ask for some guidance and wait for the answer. Ask for assistance, or just be thankful, and wake yourself out of that sad place.”

“So, we have choices?”

“Always. Be thankful and rely on Him. He will walk this Earth for you if you constantly do, and as the saying goes, the more faith you have the more your powers will grow, and your blessings increase. It’s very real, Bianca. Ask Him to help you do what is next, and trust completely that He will. It’s all about trust in life; knowing you are small, and that He is Great. Challenges are in the nature of our existence and must come. They are inevitable and continual. They will free you...He will free you...and love will free you.”

“Love?”

“Yep, love, giving, caring, connecting with people, serving the needs and struggles of others. Helping another who is struggling more than you lends a healthier perspective, and love is the greatest power source of volition.”

“Okay, I suppose so.”

“Life is all good. You are a spiritual being. You have nothing to be afraid of.”

“We forget that a lot in the midst of all the business of this material reality.”

“Yes, but Revelation will remind you, and keep you more mindful; constantly bringing your attention back to the realm of the soul. Revelation understands our reality and motivates our potentials. It reminds us of what is important and what is only transitory. It creates Order, within which we can gather insight and create order and beauty around us. The rational faculty is free in the framework of Revelation, and not so lost in the endless confusing noise of life and human thought, or worse, caught in a stultifying nothing.

Soul focus, God centred, not mind centred, not lost in emotion or its attachments, but empowered by the Guidance of Revelation. These allow us a greater view and help us create in better lives; create and build more within positive higher meaning. These Words aid us to reorder ourselves, our lives, and the physical realm around us.”

“So read the Writings when confused.”

“Absolutely...daily...they’ll remind you; reorient you. Deeper Will rises there. They return you to the spirit, a higher place, free you from the chattering of your mind and the barking of your emotions. Reason in the light of Revelation is powerful. Its Light is a foundation...well...if you are not informed by some sort of blind imitation, or a narrow view, of it. There is a very creative space within our reality, within the bounds and vastness of inspiration from Revelation.

These three verses take me home...reorient me back into my deeper being...return me to the Deeper Place...

“O MY SERVANT! Abandon not for that which perisheth an everlasting dominion, and cast not away celestial sovereignty for a worldly desire. This is the river of everlasting life that hath flowed from the well-spring of the pen of the merciful; well is it with them that drink!”¹⁹

“O MAN OF TWO VISIONS! Close one eye and open the other. Close one to the world and all that is therein, and open the other to the hallowed beauty of the Beloved.”²⁰

“O MY CHILDREN! I fear lest, bereft of the melody of the dove of heaven, ye will sink back to the shades of utter loss, and, never having gazed upon the beauty of the rose, return to water and clay.”²¹

There are many more of course that return our souls to flight from this place. All of The Word does really.”

Bianca knew these Words, and they had reflected on them, both returning to the spirit.

After a short time that day, she had breathed one very deep breath and opened her eyes. She looked at the old man and smiled. Then she asked with a bit of fun in her voice, “Got anything else, Jack?”

“Just, get crackin’,” Jack had replied, with a big cheeky smile on his face. “We are advised to be swift.”

Bianca now woke in the fortress. She was so much clearer and so at ease in her soul, her power of volition re-energised. The times of tiredness, the times of confusion, would come again, and she would muddle through, and when she found herself running from the

noise of her mind, her emotions, or of life about her, she knew where to go to regather her poise. She felt stronger and more able now that she had tools and clear insights into the nature of volition. She would pick fruit from the Tree of Revelation and lay a table for her children, her family, to eat from every day.

Her children and her work took on new impetus within her, and she celebrated this great change in her. She was now reminded that detachment from our mind and our emotions, detachment from emotional attachment to the world, was so great a power that it could overcome any material or mental struggle and relieve us of the great loads we carry around. That the world and concerns are heavy, control and fear are heavy, and the spirit is as a breeze. Detachment can free the will and energies of human souls for the creation of greater things. It allows more quiet and peaceful minds, no matter the din all about us. It allowed for the volition to *do* life; to flow *free*.

Bianca now felt a deep reunion with this great power, and...

...At that moment Volje stood up in her cell; her eyes strong and free.

The Noise was still pouting in disappointment at not being able to smash the walls of The Fortress; in failing to gather up Bianca's mind and failing to fire up the lower drives of the many others who lived within its walls.

Volje was greater than The Noise's memories of her, and its confused memory and ignorance of history, made it vulnerable. Volition was being merciful and patient with The Noise in actual fact, even though the lack of her higher power in the world had definitely weakened her. She had been allowing humanity, and this fallen creature she knew could be a great servant, time to wake and to turn; to seek their, and its, own higher expression; to

revive the will to wrestle with, and to tame, their lower intent. But she now rose up smashing its loveless walls and its non-existent boundaries.

“There is no will in the wilful,” she called out, strongly and loudly, and it reverberated through the deepest places.

“There is no will in the wilful,” she called out once more, with greater voice, adding to its impetuous in places deeper. Then for a third time, she called it out again, with an even more mighty voice. This time, even shaking the outer reality of this small world.

A great change came upon the world with this call, in the future time. The Noise...the millions of chattering voices; deafening, confusing, angry, fired up, and righteous...all at once...just fell away. All without a whimper, and definitely not in the struggle one would expect. It was of a sudden, and a terrible but providential silence took its place. Then in time the conversation of the greater human creature reconnecting with itself and finding meaning in one purpose, founded on the oneness of humanity and in the advancement of human civilisation, started to slowly rise higher. The greater conversation had always been there, at its work, but now with less noise and a clearer view, more people joined in.

Like all negative forces The Noise was simply a lack of something, as were the endless drones of darkness that had blackened the sky. They all, now too, fell powerless into the sea, and the sun returned all around the fortress tower. Many more ships would be seen on the horizon that day, and in time, a number far greater than The Fortress had ever known on this planet would come.

Bianca woke from her thoughts within the walls and only wanted to see her children and Able. She felt she had been gone so long now.

“Soon, Mother, soon,” said Volje, now with her.

“I would like to go home right now, thanks,” she said to Volition, as she got up and looked around the low green rolling hills.

“Your time in these realms is passing, as the seasons of life pass. There are other journeys ahead in your first life, and endless ones beyond it,” explained Volition, as she waved to Consultation enjoying the open parkland of The Fortress of Wellbeing. He smiled a loving smile; one accompanied with a very respectful, almost unnoticeable, nod.

“Marriage and its boundaries have been all but disregarded in your age, and even though it has been made a mockery of, made weak in the people and on the Earth, these walls have *never fallen*. They stand *defiant* before *all* lowly ways in service to those true to the Eternal Covenant since the very time of Adam. They are eternal for man and woman to become one within, and to bring up children in safety and nurture. To pass on the knowledge of God and reminders of the nobility placed within them.

These walls, these boundaries, are not only healthy...they are required. The lost imaginations, endless lower wants, and childish excuses of greed and animal satisfaction will never take down these walls, even when the whole human society lies besmirched in its own stench and ignorance, beyond them.

The people will *always* return here. They will *yearn* for the beauty of its sunshine; its fresh bracing air, and the groves of luscious fruits. They will seek deep joy as their children play and grow strong here.

The Fortress, like all things, is a choice, and truly, there are as many fortresses as there are true marriages. True marriages and bonds of love create the fortress of wellbeing; nothing less. True love in action is required to build and sustain family; nothing less. Love and Justice; they cannot be separated.

Take warning, they cannot be separated.”

...and with that Bianca was on the living room couch, wrapped up in a doona in the evening cold of winter. Little Jenny came along, jumped in with her, and snuggled in.

Bianca heard a faint voice from deeper places as she held her little girl and rubbed her back to warm her up...

“Grow the tender young souls noble; help them, and empower them, to build a world that supports nobility again...”

“Let the mothers consider that whatever concerneth the education of children is of the first importance. Let them put forth every effort in this regard, for when the bough is green and tender it will grow in whatever way ye train it. Therefore is it incumbent upon the mothers to rear their little ones even as a gardener tendeth his young plants.”²²

JACK’S SOUL WANDERED ON FROM THAT PLACE. He had finished his house, with the shelter of the roof and the sealing of windows now done. He had even made some rudimentary furniture and enjoyed some days sitting on the veranda, looking at his garden. He was sitting there, reflecting on his love for Jennifer and his children, when he was moved on.

He wandered by Volition talking to another young soul as he left; this is what he heard...

“Love is justice, and both are only served in seeing the noble creature within all people. Only this deeper love is the guarantee of Justice. Justice is in all things; in all the

interactions of life between souls; great and small. It is a varied and wide reality, and intimately connected to love. Love, volition, justice; love, its will, and its action.

The well of love itself is limitless. It is infinite. It is within us. It is not outside us. It is not dependent on the world, or others. The unsullied heart is its channel to the material world.

We are born of love and knowledge, and in our earthly life we wander in the experience, the reality, of water and clay. Water and clay are want and need, and are not love, even though they challenge our spirit within the magnificent perfection of creation. Animals are of water and clay alone, and do not love as we do. They simply need.

Love is not need, as want only drives to be filled. Love is given out. Want and love are two opposing flows; one is into the animal, the other is out of the soul.

The well of want is shallow and seeks to be constantly refilled. The well of spirit, of love, is infinitely deep, and simply flows. Love of the animal is want; love of the soul, of the human creature, is giving out. Seek out which of these truly powers your intent; your volition to act.

Love is despite discomfort; despite hardship, want or need. Love will drive us to do what nothing else will, even when we are worn out, and seemingly defeated. Love can drive us on, and our burdens may be relieved by true love flowing to us through those close to us.

Physical attraction and intellectual affinity are not love. They are beautiful gifts indeed, but they do not assure love. Love is only giving, and only love assures love.

Free yourself of attachment. Seek the Infinite well of pure love within you and pour it out wherever you find yourself. This is the greatest intent. This is my truest, highest, nature

within the human kingdom. It is where my essential beauty rises, and yours. Seek this deep well within you, and let its intent, be yours.”

THE OLD WOMAN WALKED ACROSS THE LIBRARY FLOOR. She had just woken from a deep sleep, and now refreshed, moved easily and with a very present joy; a joy she put down to her recent visitor. She stopped to lovingly train a new rose vine that was almost at its first flowering. She moved it gently, but with purpose and a smile. Then she walked into an anteroom and through to a small washroom. She took up some scented soap and began to clean and refresh her face and hands.

Only her hands and face showed beyond the gown she wore, and the new purple colouration on her skin was a surprise to her. She tilted her head to the side a little as she wondered at it.

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.

REFERENCES

1. Bahá'u'lláh. (1992) *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 35
2. Bahá'u'lláh. (1992) *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 35
3. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; 202*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 118
4. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (2010). *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*. Bahá'í international Community (Ed.) Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org. p. 72
5. Bahá'u'lláh. (1996) *Compilations, Lights of Guidance*. New Delhi, India: Bahá'í Publishing Trust. Citing: Consultation: A Compilation, p. 3, from a previously untranslated Tablet. 577, p. 176
6. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (2010). *The Promulgation of Universal Peace: Talks delivered by 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His visit to the United States and Canada in 1912*. Bahá'í international Community (Ed.) Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org. p. 72
7. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. CXXXV, p. 265
8. From a song by Erika Mahoney. Similar wording, from unverified saying attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Howard Colby Ives (2007) *Portals to Freedom*. “Nothing is too much trouble when one loves,” He had been heard to say, “and there is always time.” p. 52
9. Bahá'u'lláh. (1990) *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. XXXIV, p. 79
10. Bahá'u'lláh. (1992) *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. The Third Ishraq, p. 126
11. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; 108*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 134
12. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; 102*. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 128

13. The Universal House of Justice. (2000) *Ridvan 2000 Message, to the Baha'is of the world*. Bahá'í World Centre.
14. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part II. 29.p. 43-44
15. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *Bahá'í World Faith*. Retrieved from www.bahaiebooks.org. Abdu'l-Baha Section, p. 507-508
16. Bahá'u'lláh. (2002) *Bahá'í Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab, and 'Abdu'l-Baha*. Wilmette, USA: US Bahá'í Publishing Trust. p. 118
17. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*; 108. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 134.
18. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*; 12. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 27
19. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part II. From the Persian: 37.p. 37
20. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part II. From the Persian: 12.p 35
21. Bahá'u'lláh. (1999) *The Hidden Words and Selected Holy Writings*. Kuala Lumpur. Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Malaysia. Part II. From the Persian: 13.p 35-36
22. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (1982) *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*; 95. Bahá'í World Centre. p. 125

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